

The Methacton Audubon Recreation Association is a Community Youth Organization serving Lower Providence Township and its surrounding communities. We are a volunteer organization providing youth Recreational Baseball, Softball and Basketball Leagues for the benefit of the community.

Our focus is on providing a healthy and safe environment for youth sports' programs that help facilitate the development of our community's children into outstanding young men and women.



Recreational Baseball Handbook

Updated 2021

This handbook is designed to be a guide for present and future members of the METHACTON AUDUBON RECREATION ASSOCIATION (MARA).

The philosophy, objectives, procedural statements and other information contribute to the smooth operation of the MARA BASEBALL LEAGUE.

No handbook could possibly provide all the answers to all the Baseball League questions, but familiarity with this manual, along with good judgment should help in making good decisions for the League.

All items in this handbook are subject to revision periodically. Ideas for improvements are encouraged at any time. The various chapters in this manual deal with all facets of our league operation. Any part of this manual shall be considered the "rules" of the MARA BASEBALL program and should be adhered to accordingly.

PHILOSOPHY

Methacton Audubon Recreation Association (MARA) exists to provide a safe, enjoyable environment for children to learn the great game of baseball. The safety and well being of young players is the primary objective of MARA. The league's goal is to teach baseball skills so the players can improve and develop satisfaction and enjoyment of the game, and also values such as sportsmanship, teamwork, and service that will enable them to improve as individuals and give back to the community.

GENERAL RULES – ALL LEVELS (Regular Season)

1. Babe Ruth Baseball (Cal Ripken Division) rules apply unless specifically excepted in this document.
2. MARA is a RECREATIONAL league. The intensity in a baseball game should never reach a level that detracts from the basic rules of good sportsmanship and fair play.
3. All Managers must conduct their program in a manner that ensures the safety of each player.
4. All Managers and Coaches must complete the required MARA Background check before being able to coach at any level. This information can be found on the MARA website and during registration. Background checks are good for one year from the date of issue.
5. Managers are responsible for keeping their coaches, players, and partisan spectators under control, observing good etiquette, and exhibiting sportsmanlike conduct at all practices and games.

6. Managers will conduct a mandatory team meeting involving players and parents at the first practice so that expectations are clearly communicated. At this meeting Managers and coaches should make clear the rules of good conduct with all parents.
7. Managers are responsible to have the best interest of the PLAYER in mind at all times.
8. Managers will provide all players with a game schedule once the League has approved the schedule. The Baseball Commissioner and League Coordinator will develop a practice schedule that is fair to all teams.
9. Managers will stress that all players that a supporter and protective cup are **REQUIRED** during practices and games. Catchers are **REQUIRED** to wear a protective cup at all times.
10. Only Managers, coaches, scorekeepers, players, umpires, and League officials are permitted in the dugout during a game.
11. Hitting sticks are not permitted at the MARA complex at any time.
12. Managers, coaches, and parents are responsible for limiting the communication and items passed during the games to the players while on the team benches and playing field. This includes food, drinks, and conversation between players, parents, and siblings. The goal is to offer encouragement with the least amount of distractions.
13. Only the Manager may question an umpire's ruling. The Manager shall not allow any coaches, players, or parents to question or harass an umpire. The Manager may never leave the dugout or coach's box to talk to an umpire, without first receiving the umpire's permission. MARA is a RECREATIONAL league. The intensity in a baseball game should never reach a level that detracts from the basic rules of good sportsmanship.
14. Protests are not allowed during the regular season. During the playoffs, protests are allowed for rule interpretations only. The umpire and the Baseball Commissioner (or his designate) will resolve the protest BEFORE play resumes. Judgment calls are not subject to protest.
15. Managers, players, coaches, and spectators shall not behave improperly or use abusive language. The penalty for this behavior is:
 - a. First Occurrence – Automatic ejection from the game.
 - b. Second Occurrence – Automatic ejection from the game PLUS suspension for the next game.
 - c. Ejection from the league for the year.

Any ejection can be appealed to the Baseball Commissioner, with the player, Manager/Coaches, and umpire attending. The Baseball Commissioner's decision is final and not subject to further appeal.

16. For the safety of the players and umpires, the intentional throwing of any equipment is prohibited. Managers should teach their players the proper way to drop the bat after hitting the ball. Penalties for throwing of equipment are at the umpire's discretion, up to ejection for repeat offenses.
17. When coaching and/or umpiring clinics are offered, attendance by ALL Managers and coaches is strongly recommended. Attendance at such clinics will be consideration for future-coaching positions at all levels.
18. Managers and coaches should strive to make playing time as equal as possible for all players on the team. Each player must play four (4) innings in the field, unless:
 - a. The game is shortened due to weather, darkness, or time limit.
 - b. A player arrives late or leaves early.
19. During regular season games all players should be given the opportunity to play the infield and outfield in each game.
20. Games in the Rookie, Minor, American, and National Leagues will consist of six (6) innings. During the regular season, there will be no extra innings in case of a tie. Tie games will not be replayed. Games are considered official after four (4) full innings, or 3 ½ if the Home team is ahead. The Instructional and T-Ball leagues will play as many innings as the allotted time permits.
21. In the event of inclement weather or lack of daylight, the League may suspend play. If the League has not suspended play, the Managers and Umpires will use their discretion on whether or not to play, with the player's safety in mind. **In the event of lightning witnessed, all field events will immediately stop and individuals will take cover. Play may not resume until a 30 minute period of time passes following a witnessed lightning flash.**
22. Only the Baseball Commissioner or his designate may cancel a game for reasons other than weather.
23. The League Coordinator will reschedule cancelled and unofficial games, with priority given to cancelled games. Games will be rescheduled based on field availability. The League reserves the right to not reschedule a game if fields are unavailable. Rescheduled games will be replayed in their entirety.

24. Innings pitched in an unofficial game will count toward the pitching limits. (Also see league specific rules).
25. The umpire will notify both teams of the official time of the first pitch. Only when there is a game following the current game, will there be a one-hour forty-five minute time limit per game (1:45). Once the time limit has been reached, the current inning (top and bottom halves, if home team is trailing or tied) may be completed without regard to the time limit. However, no new inning may begin after the time limit has been reached.

Example: Team A (home) and Team B begin at 1:01 PM. Teams C and D are scheduled to play at 3:00 PM. At 2:46 PM, the time limit is reached in the top of the 5th inning and Team B leading. The game will end after the bottom of the 5th inning.

26. All players present must bat consecutively. A manager may sit a player for disciplinary reasons but must report the incident to the Baseball Commissioner before the next scheduled game. Players arriving late will be put last in the batting order.
27. Each Manager will supply a copy of his batting order, consisting of player's last name and number, to the opposing manager.
28. The home team will occupy the third base dugout.
29. Players in the field and on the bench are encouraged to "chatter" to support their teammates. However, "chatter" should not distract the batter nor be derogatory to the opposing team in any way.
30. Catchers may catch the entire game, but Managers should attempt to utilize more than one catcher in a game whenever possible, especially on hot days.
31. Managers and coaches should discourage the use of curve balls and other breaking pitches that could cause damage to young arms. In the National League their use should be limited.
32. If a pitcher throws at least one pitch in an inning and is removed from the mound for any reason, he is considered to have pitched one inning. There are no thirds of an inning when calculating pitched innings. Furthermore, if a pitcher is removed from the mound for any reason during a game, he may not re-enter the same game as a pitcher.
33. If a pitcher hits two batters in a game he will receive a warning. If a pitcher hits another batter in that game (total of 3), the pitcher can be removed from the mound for that game at the umpire's discretion.
34. A Manager or coach is permitted to make one trip to the mound in the same inning to the same pitcher. On the second trip in the same inning to the same pitcher, that pitcher

must be removed from the mound for the entire game. However, if a pitcher is injured, the Manager may notify the umpire that he is visiting the mound to check the injury and he will not be charged with a visit.

35. Pitchers must pitch from the pitching rubber.
36. Any player warming up a pitcher, whether on the field or on the sidelines, must wear a glove and protective mask.
37. MANDATORY NO CONTACT RULE (Slide or Surrender): If a runner does not slide and makes no effort to avoid contact with the player making the play, the runner will be declared out.
38. Headfirst slides are not permitted unless diving back into a base that a runner has successfully reached. Any runner making a headfirst slide will be declared out. Repeat offenses by any player in the same game will result in the ejection of that player.
39. Players are not permitted to coach at first or third base.
40. Only the on-deck batter is permitted in the designated on-deck area. All other players must remain on the bench when not in the field, on the bases, or at bat. Players may not swing bats in any other area.
41. A fielding glove, batting glove, approved batting helmet with facemask cage and bat(s) is the only personal equipment a player can use, except the catcher. If a catcher has his own equipment, he may use it as long as it is considered "normal" catcher's equipment. **Beginning in the Spring 2018, all bats must have a USABASEBALL logo stamped on them and may have barrels up to 2 5/8 inch diameter.**
42. For National League Division players only, players may use an approved batting helmet with an approved jawguard or helmet with facemask cage.
43. To speed up play, Managers are encouraged to use a courtesy runner for their catcher

Courtesy runners are not permitted in any other instances except in the case of injury. The courtesy runner will be the player who made the last batted out.
43. Call Up Players – The call up program is an important part of MARA Baseball. It allows short-handed teams to play with a full team and exposes younger players to a higher level of play. As such, calling up a player should not be used as a mechanism to improve a team. The League Coordinators in the Rookie, Minor, and American Leagues will identify a pool of higher-skilled players that will be available for temporary use by short-handed teams. This list will be distributed to the Managers and League Coordinator of the higher

leagues. Managers may call up a player or players from a lower league to bring his team up to 10 players. Call up players can not play up if their regular team has a scheduled game. Managers must notify their League Coordinator when they use a call up player. The League Coordinator is responsible to track pool player usage and rotation. Call up players are subject to the same playing time provisions as regular players with the following exceptions:

- a. Call up players may NOT pitch.
 - b. Call up players may only play two innings in the infield, including catcher.
 - c. Call up players must bat at the bottom of the batting order.
 - d. Call up players cannot play more than a rostered player (a rostered player cannot sit two innings in a game if a call up only sits 1 inning)
44. A team may only score five (5) runs in an inning. Once the fifth run in the inning has scored, the half-inning is declared over. For the Rookie and Minor Leagues the following run limit is applied: A team may only score three (3) runs per inning a) during the month of April, and b) when kids are pitching. On May 1st and for the remainder of the regular season and the playoffs, the five (5) run maximum per inning will be enforced. This rule does NOT apply in the sixth inning or extra innings.
 45. After the completion of the fifth inning, if either team is ahead by 10 or more runs, the game will be declared over. This rule supersedes the official Cal Ripken 10-run rule.
 46. Players may not wear any jewelry or non-baseball headwear. However, a player may tape a medical emergency tag or religious medallion to their body.
 47. The home team is responsible for bringing any necessary equipment (e.g. pitching machine) to the field and preparing the field before the game (lining and dragging the field, etc.). The visiting team is responsible for retuning equipment and for raking the field after the game. Both teams must return any League batting helmets to the storage area after the game. Both teams must clear their dugout area of litter and police the field after the game.
 48. Alcoholic Beverages are not permitted on MARA Premises, including the parking lots.
 49. Tobacco products are not permitted on MARA Premises.
 50. All players in MARA Baseball are required to play in the league for which they are age-appropriate as defined by Babe Ruth baseball. The only exception to this rule are players who are age-appropriate for the T-Ball league playing up in the Instructional league, or players who are age-appropriate for the Instructional league playing up in the Rookie league. In both of these cases, approval is required from the Baseball Commissioner in

order to play up. Under no circumstances will a player be able to play up past the Rookie league.

51. The Baseball Commissioner's approval is required for players to play below their age-appropriate league (playing down).
52. MARA's National league is primarily comprised of players who turn 12 years of age before the April 30th cut-off date. The league also will typically include a limited selection of certain higher-skilled players who turn 11 years of age before the April 30th cut-off. These 11-year olds will be selected to play in this league based on their skills during tryouts and/or past performance in MARA. This decision is a collaborative effort between the current year National League managers and the Baseball Commissioner and is impacted by the total number of teams and kids already signed up for the National league. As a general rule of thumb, the kids who made the 10 year-old all-star team the previous year would

ADDITIONAL PLAYOFF RULES, All levels

- Playoffs will not be held in the T-Ball and Instructional leagues.
- Playoffs will be in a double-elimination format. All teams are eligible for the playoffs. The Baseball Commissioner or his designate will conduct the playoff draw. The home team will be determined by a coin flip, except for the first game of the championship, where the winner's bracket team will be the home team.
- During the playoffs all games must be played to completion (no ties). The ten(10) run rule will be enforced after the losing team bats in the 4th inning. . For example if the home team is winning by 10 or more runs after the visiting team has batted in the fourth inning, the game is over.
- Games may be suspended due to darkness or weather conditions. Suspended games will be resumed at the point they left off the next day if at all possible. The game is resumed exactly at the point it was suspended as if the suspension never occurred. All pitching limitations remain in effect. Playoff games that are dependent on the outcome of a suspended game will be played immediately following the conclusion of the game.
- Teams must bat at least ten (10) players. If a team only has nine (9) players and the opposing team has eleven (11) or more players, the last spot in the order is an automatic out. If a team only has eight (8) players, the game is a FORFEIT. If both teams only have nine (9) or ten (10) players, this rule is waived, and no automatic out is enforced. The baseball commissioner reserves the right to review exceptional situations whereby this rule would not be enforced. **As a general rule of thumb during the playoffs, if the**

differential in roster size between both teams exceeds +/- 1, the automatic out procedures will come into play.

- Call-up players are permitted in the playoffs only to avoid forfeits or to reach the minimum of ten (10) players. A team may only call up the same player once during the playoffs. The playing time rules for call up players are the same as in the regular season. Calling up a player should not be used as a mechanism to improve a team. The baseball commissioner reserves the right to review and appropriately address any use of the call up rules deemed inconsistent with the intent of the rule.
- All pitching limits re-set at the commencement of playoffs.
- No player may sit more than 2 consecutive innings in the field, except in the case of injury or an extra-inning game.
- All players must play a minimum of 3 innings in the playoffs, unless:
 - a. The game is shortened due to weather or darkness.
 - b. A player arrives late or leaves early.

TEE BALL GUIDELINES

Tee Ball is a child's first exposure to organized baseball. The MARA Tee Ball program is designed to introduce children to the basic concepts of baseball in a fun and stress-free environment. Teams will play one or two games per week; practices will not be scheduled.

Tee Ball games are scheduled for 90 minutes. Coaches are encouraged to use the first 15-20 minutes as teaching sessions. The remaining time should be used for the game. Three complete innings can usually be played in an hour.

Managers should strive to teach their players the following basic skills and concepts:

1. Baseball positions
2. Proper batting stance and level swing
3. Base running – running through first base and home plate and to second base and third base.
4. Throwing – proper arm position, leg drive and follow through. "Step, throw, touch your toe."
5. Catching – catch with two hands. Fingers point up on ball above the waist; fingers point down on balls below the waist.
6. Fielding ground balls – Knees bent, feet slightly wider than shoulder-width, glove down and slightly in front of the body (scoop some dirt).

During games, all players present will bat each inning. Managers are encouraged to rotate the batting order each inning so each player has equal opportunity to bat first and bat last.

Except for the last batter, batter/runners and runners shall advance one base at a time, unless the ball is cleanly hit into the outfield. On the last batter, all runners will circle the bases.

On defense, only five (5) players are permitted in the infield: pitcher's mound, 1B, 2B, SS, and 3B. Remaining players should spread out in the outfield. Managers should instruct their players when it is appropriate to pursue a ball. The third-baseman should not run after a ball hit into right field. Managers should rotate positions each inning and ensure each player has equal opportunity to play each position.

At the end of the year, as the players' skills progress, Managers may elect to introduce coach pitch. Each player should receive no more than five (5) pitches. If the ball is not put into play after five pitches, the player should hit the ball off the tee.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEAGUE GUIDELINES

The Instructional League is a bridge between Tee Ball and the competitive leagues. The Instructional League is split into two divisions, Coach Pitch and Machine Pitch

COACH PITCH GUIDELINES

The Coach Pitch division is primarily for players who are league age 6. These players have likely played one or more years of Tee Ball and are just becoming familiar with basic baseball skills. Managers are encouraged to continue developing the basic skills learned in Tee Ball while introducing new concepts such as outs.

Instructional League games are scheduled for 90 minutes. Teams are encouraged to use the full time, subject to the league's established time limits and the attention span of a 6-year old. Score is not kept.

1. All batters present will bat each inning. Managers are encouraged to rotate the batting order each game so each player has bats in each batting order position an equal number of times.
2. Batter/runners and runners should advance one base at a time, unless the ball is cleanly hit into the outfield. On the last batter of the inning, all runners will circle the bases.
3. Outs will be tracked. After three outs are recorded, the bases will be cleared but the hitting team will remain at bat until all players have batted.

4. Batters shall receive up to eight (8) pitches. If the ball is not put into play after eight pitches, the player should hit the ball off the tee. Managers should remind players that this is not a failure. The batting tee is used at all levels of baseball to develop a level swing.
5. Defensively, only five (5) players are permitted in the infield: pitcher's mound, 1B, 2B, SS, and 3B. Remaining players should spread out in the outfield. Managers should instruct their players when it is appropriate to pursue a ball. The third-baseman should not run after a ball hit into right field. The concept of backing up a play should be introduced at this level. Players should be taught the "Ball, Base, Backup" principle – they should do one of these on each play. If you can't make a play on the ball, cover a base. If you can't cover a base, backup the fielder or a base.
6. Managers should rotate positions each inning and ensure each player has equal opportunity to play each position.
7. At the end of the season teams may use the pitching machine if one is available. The Instructional League Machine Pitch rules will apply, except a Catcher is not required.

MACHINE PITCH GUIDELINES

The Machine Pitch division is primarily for players who are league age 7. These players have likely played Tee Ball and one or more years of coach pitch and are familiar with basic baseball skills and concepts. Managers are encouraged to refine these skills in preparation for the competitive Rookie League.

Instructional League games are scheduled for two hours. Teams are encouraged to use the full time, subject to the league's established time limits and the attention span of a 7-year old. Score is not kept.

1. Managers are encouraged to rotate the batting order each game so each player has bats in each batting order position an equal number of times.
2. Batter/runners and runners should advance one base at a time, unless the ball is cleanly hit into the outfield.
3. Outs will be tracked. After three outs are recorded, the bases will be cleared and the sides will switch.
4. When the pitching machine is in use, the following rules apply:
 - a. The dial on the pitching machine will be set at thirty six (36) mph, unless approved by the Baseball Commissioner.

- b. The home team is responsible for setting up the pitching machine and the visiting team is responsible for putting it away.
 - c. A coach from the hitting team will feed the pitching machine and make all calls. A batter will receive up to five hittable pitches (a hittable pitch is from the batter's shoulder to his mid-shin and slightly wider than home plate). Pitches that are not hittable will be called "no pitch" by the coach and will not count towards the five pitches. If a player fouls off the fifth hittable pitch, he will receive additional hittable pitches until he has:
 - i. Hit the ball in fair territory, or
 - ii. Swung and missed at the final pitch, or
 - iii. Not swung at the final pitch.
- Strikeouts are not permitted. If a player does not put the ball into play after the full allotment of hittable pitches, the coach should throw 3 overhand tosses or soft-tosses and then ultimately use the batting tee if no pitches are put into play.
- d. Batted balls that hit the pitching machine will be immediately called dead balls with the batter awarded first base and any runners advancing one base, regardless if force situation or not.
 - e. When fielding, the pitcher must remain behind or to the side of the pitching machine, within five (5) feet of the machine, and no closer than the pitching rubber until the ball is put in play.
 - f. Batters must take full swings. No bunting is allowed.
 - g. There are no walks. Intentional walks are not allowed at any time.
 - h. Stealing is not permitted at any time.
5. Defensively, only six (6) players are permitted in the infield: pitcher's mound, catcher, 1B, 2B, SS, and 3B. Remaining players should spread out in the outfield at least ten (10) yards into the outfield. Managers should instruct their players when it is appropriate to pursue a ball. The third-baseman should not run after a ball hit into right field. The concept of backing up a play should be introduced at this level. Players should be taught the "Ball, Base, Backup" principle – they should do one of these on each play. If you can't make a play on the ball, cover a base. If you can't cover a base, backup the fielder or a base.
6. Managers should rotate positions each inning and ensure each player has equal opportunity to play each position.

ROOKIE LEAGUE ADDITIONAL RULES

1. The Rookie League will use a combination of machine pitch and player pitch throughout the season as follows:
 - a. Beginning of Season to April 30th: 1 player pitch inning
 - b. May 1st to end of season and playoffs: 2 player pitch innings
 - c. Coaches may increase the number of player pitch innings by one (1) inning by mutual agreement of the coaches during the rec season.
 - d. The player pitch format will occur first followed by use of the machine.

2. When the pitching machine is in use, the following rules apply:
 - a. The dial on the machine will be set at 38 mph.
 - b. The home team is responsible for setting up the pitching machine, and the visiting team is responsible for putting it away.
 - c. The umpire will feed the machine and make all calls. A batter will receive up to five hittable pitches (strike zone of shoulder to shin – and slightly wider than home plate). Pitches that are not hittable should be declared “no pitch” by the umpire. It is important that the “no-pitch” call come after the ball has crossed the home plate. If a player hits a pitch that otherwise would have been considered “unhittable” the ball is in play and it is a live ball. If a player fouls off the 5th hittable pitch, he will receive additional pitches until he has:
 - i. Hit the ball in fair territory, or
 - ii. Swung and missed at the final pitch or a third strike (catchers do not have to catch the third strike, unless it is a foul tip), or
 - iii. Not swung at the final pitch
 - d. Batted balls that hit the pitching machine will be called dead balls with the batter awarded first base and all runners awarded one base, regardless if force situation or not
 - e. When fielding, the pitcher must remain behind or to the side of the pitching machine, within five (5) feet of the machine, and no closer than the pitching rubber until the ball is put in play. .
 - f. Batters must take full swings. No bunting is allowed.
 - g. There are no walks.

3. The following rules apply when a player pitches:
 - a. The umpire shall umpire from behind the catcher.
 - b. Intentional walks are not allowed at any time
 - c. No player shall pitch more than one (1) inning in a game.
 - d. No player shall pitch in 3 consecutive games (regardless of days off).

- e. Unintentional walks are permitted, unless the walk results in a run scored. If the bases are loaded and the pitcher throws four (4) balls, the batter does not walk. A coach for the team at bat must pitch to the player. The player will receive up to three pitches. If the player fouls off the third pitch, he will receive additional pitches until he has:
 - i. Hit the ball in fair territory
 - ii. Swung and missed at the final pitch (catcher does not have to catch third strike (unless it is a foul tip), or
 - iii. Not swung at the final pitch (coach owns the apology for a bad pitch).
 - f. If the bases are loaded and a pitcher hits the batter, “rule e” shall also apply. If that hit batter is too injured to continue, the coach will pitch to the next batter in the lineup as defined in “rule e”.
 - g. If a pitcher walks six (6) batters in an inning, he must be replaced as the pitcher.
 - h. If a pitcher hits more than two (2) batters in an inning, he may be replaced as the pitcher at the umpires discretion.
4. Unless a team is short-handed, ten (10) players will play in the field: pitcher, catcher, first baseman, second baseman, shortstop, third baseman, and four outfielders. The outfielders must play at least ten (10) yards into the outfield and must be at the same depth (no short fielders), and no significant shifts for specific hitters (for example - 3 outfielders on one side of the field is not allowed).
5. The Infield Fly Rule is NOT in effect.
6. Base runners may not take a lead. The runner cannot leave the base until the ball has crossed home plate.
7. Stealing 3rd base is permitted, capped at 1 per inning. Managers should encourage their catchers to make the throw, and teach their shortstop and left fielder to back up the throw. Runners are not permitted to advance to home if the ball is overthrown. A runner may not steal on a throw back to the pitcher. Runners are not permitted to steal home on a passed ball.
8. Because Rookie league players are still developing catching and throwing skills, base coaches should NOT be overly aggressive in sending runners to the next base. There is no advancing on an overthrow to first or third base.
9. Runners, who have not advanced more than halfway to the next base when a ball hit to the outfield is subsequently controlled by a player in the infield (on the dirt), will be returned to the previous base. However, a runner attempting to advance in this situation may be thrown out at the base they are attempting to attain by an infielder who has controlled the ball. (Note that the intent of this rule is to discourage base

coaches from overly aggressive tactics.) Coaches should draw chalk lines prior to game midway between 1b/2b, 2b/3b, and 3b/home.

10. Catchers do not have to catch the third strike, unless it is a foul tip.

MINOR LEAGUE ADDITIONAL RULES

The Minor Leagues will be entirely kid-pitch format.

1. The following pitching rules are in effect:
 - a. The umpire shall umpire from behind the catcher.
 - b. Intentional walks are not allowed at any time
 - c. Pitcher's balks will not be called.
 - d. Pitchers may not pitch more than two (2) innings per game. Coaches may agree to limit this to 1 inning per game in order to develop more pitchers and prevent an experienced pitcher from overdominating more novice players during the regular season.
 - e. A rolling 3 inning format will be used, whereby a player may not pitch more than three (3) innings in any two consecutive games.
 - f. A pitcher who has at least four full calendar days off between pitching appearances will reset for the purpose of this rule. The four calendar days of rest exception to the rolling two (2) inning format only applies to the regular season.
2. When a player is pitching, stealing of 2b on a pitched ball is permitted only once per inning per team. Stealing of 3b can occur without limitation. A runner may not steal on a throw back to the pitcher. Managers should encourage their catcher to make the throw, and teach their middle infielders and outfielders to back up the throw. Runners are not permitted to advance if the ball is overthrown. Double steals of 2b and 3b is not permitted.
3. Bunting will be allowed on a limited basis. Only one executed bunt is allowed per inning, and a maximum of 3 bunts is allowed per team, per game.
4. The INFIELD FLY RULE is NOT in effect.
5. Base runners may not take a lead. The runner may not leave the base until the ball has crossed home plate.
6. Base runners are not permitted to steal home at any time, including on a wild pitch or passed ball.

7. Because Minor League players are still developing catching and throwing skills, base coaches should NOT be overly aggressive in sending runners to the next base.
8. Unless a team is short-handed, ten (10) players will play in the field: pitcher, catcher, first baseman, second baseman, shortstop, third baseman, and four outfielders. The outfielders must play at least 15 feet behind the infield and must be at the same depth (no short fielders).

AMERICAN LEAGUE ADDITIONAL RULES

1. The pitching machine is not used in the American League.
2. The Infield Fly rule IS in effect.
3. Bunting and fake bunts are permitted but slap bunts are not allowed. Once a batter squares to bunt he must either bunt or fake but cannot slap bunt or swing at the pitch.
4. Base runners may not take a lead. The runner cannot leave the base until the ball has crossed home plate.
5. Stealing of any base, including home, is permitted. Runners can advance on overthrows and passed balls.
6. Double steals are permitted.
7. Runners are permitted to steal on the throw back to the pitcher although Managers and Coaches should use good judgment when doing this.
8. Pitchouts are permitted.
9. Pitching balks will not be called.
10. Intentional walks are not allowed at any time.
11. Catchers do not have to catch the third strike, unless it is a foul tip.
12. To encourage Managers to develop as many pitchers as possible, the following limitations exist on American League pitchers. Managers are reminded that ten and eleven-year old arms are still developing and a player's pitch count over consecutive days should be closely monitored.
 - a. Players removed from the mound may not return as pitchers in the same game.

- b. Pitchers may not pitch more than three (3) innings per game. A rolling three (3) inning format will be used, whereby a player may not pitch more than a total of three (3) innings in any two consecutive games. A pitcher who has at least four full calendar days off between pitching appearances will reset for the purpose of this rule. The four calendar days of rest exception to the rolling three (3) inning format only applies to the regular season.
13. Scorekeepers and Coaches should discuss and compare inning requirements before and during the game to ensure compliance.

NATIONAL LEAGUE ADDITIONAL RULES

1. The pitching machine is not used in the National League.
2. The Infield Fly rule IS in effect.
3. Bunting and fake bunts is permitted but slap bunts are not allowed. Once a batter squares to bunt he must either bunt or fake but cannot slap bunt or swing at the pitch.
4. Base runners may take a lead. Because of the additional distance between bases and pitchers holding runners on for the first time, managers and coaches will work with the umpire to determine the maximum lead a runner may take.
5. Stealing of any base, including home, is permitted. Runners can advance on overthrows and passed balls.
6. Double steals are permitted.
7. Runners are permitted to steal on the throw back to the pitcher.
8. Pitchouts are permitted.
9. Pitching balks will be called at the umpire's discretion.
10. Intentional walks are not allowed at any time.
11. Catchers must catch the third strike.
12. To encourage Managers to develop as many pitchers as possible, the following limitations exist on National League pitchers. Managers are reminded that eleven and twelve-year old arms are still developing and a player's pitch count over consecutive days should be closely monitored.
 - a. Players removed from the mound may not return as pitchers in the same game.

- b. Pitchers may not pitch more than three (3) innings per game. A rolling 3 inning format will be used, whereby a player may not pitch more than three (3) innings in any two consecutive games.
- c. The above innings limitations may be modified (regular season only) in the event that a player has had at least four calendar days rest.
- d. Scorekeepers and Coaches should discuss and compare inning requirements before and during the game to ensure compliance

All Star Teams

In-House All Star Game

At the end of the season the League may conduct an in-house all star game in the Rookie, Minor, American, and National Leagues. Managers and coaches will select the players to participate in this game. Players who have not been selected for a travel all-star team will be given priority over travel all-stars for the in-house All-Star game.

Travel All Star Teams

MARA is a member of the Cal Ripken division of Babe Ruth baseball. Cal Ripken sponsors age-group tournament play following the regular season. The League may extend the opportunity to each age group to form a competitive all star team to compete in local, district, state, regional and/or national tournaments.

In order to participate on a travel all-star team for MARA, you must be fully committed to our organization. This means we expect that all potential travel all-star players to have played in the majority of their MARA Recreational league games. This is a higher standard than the 50% of league games rule under Babe Ruth rules but we believe it demonstrates commitment to our organization. In the event of any dispute, a decision on eligibility will be determined by the MARA Board of Directors. In addition, if a player is chosen to play on an MARA travel all-star team, that player is not permitted to play on a travel all-star team of any other organization including a neighboring Little League organization. If a player is found to be roster on another travel team, he will be immediately removed from the MARA travel all-star team for that year and, at the Board's discretion, suspended for the next year from playing on an MARA travel baseball team.

Players choosing to try out for a Travel all star team must acknowledge that:

Selection to an all star team is an honor. Players, Managers, Coaches, and fans are representing MARA Baseball when they are competing.

If selected for an all star team, playing time on an all star team is not guaranteed. Some players may play little or not at all.

Each all star team is responsible for its expenses (uniforms, tournaments, travel).

Parents must sign a commitment letter which includes whether there would be a conflict with another sport, vacation, etc. and must acknowledge that their child is not a member of another organization's travel all-star team. Violation of this commitment will result in a one-year suspension from future all-star play.

1. All Travel all-star teams must be approved by the MARA Board.
2. Travel all-star teams generally carry 12 active players. A manager may carry 11 or 13 at their discretion. Up to three alternates can be chosen at the all-star manager's discretion but these players will not be rostered. These alternates can be invited by the all-star manager at his discretion to participate in practices as a developmental opportunity.
3. Each all-star team may have a maximum of one (1) Manager and three (3) Assistants. All Managers and Assistants must be approved by the MARA Board.
4. Tryouts for the competitive all star teams will be held in April and/or May for each age group from Rookie league through National League.
5. All players in the age group must be invited to the all star team tryouts.
6. The all star Manager will select the all star team. Selection to the team will be based on a player's performance during the course of the regular season and the all-star tryouts. Previous selection to an all-star team in no way guarantees selection in future years. The all-star manager is encouraged by the MARA Board to solicit feedback from other MARA team managers to be able to fully assess a player's performance during the course of the regular season. While the selection to the all-star team is primarily performance based, the all-star manager has the right to choose "position players" as needed.

Protocol for Player Drafts

1. The goal of each MARA draft process, especially at Rookie league and above is parity – fair and balanced teams.

2. The pairing of Managers (Head Coaches) and assistant coaches prior to the league drafts is not permitted for Rookie league through National league when involving 1st and 2nd round draft picks. Otherwise pairing may be allowed assuming all coaches in the league concur that no competitive advantage is being achieved through pair up.
3. Only Head coaches are permitted at league drafts. Assistant coaches or other designees are permitted only in the absence of the Head Coach and with advance notice to and approval by the Baseball Commissioner or his designee.
4. For our younger leagues, coaches are required to honor all carpool requests in T-Ball and Instructional leagues as best as possible. Coaches should keep in mind that this can be an important request for single parents of children in MARA. In the T-Ball and Instructional leagues coaches are permitted to request players based on neighborhoods or elementary school, etc. as long as requests are reasonable and can be agreed by other coaches. Coaches are expected to be flexible such that one coach does not expect to take a majority of kids from a given neighborhood or elementary school. The Baseball Commissioner reserves the right to settle any issues that cannot be satisfactorily agreed by the Managers.
5. Unknown or new players will be assigned by the Baseball Commissioner or his designee at his discretion. Coaches will not be permitted to draft a player who did not participate in player evaluations unless that player's skill level is known and shared with all the coaches.
6. All Drafts will use the serpentine format. Player assignments for T-Ball and Instructional coaches can be more flexible by simply requesting players.
7. Reaching consensus among the coaches for Rookie league and above is important as it relates to the ranking of the Head Coach's kid to determine which round they fall into and that will count for his pick in that round. Any coach whose kid is not a first round pick will draw out of a hat to determine the draft order. An attempt will be made to determine a proper slotting of any coach's kid who is rated as a first round pick (e.g. his kid is 2nd best player in the league so coach gets 2nd pick in first round and his kid falls in that slot). The Baseball Commissioner or his designee reserves the right to make a final decision on the ranking and draft order.
8. It is important that all kids affiliated with a sponsor be clearly identified BEFORE the draft such that only one such kid is selected for each team.
9. There should be an attempt to split up pitchers and catchers equitably all competitive leagues. The Baseball Commissioner will ask for input in advance from a selection of coaches to identify the top pitchers and catchers such that this information can be shared with all coaches prior to the draft.

10. All players must be contacted by the coach within 48 hours of the draft if nothing else to let them know their team assignment and that more information will be forthcoming. Roster information about teams will be posted.
11. League coordinators are responsible for providing Commissioner with updated spreadsheet of all players chosen by team within 48 hours of the drafts including Instructional and T-Ball leagues.

Privacy Policy

The SportsSignup software we use for our on-line registration process collects information about Registrants relating to the sports program the Registrant is participating. The personal information we collect through the SportsSignup software includes items which are used for the registration process. If the Registrant elects to pay the registration fee via credit card, we also would collect credit card information. The credit card information collected through the SportsSignup software will not be shared with any party other than needed to process the transaction. We do however share other information about the Registrants with members of our organization solely for the purpose of allowing a manager or coach to contact a Registrant. For example, managers or coaches would be provided with items such as a Registrant's name, mailing address, parent's email address, parent's telephone number, mother and father's name, etc.

Security Policy

Registrant information credit card information is stored by SportsSignup in a Microsoft's SQL Server Database, which supports industry standard security. The Database is hosted by Logical Net, a top-grade hosting company and Microsoft Certified Partner. Logical Net uses the latest technologies available when ensuring data security and database availability.

When Registrants use the SportsSignup software to make payment via credit card, the payment information is entered on a secure web page, using SSL encryption and processed via our merchant account. The SportsSignup software uses Secure Sockets Layer, SSL, the standard security technology for creating an encrypted link between a web server and a browser. SSL is an industry standard that uses 128 bit key encryption, and is used by millions of websites in the protection of

their online transactions with their customers. Only the last 4 digits of the credit card number are stored in the SportsSignup system.

The SportsSignup system is PCI Complaint. SportsSignup is enrolled in Trustwave's Trusted Commerce program, a third party service provider, to validate compliance with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) mandated by all the major credit card associations including: American Express, Diners Club, Discover, JCB, MasterCard Worldwide, Visa, Inc. and Visa Europe. Trustwave's Trusted CommerceSM designation indicates that SportsSignup protects credit card and order information in accordance with payment card industry best practices.

Refund Policy

Full refunds can be provided up until April 1st for our baseball and softball programs and December 1st for our basketball programs. Customers must request a refund by emailing the organization at ARASports@yahoo.com or by calling the MARA hot-line at 610-666-6655. The amount refunded to the customer will be net of any fees incurred by Methacton Audubon Recreation Association (MARA) associated with processing the customer's payment. MARA reserves the right to process refunds at their discretion as either a credit to the credit card used to process the registration or via check. Refunds will be made within 30 days of request.

Coaches Background Check Policy

Criminal background screening on Coaches is conducted by KidSafe an outside third party which specializes in background screening, and is initiated through the Registration Portal as offered by SI Play. This is executed in an effort to protect the children who participate in organized Baseball, Basketball, Softball and related activities associated with MARA.

Definitions

MARA recognizes a Coach as any person who leads and instructs players at practices and/or games - or portions of practices and/or games - for Baseball, Basketball, and Softball, both in the recreation league and for the Travel/All

Star program. Only those persons who are screened and approved by the MARA shall be allowed to coach.

The criminal background screening is mandatory, no exceptions.

If a coaching candidate fails the background check, they are disqualified to serve as a volunteer coach; both as a head coach and assistant coach. If any of the disqualifying entries are reported in the criminal background check, MARA shall notify by certified mail the Coach that he or she is disqualified and may notify the coach's recreation club that the coach is disqualified. However, a candidate may appeal the decision to the MARA Board. The burden is on the coaching candidate to show that the background check is inaccurate or that there are extenuating circumstances that the MARA Board should take into account in determining whether the candidate is acceptable to serve as a volunteer coach. The MARA Board will ultimately determine coaching eligibility. In the event information surfaces via the background check, or through the appeal process, the information will be held in the strictest confidence and no information will be made public.

Reasons for being declined the opportunity to coach are noted below as part of this policy. In some instances, factors of time may be taken into account when considering coaching eligibility (i.e. length of time since disposition of certain offenses).

All information obtained, whether through the background check or appeal process, will be promptly destroyed at the end of the current MARA season in which the candidate seeks to serve as a volunteer coach.

All coaches are required to notify the committee immediately following an arrest or conviction of any of the offenses listed below. Any coach, who while coaching for MARA is arrested for committing an offense as listed, will immediately forfeit his/her coaching eligibility until disposition by the courts. A conviction of an offense as listed will result in termination of coaching eligibility as stated in the policy.

Offenses giving rise to Disqualification

The following is a list of offenses prohibiting an applicant from participation as a Coach under

MARA's Coach Screening/Background Check Policy. This list includes, but is not limited to:

- **Arson**
- **Assault** (including aggravated and sexual)
- **Aggravated Kidnapping**
- **Aggravated Robbery**
- **Crimes against Children** (including abandonment, abuse, endangerment, pornography, possession or promotion of pornography, enticement, solicitation, sale purchase or furnishing of alcohol, injury to, or indecency)
- **Criminally Negligent Homicide**
- **Deadly Conduct**
- **Delivery of Marijuana**
- **Manufacture of or Delivery of a controlled substance or dangerous drug**
- **Any violation of a law intended to control the possession or distribution of any controlled substance or illegal drug**
- **Indecent Exposure**
- **Injury to Elderly or Disabled**
- **Intoxication Manslaughter**
- **Kidnapping**
- **Manslaughter** (voluntary or involuntary)
- **Murder**
- **Prohibited Sexual Conduct**
- **Prostitution** (including promotion of, aggravated promotion of, solicitation of)
- **Public Lewdness**
- **Rape**
- **Sexual Abuse**
- **Marijuana Possession***
- **DWI /DUI***
- **Theft****
- **Subject to a protection from abuse order**
- **Identified on any abuse registry such as a Megan's Law registry**
- **Animal cruelty**
- **Possession of an instrument of crime/weapons violations**
- **Terroristic Threats**
- **Misdemeanor Harassment**

*If a first offense and not currently under probation --- eligible, but cannot drive any child other than his/her own.

More than one violation has occurred or currently on probation --- ineligible.

**Eligibility dependent upon the severity and length of time since offense occurred.