

# **Shades Mountain Park**

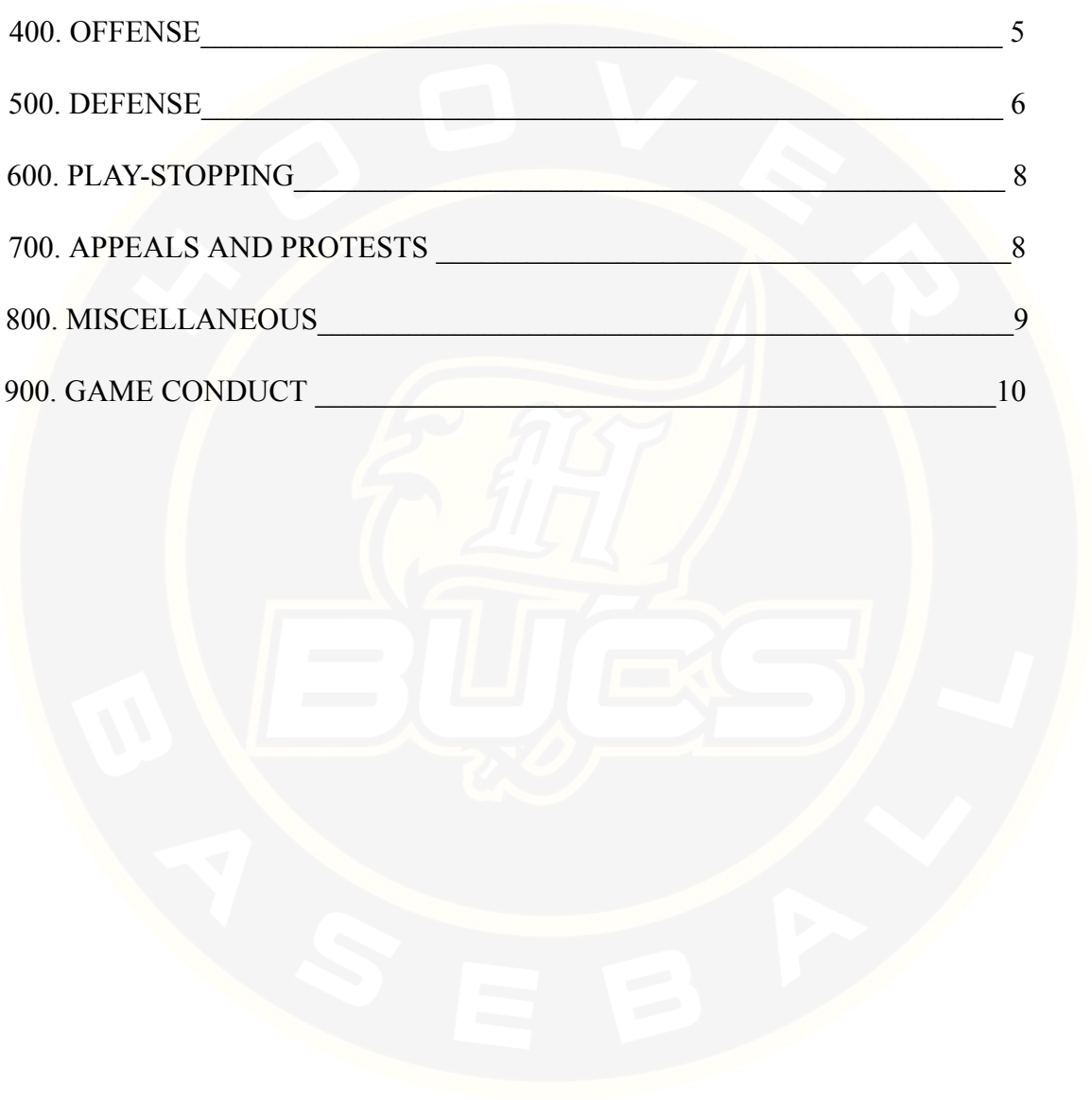


## **7 & 8-Year-Old League Rules**

**Updated: Spring 2025**

## Contents

100. EQUIPMENT _____	3
200. REGULATION GAME/TIME LIMITS _____	4
300. THE PLAYING FIELD _____	4
400. OFFENSE _____	5
500. DEFENSE _____	6
600. PLAY-STOPPING _____	8
700. APPEALS AND PROTESTS _____	8
800. MISCELLANEOUS _____	9
900. GAME CONDUCT _____	10



## **RULES OF PLAY**

This league at Shades Mountain Park is a coach-pitch baseball program for youth ages 7 for 7U and 8 for 8U. The rules set forth below govern all play.

### **PLAYER'S AGE**

7u: Participation in this league is open to any approved youth who is 7 years old on April 30th of the current year (or in first grade). For the fall season, participation is based on the youth's age on April 30th of the upcoming year. Playing up in an older league is not permitted except when allowing players to join their grade level or in other exceptional circumstances as determined solely by the Board's discretion.

8u: Participation in this league is open to any approved youth who is 8 years old as of April 30th of the current year (or in second grade). For the fall season, eligibility is determined by the youth's age as of April 30th of the following year. Players are not permitted to join an older league unless they are playing with their grade level or in other exceptional circumstances as decided solely by the Board.

### **100. EQUIPMENT**

101. The official ball used in this league will be a baseball approved by the Shades Mountain Park Board and supplied by the director of park facilities.

102. Metal cleats are prohibited.

103. Approved (unaltered) baseball bats may be used. Any broken, cracked, or dented bats must be removed immediately upon discovery without penalty at the umpire's discretion.

104. All batters and baserunners must wear batting helmets with full ear flaps and a face shield. Any baserunner who, in the umpire's judgment, intentionally removes their helmet will receive a warning. Any subsequent offense will result in the player being declared out.

105. Equipment must be kept in the dugout when not in use.

106. A first baseman's mitt may be used by the first baseman only.

107. The pitcher must wear their batting helmet or face shield and a park-provided heart guard.

108. The park will provide proper protective equipment for the catchers, which the catcher must always wear. The catcher should also wear an athletic cup.

109. All players must wear full baseball uniforms, with the shirt tucked inside their pants,

during the game.

## **200. REGULATION GAME/TIME LIMITS**

201. A regulation game should consist of six (6) complete innings. Fewer innings may be played based on the time limits set in Rule 202.

202. No inning may start later than eighty (80) minutes from the start time. Stoppage of play on the home team's last batter will constitute the start of the next inning.

203. In the event of rain, a game will be considered complete after three (3) and a half innings if the home team is ahead and four (4) innings if the Visitor is ahead. If a game is halted due to weather before completion, it must be resumed from the point of termination when park officials reschedule it with nearly the same lineup.

204. The score will be kept. If there is a tie at the end of regulation as defined in Rules 201 and 202, the game result will be a tie.

205. If a team is leading its opponent by fifteen (15) runs after four (4) innings or three (3) and a half innings if the home team is ahead, the game will be over, and the leading team will be declared the winner. If a team is leading its opponent by eight (8) runs after five (5) innings or four (4) and a half innings if the home team is ahead, the game will be over, and the leading team will be declared the winner.

206. Two umpires will call each game. (If an extenuating circumstance occurs, a board member will contact both coaches to ensure the players' safety and the game's integrity.)

## **300. THE PLAYING FIELD**

301. The defensive infield coach's box will be positioned outside his dugout and be a minimum of three (3) feet wide and six (6) feet long and positioned no closer than six (6) feet to the base path.

302. The pitching coach shall pitch at a minimum distance of 30 feet from the point of home plate on a straight line to the center of the pitcher's circle. A line will be marked on the field that the pitching coach shall remain behind throughout the pitch delivery. On both SMP-designated 7u and 8u fields, this line will be the permanent pitching rubber.

303. Batters boxes will be drawn three ft. wide and six ft. long and positioned 4 inches from the outside edge of the plate (not the center). There should be 3 feet in front and 3 feet in the back of the middle of home plate.

304. The base paths will be between fifty (50) feet and sixty (60) feet.

## **400. OFFENSE**

401. The batting order shall consist of all players on each team. Players will bat in continuous order, beginning with the leadoff batter for each inning. If one team cannot field the required number of players for the scheduled game, that team will not be forced to forfeit a game. Instead, the game will be played with the deficient team, playing all players possible.

402. The batting order may not be changed once the game has started. Late arrivals must be placed at the end of the batting order. No outs will be recorded for an injured player who cannot bat. An injured player who returns to the game must return to his/her original position in the batting order.

403. An inning is over once three outs have been recorded or eight (8) runs have been scored. The next batter in the lineup, following the last batter of the inning, will lead off the following inning.

404. Base coaches shall always remain in their coaching boxes at first and third bases unless player safety dictates otherwise. The pitching coach is positioned behind the thirty (30) foot pitching line and must immediately leave the playing field once the ball is put into play. There may also be a coach behind home plate in the designated area to gather balls and get them back to the pitching coach. These are the only coaches allowed on the field for offensive teams at bat.

405. If an offensive coach physically assists a baserunner while the ball is in play, the runner will be called out.

406. Each batter will receive up to five (5) pitches to put the ball into play. The batter will be declared out after three (3) strikes or five (5) pitches. If the third strike or fifth pitch is batted foul, the batter will be offered another pitch until the ball is put into play or the pitch is missed. If the batter has two (2) strikes or is on the fifth pitch and hits a foul ball that is caught, he is out.

407. Three (3) strikes is an out, even if the catcher doesn't catch the pitch on the third strike.

408. The pitching coach will pitch to his batters. The coach must immediately leave the playing field and remove the bat, if needed, once the ball is put into play. The coach cannot talk to the runner while the ball is in play. After one warning from the umpire, the coach will be replaced.

409. If a batted ball hits the pitching coach and, in the umpire's judgment, the pitching coach made an effort to avoid contact or was protecting himself, it will be considered a dead ball, and the play will be redone with the previous count, and runners will return to the same base they previously occupied. If the pitching coach intentionally contacts the ball, in the umpire's judgment, the batter will be out, and no baserunners may advance.

410. No bunting will be allowed. Half-swings will be called a bunt. In the event of a bunt, it will count as a strike against the batter.

411. A batter cannot be out of the batter's box when the ball is hit. This includes stepping on home plate. If this happens, the batter will be called out.

412. After one (1) warning per game per player for slinging his/her bat, the batter will be called out for each additional time he/she slings his/her bat.

413. Baserunners shall not leave their base before the ball reaches home plate. If this occurs (umpire's decision), the baserunner is out. The ball is considered dead and a no-pitch. If a baserunner misses a base, it is an appeal play to the umpire.

414. There is no base stealing allowed in this league.

415. Head-first sliding into the next base is not permitted. Head-first sliding back into a base is permitted. Violation of this rule will result in the baserunner being called out.

416. Any runner is out when he does not slide or attempt to avoid the fielder who has the ball near the base and is waiting to make the tag. If a play is being made at a base and the runner does not slide, the runner could be called out at the umpire's discretion for causing a safety hazard during play. A possible double play will be called if there is no potential for the fielder to continue a play due to failure to slide. If there is contact with the fielder and the umpire's judgment is deemed malicious, the runner will be called out and possibly ejected from the game.

## **500. DEFENSE**

501. All players on each team will play defense simultaneously in each inning, but only six (6) may play the infield: one (1) inside the pitcher's circle, four (4) in the normal positions for first base, second base, third base, and shortstop, and one (1) at catcher, which is required. All other players should be positioned in the outfield. Outfielders must be positioned in the outfield grass. If an outfielder starts the play in the infield dirt, the offensive coach can accept the play or require the batter to hit again. Throughout the season, the board encourages coaches to rotate players through positions so that all players have an opportunity to play multiple positions unless, in the coach's judgment, it presents a safety concern.

502. For 7u: Two defensive coaches will be allowed on the field: one (1) in right field positioned just outside the foul line and one (1) in left field positioned just outside the foul line. One (1) infield coach is permitted to stand in the coach's box, as defined in Rule 301, outside his dugout to coach the infield. Defensive coaches should not touch or physically assist a player during play under any circumstance.

For 8u: Only one coach is permitted to stand in the coach's box, as defined in Rule 301, outside his dugout to coach the team. All other coaches must be in the dugout.

503. Free substitution of defensive players is allowed at any time during the game. However, this will not affect the batting order, which will remain unchanged from what was submitted at the beginning of the game.

504. The pitcher must have one (1) foot in contact with the circle when the ball is hit. If this rule is violated, then the offensive team gets its choice of accepting the play or allowing the batter to bat again.

505. No rolling of the ball underhanded on the ground will be allowed. No outs will be permitted when rolling the ball. Runners will automatically be safe if the defensive team rolls the ball.

506. Players should throw the ball to the base when attempting to make a play unless it's a natural baseball play. For example, the first baseman should tag 1B, the second baseman or shortstop should tag 2B, the third baseman should tag 3B, and the catcher should tag home plate. Outfielders should throw the ball in from the outfield. The outfielders should not run it into the infield. If any such play outside of this rule were to result in an out, the baserunner would be ruled safe. Certain situations may arise where a natural play may fall outside of these scenarios. In these rare instances, the umpire's judgment allows the play to result in an out.

507. If the ball is thrown out of the playing field (defined as under or over the fence around the field, into the dugout, or stuck under a fence), play stops, and all baserunners are allowed to advance one base.

508. The pitcher cannot tag anyone out after fielding the ball except a baserunner running to home plate or a batter running to first, but then, only if the ball is batted fair down the first base line, third base line, or right in front of home plate. In all other cases, the ball should be thrown to the proper base for an out to be recorded. The pitcher cannot field a ball in the circle and run home to force out a baserunner at the plate.

509. The catcher must start in the crouched position in the catcher's box to be allowed to make a play on a batted ball. For example, a player standing along the backstop cannot make a play on a batted ball, i.e., catch a foul ball for an out.

510. There is no "overthrow" rule. If a ball is thrown to any base and overthrown, baserunners may advance at their own risk until play is stopped, according to Rule 601.

511. A ball batted fair that bounces over, through, under, or becomes stuck in the fence is a ground-rule double.

512. The infield fly rule will not be in effect.

513. If a player is injured by being hit by the ball and cannot continue play, time will be called by the umpire, and all players will be awarded one base.

514. Defensive infielders should be encouraged to stay out of the baseline and not stand on a base in order to avoid interference with baserunners. If player interference clearly impacts the result of the play, in the judgment of the umpire, he has the authority to modify the result.

## **600. PLAY-STOPPING.**

601. For 7u: Holding the baseball above the head and asking for a timeout stops play. Play will stop when the umpire recognizes the timeout, even if a verbal request was not made. Any infielder who has control of the ball in front of a runner in the baseline can call timeout. The player should always attempt to face off the lead runner. If timeout is requested behind the lead runner, base runners in front of where the timeout was requested are free to advance. However, once the umpire has recognized timeout, whether or not the player is in front of the lead runner, a player that is stationary on a base shall not advance to the next base, and a runner in between bases will stop at the next base.

For 8u: Play shall be stopped ONLY by the UMPIRE. The UMPIRE will call "Time" once an infielder has complete control of the ball and the lead runner has been stopped on a bag, has been forced back to the bag, or returns to the bag they just passed. [Play will be stopped if the LEAD runner does not aggressively attempt towards the next base.] Any trailing runners will be awarded the next base if they are more than halfway to the next base when "Time" is called by the Umpire. [This is a judgment call by the umpire.] All umpires will be instructed to make rapid decisions on play stoppage to ensure games are called consistently.

602. A caught fly ball will result in the batter being called out. Other baserunners may advance at their own risk. Double and triple plays are allowed. Play should be stopped according to the normal rules for stopping play, per Rule 601.

## **700. APPEALS AND PROTESTS**

701. Appeals will be made by the Head Coach only after a timeout has been given by the umpire and before the first pitch is made to the next batter. The Head Coach will appeal to the umpire. Once the umpire makes his decision, there is no other in-game appeal, and the game will play on. If the Head Coach wants to protest the decision, he will notify the umpire and opposing Head Coach. After the game and within 24 hours,

the protest will be discussed with the league commissioner, who will decide.

## **800. MISCELLANEOUS**

801. Playing illegal players will result in a forfeit of a game. The only eligible players are players on a team's official roster or a player borrowed from the Play-Up/Over list, who will be distributed to the head coaches by the league commissioner prior to Opening Day. A borrowed player must play in the outfield and must bat last in the lineup. A player may borrow a maximum of three (3) games per season unless sanctioned by the league commissioner.

802. The home team head coach shall prepare the field for play, including making any requests for necessary field repairs. The last Visiting Team coach of the day is responsible for securing the field and equipment, locking up the press box (including unplugging the PA system and scoreboard), and turning off the field lights. The field and equipment should be ready fifteen (15) minutes prior to game start.

803. Besides stopping play, time-outs can only be requested by the head coach. In each game, there will be a maximum of one (1) offensive time out per batter and one (1) defensive time out per inning. No timeout may last more than one (1) minute in length.

804. The umpire may call a timeout for injury or appeal. These timeouts will not be charged to a team. If an umpire calls a timeout for any injury he deems serious, play will be stopped, and all baserunners will be awarded one base. The coaches cannot enter the field until time has been called. This is a judgment call and cannot be appealed or protested.

805. Each team may have a coach or parent in the dugout during the games to maintain order, manage equipment, and manage the batting order to speed play. This individual cannot be on the field except between innings.

806. Coaches will be responsible for the disposition of their fans and will be expected to attempt to address unsportsmanlike and/or disruptive behavior and, if necessary, notify the league commissioner.

807. The visiting team is required to have at least one parent in the press box during each game to operate the scoreboard. The home team is responsible for keeping the official scorebook. No more than three (3) people are allowed in the press box at one time. Children under the age of 13 are not allowed in the press box for any reason, according to park rules.

808. No adult, other than coaches, shall be allowed on the field during the game without the consent of the umpire. No persons except the officially registered players of the team, the head coach, and assistant coaches shall be allowed on the bench during the game.

Persons failing to leave the field at the request of the umpire could result in the forfeiture of the game.

809. Umpires are to be in and keep control of every game. Judgment calls such as balls/strikes, safe/out, fair/foul, etc., are not to be argued. An umpire may eject any coach, parent, or player who excessively argues a call. Any parent ejected from the stands must leave the park immediately and not return until cleared by the Shades Mountain Park Board. Any ejected player or coach must leave the park immediately and be suspended for the next game. If an ejected player or coach attempts to participate in the next game, he will be disqualified for the remainder of the season.

810. The Shades Mountain Park Board of Directors shall have the authority to remove or eject any coach or player for the remainder of the season for any flagrant, unsportsmanlike conduct.

811. Players, coaches, umpires, or other game officials are prohibited from using tobacco/vaping/or any product deemed irresponsible in front of children. Profanity during the game will not be tolerated, and the use of disrespectful language will result in a warning or potential ejection.

812. The league commissioner will have the final say on any matters or situations that may arise that are not covered in these rules. If a rule is unclear, the league will observe the spirit of the rule as ultimately clarified by the commissioner. Any questions, objections, or requested clarification of the rules should be addressed directly to the league commissioner.

## **900. GAME CONDUCT**

901. Remember – The game is for our children! The results of a child's baseball game should not dictate an adult's ability to control their behavior. Adults should set an example of sportsmanship and appropriate behaviors for their children.

*Edited and adopted January 2025 by the Shades Mountain Park Board*