



# 4 Year Old T-Ball Rules

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## **RULES OF PLAY**

This league at Shades Mountain Park is organized as a tee ball program for youth, age 4. The rules set forth below shall govern all play.

### **PLAYER'S AGE**

Participation in this league shall be open to any approved youth who is 4 or 5 years of age on April 30<sup>th</sup> of the current year. For the fall season, participation is set by the youth's age on April 30<sup>th</sup> of the upcoming year. Playing up in an older league is not allowed except to allow a player to play with his/her grade level or in other extenuating circumstances as determined by the Board in its sole discretion.

### **100. EQUIPMENT**

101. The official ball for this league shall be a safety ball approved by the Shades Mountain Park Board of Directors.
102. No metal cleats shall be allowed.
103. Approved (unaltered) baseball bats, as defined in the SMP Bat Rules found on the Shades Mountain Park website, may be used. Bats that are broken, cracked or dented shall be removed upon discovery without penalty.
104. All batters and baserunners must wear batting helmets with full ear flaps and a face shield. Any baserunner that, in a coach's judgment, deliberately removes his/her helmet should be given a warning. Any subsequent offense will result in the player being called out.
105. Equipment must be kept in the dugout when not in use.
106. Approved batting tees will be provided by the park.
107. The pitcher must wear his/her batting helmet and a park-provided heart guard.

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

201. A regulation game should consist of three (3) full innings not to exceed sixty (60) minutes.
202. No inning may start later than sixty (60) minutes from the start time. Stoppage of play on the Home Team's last batter will constitute the start of the next inning.

203. Game score will not be kept. Therefore, there will be no official scorebook and the scoreboard will not be used.

204. Games will be governed by the head coaches, as there are no umpires in this league.

### **300. THE PLAYING FIELD**

301. There will be a fifteen (15) foot chalked arc from the first base line to the third base line drawn from the back point of home plate. The ball must be on or past this line to be fair. If not, it will be a foul ball.

302. There will be a chalked arc in the outfield. Outfielder should be positioned on or behind this line until the ball is hit. If no line, then coaches should position outfielders in the outfield at a reasonable distance behind the infielders.

303. Batters boxes will be drawn 3 ft. wide and 6 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 back of the middle of home plate.

### **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 each inning. The offense shall bat each player in the lineup once during each inning. No player shall bat twice in one inning. Late arrivals must be placed at the bottom of the batting order.

402. There will be no penalty for batting out of order.

403. The batting order may not be changed once the game has started, except for late arrivals.

404. If one team is unable to field the appropriate number of players for the scheduled game, that team will not be forced to forfeit the game. Instead, the game shall be played with the deficient team fielding all members possible.

405. Base coaches shall remain in their coaching boxes at first base and third base at all times, unless player safety dictates otherwise. There may also be a batting coach behind home plate. These are the only three (3) coaches allowed on the field for offensive teams at bat. Coaches may position batters as they wish, as long as the batter stays in the confines of the batter's box. Coaches are strongly cautioned against turning their batters at an angle to hit the ball down one of the

- baselines. This practice teaches poor skills and is not in the best interest of the player.
406. The tee and the bat will be removed by the batting coach after each fair batted ball.
  407. Each player will be warned for slinging his/her bat. If the batter continues to sling his/her bat after multiple warnings, he/she will be called out and removed from the bases.
  408. Any ball struck and traveling on or past the 15 ft. arc shall be a fair ball, so long as the ball is touched in fair territory or passes first or third base before going foul, even though part of the tee may have been struck.
  409. No bunting will be allowed.
  410. While baserunners can advance more than one base per hit ball, conservative basing running should be used. If a batted ball does not leave the infield, generally baserunners should only advance one base. If a batted ball is hit into the outfield, baserunners can advance at their risk. However, once the ball is controlled in the infield and play is stopped per Rule 601, baserunners shall stop at the base they are at or which they are running to. The spirit of this rule is to encourage coaches to teach proper base running, while giving the player an opportunity to hit a double, triple, or homerun when they have a good hit to the outfield.
  411. A batter cannot be out of the batter's box when the ball is hit. This includes stepping on home plate. Any ball hit in such a manner that ends up in play will be ruled a foul ball.
  412. Baserunners shall not leave their base before the ball is hit by the batter.
  413. The batter may adjust the tee or the batting coach can adjust the tee for the batter.
  414. Coaches should not elevate the tee in order to aid the player in swinging up on the ball and producing a fly ball hit. This practice teaches poor baseball skills and will not be tolerated. Coaches who insist on teaching players to swing up at the ball may be warned and even sanctioned or suspended.
  415. When the last batter comes to the plate, any out made, or otherwise appropriate stoppage of play, as described in Rule 601, will be considered the end of the inning. The batting coach will notify the defensive team when the last batter comes to bat. Defensive players shall remain on the field until play is stopped and all baserunners have stopped running.

## **500. DEFENSE**

501. All players on each team will play defense simultaneously in each inning, but only five (5) 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. All other players should be positioned in the outfield. Throughout the season, players should be rotated through positions so that all players have an opportunity to play each position, unless in the coach's judgment it would present a safety concern.

502. Three defensive coaches will be allowed on the field: one (1) in right field, one (1) in left field, and one (1) to coach the infield, positioned behind the pitcher's circle.

503. Except in the event of an injury, players may not change positions during an inning. Players can move freely left or right, back or in. Example: A player cannot play shortstop for one batter and then move to the outfield for the next.

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 allowed by rolling the ball. Runners will automatically be safe if defensive team rolls the ball.

506. Appeals must be made by the head coach after time has been called and before the ball is returned to the tee by the opposing coach. The coach will notify the opposing coach involved of his appeal of what runner and what base.

507. Infielders will, when cleanly fielding a hit ball, attempt to make an appropriate play, such as throwing out a baserunner, rather than making a shortcut play to prevent runners from advancing. Remember, we are not keeping score. We are teaching and reinforcing baseball knowledge and the skills that will be necessary for our children to advance to the next league.

508. 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.

509. If a ball is thrown to any base in an attempt to make a "baseball play" on a runner and the ball is overthrown, no advancement is allowed by the runner on which the play is being made. Other baserunners may advance one base at their own risk.

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

511. The pitcher cannot tag anyone out after fielding the ball except: a runner running to home plate or a batter running to first, but then, only if the ball is batted fair down the first base line. In all other cases, the ball must be thrown to the proper base for an out to be recorded.

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

601. By holding the baseball above their head while standing in front of any baserunner, a player may ask for time out to stop play.

602. The batting coach will announce when their last batter (per Rule 415) is at the plate. At this point, the ball is to be played as if there are two outs, where an out at any base will end the inning and stop all runners yet to reach home plate from scoring that inning. There will be no stopping play on the last batter by advancing the ball to home plate. Play will only stop if an out is made or according to the normal rules for stopping play, per Rule 601.

603. A caught fly ball will result in the batter being called out. Other baserunners may advance at their own risk.

604. If at any time during play, two baserunners occupy the same base and one of the runners is tagged, the lead runner will be called out.

605. Double and triple plays are allowed.

#### **700. APPEALS AND PROTESTS**

701. All questions as to the interpretation of the playing rules should be discussed and resolved by the head coaches.

#### **800. MISCELLANEOUS**

801. The home team head coach shall be responsible for preparing the field for play. At the conclusion of the last game of the day, the home head coach shall be responsible for turning off the lights and returning the game tee to the storage area.

802. Time-outs can only be called by the head coaches. It is each coach's responsibility to signal the opposing coach for time-outs and ensure that he is notified when play is to resume.

803. 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.

804. The batting coach or parent in the dugout is required to announce last batter (per Rule 415), which should be acknowledged by the coaches of the defensive team.

805. 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.

806. The visiting team is required to have at least one parent in the press box during each game to assist in tracking time and innings and announcing players on the PA system. Score will not be kept on the scoreboard. No more than three (3) people are allowed in the press box at one time: Children under the age of thirteen (13) are not allowed in the press box for any reason. According to park rules, PA announcers should be adults. League coaches should have a complete copy of press box rules.

807. The league commissioner will have 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! Cheer for both teams, not against the opponent.

*Edited and adopted January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 by the Shades Mountain Park Board*