



9U Year Old League Rules Spring 2025

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RULES OF PLAY

This league at Shades Mountain Park is organized as a kid-pitch baseball program for youth, turning 9 before April 30th of the current calendar year. The official playing rules will follow the official Rules of Major League Baseball, with the variations and exceptions set forth in this document.

PLAYER'S AGE

Participation in this league shall be open to any approved youth who is 9 years of age on April 30th of the current year. For the fall season, participation is set by the youth's age on April 30th of the upcoming year. Playing up in an older league is not allowed except for situations addressed in the SMP Play Up-Down Policy.

100. EQUIPMENT

101. The official ball for this league shall be a baseball 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. Face shields can either be the c-flap style or full cage-style, but must be one or the other, up the discretion of the players' parents/guardians. Any baserunner that, in the umpire's judgment, deliberately removes his/her helmet should be given a warning. You will also be given a warning for no face shield/mask. Any subsequent offenses will result in the player being called out.
105. Equipment must be kept in the dugout when not in use.
106. A first basemen's mitt may be used by the first baseman only.
107. Proper catchers' protective equipment, including a ONE-PIECE helmet with throat guard, will be provided by the park and must be worn by the catcher at all time. The catcher should also wear an athletic cup. Personal catcher's gear may be used so long as it fits this description. No two-piece masks and skull caps.
108. Any player warming up a pitcher shall wear a catcher's mask and athletic cup. If warming up inside the fence, there shall be a player within proximity of the pitcher and catcher wearing a batting helmet to protect the players warming up.
109. All players must be in full baseball uniform with shirt tucked inside his/her pants during the game. Pitchers may not wear t-shirts with white sleeves showing.

200. REGULATION GAME/TIME LIMITS

201. A regulation game should consist of six (6) full innings. Fewer innings may be played based on the time limits set in Rule 202.
202. No inning may start later than ninety (90) 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, it will be considered a full game after three (3) and a half innings if the home team is ahead and four (4) innings if the Visitor is ahead. For games halted in the fifth or sixth inning, the official score shall be that at the end of the last completed inning, unless the home team is at bat and ahead, at which the score at the time of termination shall be the final score. If a game is halted due to weather before completion, it must be resumed from the point of termination when the game is rescheduled by park officials, with as nearly the same lineup as possible. Pitching rules must be adhered to as defined in Rule 604.
204. The Mercy Rule is determined according to the innings limit for each age group. The game is over if a team is leading its opponent by 12 runs after 3 innings (2.5 if home team is ahead), 10 runs after 4 innings (or 3.5 innings if the home team is ahead) or 8 runs after 5 innings (or 4.5 innings if the home team is ahead).
205. If there is a tie at the end of regulation as defined in Rules 201 and 202, the game result will be a tie.
206. There should be two umpires calling each game.

300. THE PLAYING FIELD

301. First and third bases shall be sixty-five (65) feet from the point of home plate.
302. The distance from the point of home plate to second base shall be ninety-one (91) feet and eleven (11) inches.
303. The pitching distance shall be forty-six (46) feet, measured from the point of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber.
304. The home run distance shall be no less than 185 feet and no greater than 250 feet.
305. The height of the pitching rubber above the level of home plate shall be raised by a gradual slope to six (6) inches.
306. The defensive infield coaches' 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.

307. 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. If one team is unable to field eight players for the scheduled game, that team be forced to forfeit a game.

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 seven (7) 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 remain in their coaching boxes at first base and third base at all times, unless player safety dictates otherwise.

405. A coach may call time out to talk to the batter only once per at-bat. Any violation of this rule will result in the batter being called out. The only exception to this rule is if the umpire calls or opposing coach calls time or in the case of an injury.

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

407. Base Stealing: the runner shall be called out and no pitch called if a runner leaves the base prior to the pitch crossing the plate and there is contact from/by the catcher with the ball (ultimately, umpires' discretion). Once the pitch has crossed the plate the baserunner can advance at his own risk.

408. Three (3) strikes is an out, even if the catcher doesn't catch the pitch on the third strike (except in the case of a foul tip).

409. While bunting is allowed, slashing is prohibited. Slashing is the act of faking a bunt then resetting and taking a swing at the pitch. If a “slash” is ruled by the umpire, the batter is out and baserunners shall not be allowed to advance.
410. 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.
411. 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.
412. If a baserunner misses a base, it is an appeal play to the umpire.
413. Head-first sliding into the next base is not permitted in any instance. Head-first sliding back into a base is permitted. Violation of this rule will result in the baserunner being called out.
414. Any runner is out when he does not slide or attempt to avoid the fielder who is awaiting a throw or has the ball in the proximity of the base and is waiting to make the tag. If contact is made with the fielder and, in the umpire’s judgment, is deemed malicious, then the runner will be called out and ejected from the game.

500. DEFENSE

501. Teams will play with nine (9) defensive players in the field. Any extra players on the roster will remain in the dugout.
502. Only one defensive coach will be allowed on the field in the coach’s box, as defined in Rule 306, outside his dugout to coach the defense. Defensive coaches should not touch or physically assist a player during play under any circumstance.
503. A team is allowed one field visit per pitcher per inning. A second visit will result in the current pitcher being removed from the mound. Once removed the pitcher may not return to the mound at any point in the game.
504. Catchers are not allowed to block home plate unless they are in possession of the ball. Any attempt to do so, in the umpire’s judgement, will result in the runner being called safe. In accordance to Rule 413, baserunners must slide into home and may not run over the catcher.

505. Free substitution of defensive players is allowed between innings and will not affect the batting order, which will remain unchanged from what was submitted at the beginning of the game. However, a player may only change positions once during an inning unless it is the result of a pitching change.
506. 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 beyond the base they were attempting.
507. A ball batted fair that bounces over, through, under, or becomes stuck in the fence, is a ground rule double.
508. The infield fly rule will be in effect. This will be called by the umpires at their discretion
509. If a player is injured by being hit by the ball in their at-bat and cannot continue play, time will be called by the umpire and all players awarded one base.
510. Defensive interference will be called when in the umpire's judgement the defender impeded the baserunners ability to advance to the next base.
511. New pitchers entering the game are allowed eight (8) warm-up pitches. Otherwise, five (5) warm-up pitches are allowed. Warm-up pitches are not counted in official pitch counts.

600. PITCHING.

601. Shades Mountain Park will follow the MLB Pitch Smart Guidelines and abide by the recommended pitch count limits and required rest periods. The guidelines set workload limits for pitchers to limit the likelihood of arm fatigue and injuries. Research has shown that pitch counts are the most accurate and effective means of doing so.
602. Pitchers in the 9U league will have a daily max of 65 pitches.
603. If a pitcher reaches the 65-pitch limit during an at-bat, he must be removed from the mound immediately at that point.
604. All pitchers will adhere to the following required rest periods after pitching. A day is defined as a calendar day, not a 24-hour period. For example, a pitcher that threw 45 pitches on Tuesday night, cannot pitch again until Friday.

- a. 0 Days: 1-20 pitches
 - b. 1 Days: 21-35 pitches
 - c. 2 Days: 36-50 pitches
 - d. 3 Days: 51-65 pitches
605. If a game is interrupted for any reason before becoming official and is postponed for a period that allows the pitcher to meet the rest rules in Rule 602, he would be eligible to pitch and would only adhere to his pitch limits for the current day.
606. The number of pitches thrown by each pitcher must be recorded by each team, and submitted to the league VP to be published on the Shades Mountain park website. The home team provides the official scorekeeper and is the official pitch count recorder, when there is a dispute. The scorekeeper must provide the current pitch count for any pitcher when requested by either coach or umpire. However, the manager is responsible for knowing when his pitcher must be removed. The scorekeeper should inform the home-plate umpire when a pitcher has reached his pitch limit for the game, as noted in Rule 602. The home-plate umpire will inform the head coach that the pitcher must be removed.
607. Balks: NO balks will be called.
608. A pitcher who has reached 41+ pitches in a day cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of that day, to included multiple games in that day.

700. PLAY-STOPPING.

701. 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 back to the bag they just passed. Play will be stopped if the lead runner is not making an aggressive attempt towards the next base. Any trailing runners will be awarded the next base as long as they were more than half-way 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.

800. APPEALS AND PROTESTS

801. Appeals will be made by the Head Coach only after timeout has been given by the umpire and before the first pitch is made to the next batter. The Head Coach will make the 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 at that moment in the game.

The score, baserunners position, outs, etc need to be recorded at the moment of protest. At the conclusion of the game and within 24 hours, the protest must be discussed with the VP who will make the final decision, with SMP board assistance when appropriate.

900. MISCELLANEOUS

901. 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 borrowed player from the Pick-Up list which 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 be borrowed a maximum of three (3) games per season, unless approved by the league VP. Players are only to be picked up if the team has 8 or less players, not 9 players looking to get to 10. If a 9th player on that team's roster shows up, they are to take the spot of the pick-up player and relieve the pick-up player for the rest of the game.
902. The home team head coach shall be responsible for preparing the field for play, including making any necessary field repair. The last Visiting Team coach of the day is responsible for securing the field, 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.
903. Each team furnishes at least one (1) game ball for every game.
904. Home team = scorebook. Whether paper or digital (i.e. Gamechanger), the home team should be able to point to any one point in the game when asked by an umpire, coach, or VP, when necessary.
Visiting team = scoreboard and pressbox responsibility. Please keep young children away from the machines and microphones. Visiting team responsible for trash and food disposal from pressbox after each game.
905. 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.
906. The umpire may call timeout for injury or appeal. These timeouts will not be charged to a team. If an umpire calls timeout for any injury he deems serious, play will be stopped and all baserunners 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.

907. 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.
908. 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 VP.
909. No adult, other than coaches, shall be allowed on the field during the game without 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.
910. 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 of Directors. Any player or coach ejected must leave the park immediately and will 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.
911. 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.
912. Players, coaches, umpires, or other game officials are prohibited from using tobacco products or profanity during the game.
913. The league VP 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 VP. Any questions, objections or requested clarification of the rules should be addressed directly to the league VP.

1000. GAME CONDUCT

1001. Remember – The game is for our children! Cheer for both teams, not against the opponent. *Edited and adopted January 2025.*