

## **SYA In-House Baseball (Coach Pitch)**

### **Eligibility:**

Players aged 6 or 7 who have played a total of 2 years in the Rookie (Tee Ball) division or players aged 5, as evaluated or requested by a parent. Simple version: If you think your player can hit a ball thrown from their coach, this would be a good fit.

### **Objective:**

The Coach Pitch Division is an instructional division designed to strengthen interest in baseball and prepare participants for independence of on-field play and competitive baseball played within the Minors Division and Travel Softball.

There will be focus on several aspects of player development, specifically:

- Advance participants' fundamental baseball skills (throwing, fielding, hitting)
- Promote good sportsmanship
- Understand safe baseball behaviors
- Advance knowledge of the rules of baseball

### **Team Placement & Composition:**

- The Director with input from Coaches will determine placement of players.
- Each team roster will consist of a maximum of 8 players. However, the actual number may differ based on the numbers of players registered.

### **Schedules:**

- The regular season will run from April - June.
- Teams will practice twice per week and play one game per week.
- Teams will play against the other SYA In-House Baseball Coach Pitch Division teams.

### **Location of Games:**

- Games will be played on the Coach Pitch baseball field at Laubach Park on Lehigh Ave, located on the East Side of Salisbury Township.

### **Equipment:**

- Soft Core Level 1 "Tee Ball" baseballs will be used.
- SYA In-House Baseball will provide each player with a hat, shirt, pants, and socks.
- SYA In-House Baseball will provide each team with balls, developmental equipment (cones, nets, tees, etc.) and a first aid kit and ice packs.
- Each player needs to have their own glove, bat, and helmet. SYA In-House Baseball will have spare helmets and bats should a player require them.

- Each player should wear sneakers or cleats (no metal).

## **Rules**

The Coach Pitch Division will follow Little League Baseball rules with several modifications to aid in the development of players.

### **General Guidelines:**

- Score will not be kept during regular season.
- Stats will not be kept.
- Games are typically 4 innings or a maximum of 1.5 hours. Coaches may use judgment to play more or less than 4 innings or end the game prior to 1.5 hours based on the focus of the players.
- Home Team occupies the third base side
- Away Team occupies the first base side.

### **Batting:**

- All attending players must be listed in the batting order. Coaches can maintain the same batting order throughout the game or adjust the batting order each inning during the regular season.
- During the 1st and 2nd innings, each team will bat until each player in the lineup makes a plate appearance during the half inning.
- After the 2nd inning, coaches can elect to bat until three outs are recorded. Both coaches must agree to this change.
- No bunting.

### **Pitching:**

Coaches will pitch for the duration of the season.

#### **Coach Pitch Guidelines**

- Coaches will pitch to their respective team.
- Each batter will have a maximum of eight (8) swings per at bat with a coach pitching. If the player doesn't hit the ball, then the pitcher should switch to front toss or the batting tee depending upon the player's skill level. Coaches can replace a "bad pitch" with another throw, but keep it realistic.
- No walks will be issued.
- No strikeouts.
- It is recommended that Coaches will pitch from one knee approximately halfway between the pitching rubber and home plate. The coach can adjust to be closer or further from the batter depending on the batter's strength and skills.
  - Pitching from one knee will remove the difference in height between the coach and batter. Coaches should throw pitches on a line so the batter can clearly see the ball approaching them and promote a level swing and contact.

- Every player is different and coaches should adjust their pitching to what helps the player learn and grow from.
- Pitching coaches must make attempts to avoid batted balls. A batted ball that unavoidably hits a coach will still be a live ball.

### **Baserunning**

There are several adjustments to baserunning to keep runners on base to learn baserunning and promote opportunities for the defense to experience different situations during gameplay.

- A batter is limited to a single for all batted balls on the ground in the infield.
- If the batted ball reaches the outfield in the air or on the ground, the batter may advance to second base.
- Fielders can throw out any baserunner attempting to advance to any base.
- No triples and home runs are permitted.
- No leading or stealing. A runner may leave the base to advance only when the batter makes contact.
- Baserunners must take reasonable actions to avoid a collision (slide, avoid the fielder, etc). Runners who intentionally create a collision with a fielder are automatically out.
- Runners are not allowed to advance on an overthrow.

### **Fielding**

- Each player should be rotated through different positions to experience fielding.
  - All players must play at least two innings of infield per game.
  - All players must play at least one inning in every position during the season.
- No infield fly rule.
- Coaches should utilize all players on defense. Extra players can be utilized in the outfield or standing on second base.
- Free defensive substitutions.
- During coach pitch, use a fielder in the pitching position on either side of the mound, but not in front of the mound. (For safety reasons.)
- Only players can field batted balls. Coaches standing in the field instructing players cannot catch, stop or throw balls in play. The only time a coach can participate in game action is if a player's safety is in jeopardy or a serious injury may result from letting the play resume.

### **Umpiring**

- Coaches will handle basic umpiring duties focused on fair/foul balls and calling plays at each base (out/safe).
- If a play results in a disputed call, the closest coach makes the call; base coaches for first and third base, field coaches for second base, and pitching coach for home plate.

## Coach Information

### **Safety:**

- All coaches must maintain a safe environment during all practices and games.
- All teams must follow the SYA Code of Conduct.
- All players must remain in the dugout (behind the fence) while their team is up to bat. On deck batters MUST be supervised by an adult.
- All players holding a bat and NOT batting must keep the bat touching the ground while they are holding it.
- First Aid Kits will be provided and extras in the green bins.
- Ensure you have each player's contact information on hand at practices and games in the event of an accident or injury.

### **Conduct**

- Coaches must always set a proper example.
- No arguing and no confrontations.
- Coaches are responsible for the conduct of the parents and assistant coaches. Coaches may be required to excuse a coach or parent from a game based on their impact on the players or the quality of the game's environment.
- Coaches are encouraged to create an enthusiastic and positive environment for the players.
- Individual or team criticism, taunting or bullying is not acceptable.
- Coaches are expected to use their best judgment and abilities in correcting player responses to small failures.
- Coaches should promote good sportsmanship at all times.
- Both teams must shake hands after the game ("Good Game"). Promote positivity and correct players showing poor sportsmanship.

### **Preparation**

The Coach Pitch division is a developmental program and coaches must be active participants in providing instruction to players. It is very important to prepare, be organized, and obtain adequate help for practices and games to maintain a smooth flow and maximize instruction during practices and games. Practices and games move fast and idle time for the kids makes it harder to refocus them and in some cases, maintain order and safety.

- Plan practices in advance.
- Prepare batting lineups and defensive rotations in advance to games.
- The coaches on the field should provide instruction and encouragement. Coaches need to constantly guide the players on the fundamentals of every aspect of the game. Coaches need to be out in the field supporting their players and explaining what can happen in each play and situation. Players in this division have short attention spans and can easily lose their focus on the game.
- The following support is strongly recommended:

- When your team is batting you will need a:
  - Coach Pitcher
  - A catcher behind the plate
  - First Base Coach
  - Third base Coach
  - At least one parent in the dugout who will manage the batting order, ensure players have the proper equipment to bat, and watch the kids to maintain safety and order
- When your team is in the field you should have:
  - A coach on each side of the infield
  - At least one but preferably two coaches in the outfield.

### **Parents**

- Parents are required to stay at practice. Many parents do not stay at practices and the coaches are assuming responsibility for the children.
- It is helpful to get parents involved. Parents can provide support in a variety of roles since this division is a very hands-on experience for coaches.
- Communicate practice and game schedules to parents that include times and locations. Send reminders during the week.
- Maintain accurate contact information for all parents.
- Communicate frequently with parents through various channels (email, text, apps, etc.)
- Ensure clear roles and expectations of parents.

### **Postponements**

- Coaches must improve field conditions so the field is playable and safe whenever possible.
- All games will be called in the event of lightning.
- Practices should be canceled in the event of bad weather (rain, thunderstorms, etc.) and the field is not safe to play on.
- The coaches of both teams should work together to call off a game due to weather conditions or an unplayable field.
- If a game is called off, please notify the Director so they can reschedule.
- Any games will be made up based on field availability and schedules.

### **Field Responsibilities**

All coaches will coordinate all activities to prepare the field for a game and maintain it after the game ends. Please leave the field in good, playable condition for the next practice or game.

### **Pregame**

- Check for safe field conditions
- Rake infield dirt

- Remove Obstructions from the field
- Line the field (batters boxes and baselines)
- Install all bases and remove base plugs

#### **Postgame**

- Make sure all equipment is returned to the box and the box is properly locked.
- Ensure the dugout area is clean. All trash is removed and properly disposed of and no equipment or items are left behind.
- Remove all bases and install base plugs.
- Rake the batters box and any infield areas that need to be raked.

#### **Contact Information:**

##### **Coach Pitch Coordinator(s)**

OPEN

##### **Director of In-House Baseball**

Kenny Wellbank

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