



DOVER BASEBALL CAL RIPKEN ROOKIE DIVISION GUIDELINES

Revised: March 2026

The Dover Baseball Association is affiliated with Babe Ruth League, Inc., which includes the Cal Ripken Baseball League. These organizations have adopted the Official Baseball Rules, published by the Commissioner of Baseball, as their primary playing rules. These rules allow for local league modifications to best suit the needs of its players.

The following modifications to the existing national rules have been generated, and Board approved, with the intent of helping every player reach their full potential in a safe and competitive environment.

I. Player Eligibility

- A. Players participating in the Cal Ripken Rookie Division must be 7 or 8 years of age by the Babe Ruth designated cut-off date of April 30th.

II. Game Day Rules and Expectations

A. Defining an Inning and Game Length:

1. Games will be played at Horne St. School and last no more than 2 hours. There will be 1 weekday game and 1 Saturday game.
2. All weekday games are scheduled to begin at 5:30 pm.
3. A game is considered completed if any of the following occurs:
 - a. The completion of six innings or two hours of play, whichever comes first, or;
 - b. If the home team is in the lead after the top of the sixth inning.
4. A game will also be declared complete if at the end of the 5th inning either team is ahead by 10 runs or more; or 4 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead by 10 runs or more.
5. No full inning will start later than 2 hours after official start of the game. Coaches shall agree on the official start time prior to the game. Playoff games have no time limit and will be played in full unless the coaches from both teams determine it is not safe to continue due to darkness. Weekday games can be called at 90 minutes if the coaches of both teams agree. For a weekday game to be called at 90 minutes, the home team must have had a last chance to bat or be in the lead.



6. A half-inning is complete once 3 outs have been made or 4 runs have been scored.
7. During the play in which the fourth run is scored, play will continue until one of the following occurs:
 - a. An out is made.
 - b. The ball is controlled by an infielder in the infield.
 - c. All runners, including the batter, cross home plate. Due to this stipulation, it is possible to score more than 4 runs in an inning. The max would be 7, if there were 3 runs previously scored and the hitter hits a home run with the bases loaded.
 - d. During playoffs, the last inning is uncapped. There will be no run limit in the last inning.

B. Rules of Play:

1. Regulation baseballs (i.e., hard balls) will be used in this division.
2. There are no walks awarded.
3. A player hit by a pitch by another player will automatically be awarded 1st base. He/she does not have the option to keep hitting. A player hit by a pitch by a coach will not be awarded 1st base and the pitch is counted as a ball, unless he/she swung.
4. There is no bunting.
5. There are no balks.
6. The infield fly rule is not observed.
7. There is no leading.
8. A team is allowed two steals per inning. A steal can be a straight up steal or advancing on a passed ball. For example, runner on first and there is a passed ball, runner moves up one base to second. That counts as one steal for that inning. Runners are locked down at third (runners can only score on a batted ball or a bases loaded hit by pitch with player pitching, no stealing home on a passed ball). If a runner is going to attempt a straight steal, they have to wait for the ball to cross home plate. There is no advancing on an overthrow. This will encourage catchers to throw down to 2nd or 3rd on a straight steal.
9. During the 1st, 2nd, and 6th innings the coach will pitch, one inning of coach pitch can be switched for player pitch on weeknight games. On Saturday games any amount of coach pitch innings can be substituted for player pitch as long as the coaches of both teams are in agreement. When the coach is pitching:



- a. Each batter gets just 3 strikes, swinging or called. Coaches - it is very important that you teach your batters the proper strike zone.
 - b. A player cannot strike out on a foul ball
10. During the 3rd, 4th, and 5th innings, a player will be the pitcher.
11. On a batted ball that reaches the outfield grass:
- a. All runners can continue to advance bases until the ball is controlled by an infielder in the infield.
 - b. Runners more than halfway to the next base when the ball is controlled by an infielder in the infield may continue to that base at their own risk.
 - c. Runners less than halfway must return to the previous base at no risk.
 - d. It is helpful to mark the halfway point between the bases prior to the game with the field liner. While the decision is ultimately with the Umpire, it is encouraged that each team designate an assistant coach to watch where runners are when the ball is ultimately controlled by an infielder in the infield to avoid disputes.
12. For batted balls that do not reach the outfield:
- a. There is no advancing on an overthrow. This encourages infielders to make the throw to the base.
 - b. A runner on base may advance to the next base (at their own risk in some situations), regardless of whether or not he/she is halfway to the next base or not. For example, if a runner is at 2nd and the ball is hit to the third baseman, the runner may advance to third even though the fielder controlled the ball in the infield before the runner was halfway to third.
 - c. If a batted ball hits the coach, the ball is a fair ball and should be played as any other batted ball.

C. Batting:

1. USA Bat Standard: Babe Ruth Rules are to be followed regarding bats. Repeated violation(s) of this rule may subject the team manager to a violation of the Dover Baseball Code of Conduct.
2. To ensure equal batting opportunities for each player, coaches will, at the beginning of the season, create a continuous batting order and will use this order for each game of the season. If a player arrives after their team has batted past their spot in the order, that player's name will be placed at the end of the original batting order. This change will remain in effect for the remainder of the game.



3. If a player is unable to attend a game their name will be removed from the batting order for that game. At the start of the next game the player's name will be returned to its spot in the original batting order.
4. Players that are unable to bat for any reason will not be counted as an out.
5. The hitter on-deck at the end of the game will become the first batter for the next game.
6. For playoff games, Coaches may set the batting order as they see fit for each playoff game.

D. Fielding:

1. Teams will field between 8-10 defensive players, depending on player availability. This means that a team can have 2, 3 or 4 outfielders. If 10 players are available, all 10 should play in the field. All players must assume the normal defensive positions. No 5th infielder will be allowed.
2. Outfielders must be positioned at least 15 feet from the back edge of the infield dirt.
3. Defensive players, with the exception of pitcher, may not be moved during an inning except for an injury or other emergency.
4. Each eligible player must:
 - a. Play in the infield at least 2 innings per game.
 - b. Not sit out for more than 1 defensive inning in a given game. The home team must comply with this rule by the end of the 5th inning.
 - c. No player may field any one position for more than 2 innings in a game.
5. A coach may be on the field to provide defensive directions.
6. One of the defensive team coaches will stand behind the catcher to help with passed balls in order to speed up the game.

E. Player Pitching:

1. No pitcher may pitch more than 1 inning in a game.
2. Pitching 1 pitch in an inning counts as a full inning. This assures that at least 3 players pitch per game. If a game is played where the coach does not pitch the same rules apply.



3. The BABE RUTH PITCH SMART GUIDELINES shall be followed for all Dover baseball games and shall apply to pitches thrown outside Dover Baseball as well. All pitchers shall be subject to the following pitch count/rest schedule during regular season:

Maximum Pitches

Per Day	0 Day Rest	1 Day Rest	2 Day Rest
50 Pitches	1-20	21-35	36-50

4. **Regardless of what league or division the pitches were thrown in, pitchers MUST receive the complete full day(s) of rest required in order to be eligible to pitch in Dover Baseball.** For example, if a pitcher throws 40 pitches in either a Travel game or a Dover Baseball game on a Sunday, then he or she must receive two (2) full days rest and is NOT eligible to pitch in Dover Baseball until Wednesday.
5. Managers shall reach a consensus on the number of pitches thrown by each pitcher at the end of each inning and at an individual pitcher's removal from the game. Any disputes shall be resolved between the managers before leaving the field.
6. Pitch counts shall be recorded and verified by both Managers after each game and then forwarded to the Division Director.
7. During the regular season, all player pitchers should try and start their windup touching the rubber on the pitcher's mound. All players should throw from the rubber if able. Players must be able to show the proper arm strength to reach from the mound to the catcher.
8. During regular season if player is unable to throw from the pitching rubber, then that player may be allowed to pitch from no closer than 2 feet closer to home plate. The goal should be to have all pitchers throwing from the pitching rubber by the end of the season.
9. During the playoffs, all player pitchers must start their windup from the rubber on the pitcher's mound.
10. The player pitcher will pitch to the hitter until there is a ball hit in fair territory, or there are 3 strikes or 4 balls, whichever comes first.
11. If a player pitcher hits 2 opposing players in one inning, he/she must be replaced with another pitcher or a coach if there are no other pitchers available.



12. The CAL RIPKEN TOURNAMENT PITCH COUNT RULE shall be in effect for the playoffs and shall apply to pitches thrown outside Dover Baseball as well. All pitchers shall be subject to the following pitch count/rest schedule during the playoffs:

Maximum Pitches

Per Day	0 Day Rest	1 Day Rest	2 Days Rest
75 Pitches	1-40	41-65	66+

F. Coach Pitching:

1. If 4 balls are delivered from the player pitcher, a coach from the team currently batting will take over and pitch to the batter. This person will be the same person serving as the Umpire.
2. The coach pitcher will pitch from the pitching rubber.
3. The coach pitcher should mimic the pitch speed and trajectory of the average 8-year-old and not attempt to give the batter an easier pitch to hit (which can actually be harder for the batter if the speed and height are dramatically different from the player pitcher).
4. The number of strikes from the player pitcher will continue when the coach pitcher takes the mound (so if there are 2 strikes and the coach pitcher throws one pitch that is either a called strike or a swing and miss it is strike 3 and the batter is out).
5. When the coach is pitching, the player pitcher will continue to field the pitching position and must stand even with the rubber on the right or left of the coach pitcher.

G. Umpiring Duties:

1. During the regular season, umpiring duties will alternate between the coaches or a designated adult of the team currently up to bat.
2. The umpire will be positioned behind the pitcher’s mound and will:
 - a. Call balls and strikes while both kids and coaches are pitching.
 - b. A called strike should be called on all pitches that are 3-4 inches inside or outside of home plate and are between the batter’s chest and just below the batter’s knee. The intent is to have a liberal strike zone to encourage hitting off of other players (and not have kids wait for the coaches).
3. The umpire should be ready to move into position to make the call on balls put in play. Everyone will be looking at you to make the call on close plays.
4. The umpire may ask for assistance and confer with base coaches on decisions.



5. All umpire's decisions are final.
6. At the Horne Street School playing field, for fair balls that land in the marshy area in right field:
 - a. If the ball reaches this area in the air, it is a home run.
 - b. If the ball bounces before reaching the area it will be a ground rule-double.
7. For playoff games the league will provide an umpire for behind the plate to officiate games.

H. Player Safety:

1. Only the player at bat and the player on deck will have a bat in their hands.
2. All batters and base runners will wear a helmet. They will keep their helmets on from the time they enter the on-deck area until the time they return to the dugout after the play is over.
3. All players will keep the dugout entrance clear during games
4. All players will wear a protective cup/jill during all games and practices.

III. Game Day Responsibilities

A. Home Team

1. Listed first on the schedule and will use the 1st base dugout.
2. Responsible for preparing the field for play; including putting out bases, chalking lines, marking the half way point b/w 1st & 2nd, and 2nd & 3rd, marking the 2ft mark in front of the rubber, and opening, operating and closing the concession stand.
3. Responsible for furnishing 3 new, league approved, game balls for play. Balls will be provided to coaches by Dover Baseball.
4. Responsible for reporting the final score of the game to the Division Director and/or entering the score directly on the Dover Baseball website/mobile app.
5. It is the responsibility of the two head coaches to confer both during the game and at the end of the game to verify the game score.
6. Scheduled to use the batting cages 60 minutes before the scheduled game time for a total of 20 minutes, and will have infield practice 30 minutes before game time,



for total of 10 minutes.

7. Responsible for cleaning up the trash in and around the home team dugout.

B. Visiting Team

1. Listed second on the schedule and will use the 3rd base dugout.
2. Responsible for operating the scoreboard during the games.
3. Responsible for maintaining the field after play; including raking the infield, putting away bases, and making sure the equipment shed is locked.
4. Scheduled to use the batting cages 40 minutes before game time for a total of 20 minutes, and infield practice 15 minutes before game time, for a total of 10 minutes
5. Responsible for cleaning up the trash in and around the visitor dugout.

IV. All Star and Tournament Teams

A. Player Eligibility:

1. Player must be eligible for this league based upon age.
2. Player must play at least ½ of the regular season games.
3. Must be on a team roster by June 1st.
4. If a player cannot fulfill the 2nd requirement for any reason, then he or she will need a letter from the Division Director on their Eligibility Status. The letter will need to be approved or disapproved by the League President.

B. Manager and Coach Eligibility:

1. All Star and tournament team coaches must be a Manager, Coach or Assistant Coach during the regular season.
2. Must be on a regular season team roster by June 1st.

V. Division Director Responsibilities

A. Communication:

1. Maintains contact with coaches and parents regarding issues pertaining to the division.



2. Should assist anyone that is in need of any equipment before or during the season.
3. The Division Director will be able to change the breakdown of games and practices at the beginning of the season. They will have the option of turning the weekday games into practices or scrimmage games if needed.

B. League Standings:

1. The Division Director makes sure that the website is kept up to date with game results. Scores and standings will be kept solely for the purpose of determining a playoff order. There is no regular season champion in this division.

C. Cancellations and Makeups:

1. Due to weather or field conditions, league and city-wide cancellations may be made by Dover Baseball or the City of Dover. Announcement of these cancellations will be posted on the association's web page.
2. If a coach feels it is necessary to cancel games, it should be done only after consultation and agreement with the coach from the opposing team. Keep in mind, it is a short season, making up games can be difficult and we live in New Hampshire so the weather is not always ideal. Cancelling games should only be done if necessary.
3. An attempt should be made to make up all games cancelled and all make-up games must be rescheduled with the Division Director.

D. Roster Shortages:

1. When a coach becomes aware that he/she will not have enough players to field a team for a given game they must contact the Division Director. The division director will find a fill in player from another team that does not have a scheduled game or practice that day.
2. If a team is down below 8 players and no player fill player can be found then the opposing team will share 1 player to play an outfield position. This player will be the last out of the previous inning and will still bat for their team.

VI. Parent Responsibility

A. Communication

1. Appropriately communicate with coaches any concerns they might have.



2. Make the coach aware of games or practices in which their child will not be able to attend.
3. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that they adhere to the Dover Baseball Code of Conduct policy. Parents, please make sure to go over the code of conduct with your player as well.

B. Concession Stand Coverage

1. Each family shall be responsible for covering the concession stand for at least one game during the course of the season.

VII. Coaching and Player Development

A. Weekly Field Time:

1. Should include 1-2 practice(s) and 2 games each week. This breakdown is subject to change at the Division Directors discretion.

B. Player Development Expectations:

By the end of the Cal Ripken Rookie Division season players should be demonstrating a basic understanding of:

1. Field set-up and base-running concepts:
 - a. The different bases and fielding positions
 - b. Running through 1st base and home plate vs. stopping at 2nd and 3rd base.
 - c. Running on foul balls until it is called a foul by the umpire.
 - d. The need to go back to the base on a ball caught in the air.
 - e. Understanding they can't leave the base until the ball crosses home plate
2. Basic fielding concepts:
 - a. The ready position
 - b. The fielding responsibilities of the positions; i.e., The 2nd baseman covers second, backs up the 1st baseman and cuts off the throws from the right fielder.
 - c. An awareness of base runners when fielding and throwing a ball.
 - d. For outfielders, the importance of keeping the ball in front of them and getting the ball into the infield as quickly as possible.
 - e. For infielders, controlling the ball so runners can no longer advance.
 - f. Understanding the difference between a force out and a tag play.
3. Basic hitting concepts and hitting safety:



- a. Stance and swing.
 - b. Proper holding of the bat.
 - c. Players should be developing a level swing vs. an upper-cut swing.
 - d. Swinging when others are a safe distance away.
 - e. No throwing of the bat.
4. Basic Individual Catching and Throwing Technique:
- a. Using two hands to catch the ball.
 - b. Catching out in front of the body.
 - c. Throwing from a side-ways direction.
 - d. Using the front foot and glove to direct the ball.
 - e. Throwing with an overhand motion.

****FINAL NOTE****

The game of baseball is just that, A GAME! Mistakes will be made. There will be fielding mistakes; there will be coaching mistakes; and there will be umpiring mistakes. But there should be no mistakes in behavior.

It is the objective of the Dover Baseball Association to teach the game of baseball and to implant firmly in the children of the community the ideals of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage, and respect for authority, so that they may be well adjusted, stronger, and happier children that will grow up to be good, decent, healthy, and trustworthy citizens.

This objective can only be reached with the help of all; players, coaches and spectators alike! Dover Baseball has developed a Code of Conduct Policy that is intended to serve as a means of helping us meet this objective.

The policy can be found on the association website, www.dovernhbaseball.org.