

Brookline Youth Baseball League Rules

Majors, AAA, AA, and Seniors

Objectives:

The purpose of these baseball rules is to define the game of baseball as played in Brookline with appropriate modifications for age of players, skills development, and sportsmanship.

Except where noted, BYB follows the Little League Rules. These rules are available as a printed book, and as an iPad app with searchable text. Except as modified herein, Majors and AAA shall follow the "majors" rules set forth in the Little League Rules and AA shall follow the "minors" rules set forth in the Little League Rules. Seniors shall follow the "Seniors" rules set forth in the Little League Rules. Some rules of particular importance to coaches are highlighted.

Section I – The League

BYB has established the following leagues:

Seniors – Players who are league age 13-14 year olds and 7th graders who at league age 12.

Majors (also known as "the Majors Division" in the Little League Rule Book) – players who are league age 10-12 year olds. All players who are league age 12 who register on time and attend tryouts are entitled to be in Majors.

AAA– players who are league age 10-12 year olds who require more experience to play at the Majors level and players who are 9 years old who tryout and demonstrate exceptional ability, upon availability.

AA – players who are league age 8-9 year olds.

Section IV – The Players

Note to coaches on the definition of League Age:

(e) For players born prior to September 1, 2006, "League Age" is that age attained prior to May 1 in any given season. Thus, a participant whose 12th birthday is on April 30 or earlier has a League Age of 12; a participant whose 12th birthday is on May 1 or later has a League Age of 11.

For players born on or after September 1, 2006, ``League Age'' is that age attained prior to September 1 in any given season. Thus, a participant whose 9th birthday is on September 1 or later has a League Age of 8 ; a participant whose 9th birthday is on August 31 or earlier has a League Age of 9.

Section VI – Pitchers

(a) Any player, who has played the position of catcher for four or more innings in a game, is not eligible to pitch on that calendar day.

(c) Pitch count limits:

League Age	Maximum pitches per day
17-18	105
13-16	95
11-12	85
9-10	75
7-8	50

A pitcher reaching these limits while facing a batter may continue to pitch until:
 1). The batter reaches base; 2). That batter is put out; 3). The third out is made to complete the half-inning.

A pitcher who delivers 41 or more pitches in a game cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of that day.

(d) Rest requirements for pitchers aged 14 and under:

Number of pitches	Calendar days of rest required
66 or more	4
51-65	3
36-50	2
21-35	1
1-20	0

A pitcher who reaches these limits and completes pitching to a batter as described above thus exceeding the threshold reached during the at-bat, need only observe the rest for the pitch threshold reached during the at-bat.
BYB: Each head coach must record the number of pitches thrown by each pitcher on his/her team during each game, and must report each pitcher's pitch count and innings to the league VP after the game.

Official Playing Rules

2.00 – Definition of Terms

Strike Zone: that space over the home plate between the armpits and the top of the knees when the batter assumes a natural stance.

BYB: **AAA and AA – expanded strike zone**

The strike zone is from the bottom of the knees to the top of the letters on the uniform. The strike zone is a little wider than home plate, a full ball width inside and a full ball width outside. We want to allow the pitchers to throw strikes.

In the spirit of keeping the game moving with a lot of action both batting and fielding, the AA and AAA Leagues use an expanded strike zone such that the umpire should call a strike on any pitch between the bottom of the knees and the top of the letters on the uniform and within a fist width beyond either side of the plate. The idea is to reduce the number of walks and encourage all players to try to hit, while at the same time, not call pitches strikes that cannot reasonably be hit, e.g., over the shoulders.

At the start of every game, the coaches should discuss and agree with the plate umpire on the size of the strike zone that will be called. Part of the conversation with parent/volunteer umpires should be that AA age kids sometimes throw their pitches in an arc, which makes it hard for the umpire to call the pitch. For example, a pitch that crosses the plate over the shoulders but arrives at the catcher in the strike zone should be called a ball. The reverse, where the ball crosses the plate in the strike zone but is caught below the batter's knees by the catcher, should be called a strike.

Inning definition:

AA League: each half-inning shall end if the offensive team scores five runs in the half-inning.

Majors and AAA: each half-inning shall end if the offensive team scores ten runs in the half-inning.

3.00 – Game Preliminaries

Rule 3.03 Substitutions and playing time requirements. BYB permits free substitutions in the field – the requirements set forth in Rule 3.03 do not need to be followed in order to make offensive or defensive substitutions.

BYB: All fielding changes, except pitching changes and substitutions due to injury, must be made at the start of an inning. Fielding substitutions may be made in the middle of an inning only when a pitching change is made.

BYB Playing time requirements. The following requirements must be complied with in all leagues:

- Coaches will endeavor to achieve equal playing time for all players on the team.
- During each game, each player must play in the field for at least four innings and must be given the opportunity to play in the infield and the outfield, except when:
 - o The game is stopped prior to six innings of play because of inclement weather, poor field conditions, or darkness. However, the coach shall anticipate such conditions and work diligently in the spirit of the rules in all cases.
 - o The coach benches a player for disciplinary reasons such as missing games and/or practices without notifying the coach, insubordination, or disruptive behavior. The coach must notify the opposing coach of the disciplinary action before the start of the game. (Note to coaches: Poor play is not a valid reason for benching a player.)
- Each player must sit on the bench for at least one inning per game, except when:
 - o Not enough players are available. Each time a coach doesn't have enough players available to comply with the must-sit requirement, he/she must allow a different player to play a complete game. No player, except a catcher (see the next bullet), may play two complete games until each player on the team has played one complete game.
 - o An injury to or absence of a player leaves no back-up catcher available. In this case, the coach may keep the same player at the catcher position for the entire game. The coach should inform the opposing coach of the injury or absence prior to the game or immediately when the injury occurs. (Note to coaches: Only an injury to or absence of all back-up catchers permits one player to catch an entire game, and each team must have at least two catchers to help prevent this situation.)

4.00 – Starting and Ending The Game

BYB: Rule 4.04 Batting Order. LL mandates a continuous batting order for minors and allows local leagues to choose between a continuous batting order and a nine player order at the majors level.

BYB mandates the use of a continuous batting order for all leagues.

Rule 4.06(3) Note that no coach, manager or player, shall at any time, either from the bench or the playing field or anywhere else, make any move, action or noise, intended to cause the pitcher to commit an illegal pitch.

BYB plays with Rule 4.10(e) (Mercy Rule) modified to be the following: If the home team is ahead by 10 runs or more, and more than three and a half innings have been played, or the visiting team is ahead by 10 runs or more, and more than four innings have been played, the manager of the team with the least runs SHALL NOT concede victory to the opponent. (Note to coaches: Since the maximum number of runs that can be scored in every inning is capped (10 in Majors and AAA, 5 in AA), it is possible for a team to fall behind so far that mathematically they are sure to have less runs than their opponent following completion of all the innings. BYB expects that all innings will be played, maximizing the playing time for all participants, whether or not the outcome of the game is already certain.)

BYB: Fielding a Team

Notwithstanding anything in Rule 4.00 to the contrary, a team must be able to field at least seven players to play a game. If a team cannot field at least seven players when the game is scheduled to begin, the start of the game may be delayed for 10 minutes in order to allow late players to arrive. If, after 10 minutes, the team still cannot field at least seven players, that team must forfeit the game. If an injury or early departure leaves a team unable to field at least seven players at any time after a game has begun, that team must forfeit the game. (Note to coaches: A shorthanded team may not borrow players from the opposing team.)

BYB Majors only (ghost player out rule): A team that fields fewer than nine players at any point in a game must take an automatic out each time a missing batter spot comes up. For example, if a player is injured or leaves the game, leaving only eight players, then an automatic out is recorded each time that player's spot in the lineup comes up. If a team starts with fewer than nine players, they record an out for each missing batting spot in the starting lineup. A team with fewer than seven players must forfeit.

6.00 – The Batter

Rule 6.02(a) The batter shall take his/her position in the batter's box promptly when it is said batter's time at bat. BYB expects the time between innings will be less than 60 seconds (see Rules 8.03 and 8.04).

Reminder to coaches and umpires:

Rule 6.02(c) If the batter refuses to take his/her position in the batter's box during a time at bat, the umpire shall call a strike on the batter without the need for a pitch to be delivered. The ball is dead, and no runner may advance. After the penalty, the batter may take a proper position, and the regular ball and strike count shall continue, but if the batter does not take the proper position before three strikes are called, that batter shall be declared out.

Dropped Third Strike Rule 6.05(b)(2):

AA and AAA: A batter is out when a third strike is caught or not caught by the catcher.

Majors: A batter is out when a third strike is not caught by the catcher if first base is occupied and there are zero or one outs. If two are out, or first base is not occupied, the batter may attempt to advance to first base when the third strike is not caught.

BYB Slash Bunting. Slash bunting is permitted in Majors. Slash bunting is not permitted in AA or AAA. In other words, a batter may not show bunt and then attempt to swing at the ball. If a batter shows bunt and takes a full swing, the umpire shall call the ball dead and shall call a strike whether or not contact is made with the ball.

BYB Unintentional Thrown Bat Rule: Some batters, over the course of an at bat, unintentionally throw or drop their bat in a manner that may endanger the catcher, the umpire, other players or spectators. A batter who, while at bat, unintentionally throws their bat will be penalized during the game at which this occurs. The penalties are:

- First occurrence: warning and explanation of the rule and expected behavior.
- Second occurrence: the batter is immediately declared out and the ball is dead.
- Third occurrence: the batter is ejected from the game and must remain in the dugout until the conclusion of the game.

Deliberately throwing the bat will be penalized by the umpire under the rules for player misconduct.

7.00 – The Runner

Rule 7.01 A runner acquires the right to an unoccupied base when that runner touches it before being put out.

Note to coaches: In previous years, at the AA level, there was a prohibition against scoring from third base as a result of certain thrown or overthrown balls at third base. This prohibition has been dropped, and the Little League rule 7.01 adopted in full.

Stealing Home

AA and AAA: Runners on third base may NOT steal home, make or attempt a delayed steal of home, advance to home on a passed ball, or attempt the same on a throw from the catcher to (or intended to go to) the pitcher. The runner may advance under the regular Little League rules (including 7.01 and 7.13) under all other applicable circumstances.

Majors: Follows the LL rule that stealing home is permitted.

Rule 7.13: Base Stealing:

AA: Base stealing shall not be permitted.

Note to coaches regarding Rule 7.13: When the pitcher is in contact with the pitcher's plate and in possession of the ball, and the catcher is in the catcher's box ready to receive delivery of the ball, base runners shall not leave their bases until the ball has been delivered and has reached the batter.

8.00 – The Pitcher

Rule 8.01 Legal Pitching Delivery.

BYB modification to increase strikes for pitchers with difficulty throwing the full distance in AA only: Pitchers must start pitching in contact with the rubber, but if they are unable to throw a strike, may move closer to the plate with the goal of providing the batter an opportunity to see strikes to swing at. If the velocity of a pitcher disengaged from the rubber is unhittable by batters in the league, the pitcher must throw from the rubber.

Note that pitchers must start each game pitching from the rubber, and demonstrate an inability to consistently throw strikes from that distance, before being allowed to move forward.

Note to coaches: Rule 8.05(i) It is an illegal pitch if the pitcher, without having the ball, stands on or astride the pitcher's rubber or while off the rubber feints a pitch. This typically occurs when attempting to make a hidden ball play. The BYB code of conduct prohibits hidden ball plays at all levels of competition and scrimmages.

AA and AAA: Rule 8.05. In the event of an illegal pitch, the ball is dead and no runners advance. The umpire may issue a warning to the pitcher. No automatic ball will be called.

AA: AA will begin the season using a pitching machine. Over the course of the season, kid-pitch will be introduced into games gradually.

The following machine-pitch rules apply to AA games:

PITCHING MACHINE COACH: The coach operating the pitching machine may coach the players at bat, in the field, and on the base paths. The coach will not touch the ball in play at any time. When players are mounding the ball to stop play they must get the ball to the player who is positioned on the mound as the pitcher's helper.

PLAYING THE PITCHING MACHINE: The marked area surrounding the pitching machine is a dead ball area, no players are allowed in the area at any time. For this reason, the following rules shall apply to :

Batted Ball: If a batted ball comes in contact with the machine or the coach inside the circle, or if the batted ball comes to a stop inside the circle, the ball is dead. The batter will be awarded first base. Only runners that are forced to advance will advance one base. If a batted ball comes in contact with the pitching coach, OUTSIDE of the pitching circle the ball will be dead. The batter will be declared out and no runners may advance.

Thrown Ball: If a thrown ball comes in contact with the machine or the coach the umpire will immediately call dead ball. Runners will be awarded one base beyond the last base touched at the time the ball was declared dead. The coach must make every attempt to avoid being hit by a thrown ball.

Thrown or Batted Ball: If a thrown or batted ball goes through the pitching circle without making contact with the machine coach, either in flight or on the ground, and does not stop inside the circle, the ball is live.

Unintentional Entry: If a player unintentionally enters the pitching circle the umpire will call dead ball. The batter will be awarded first base and runners will advance if forced. **Intentional Entry:** If a player intentionally (in the umpire's opinion) enters the pitching circle, the umpire will call "dead ball" and the batter will be awarded second base. Runners will advance if forced. Should the same player intentionally violate this rule again they will be removed from the pitcher position.

Bunts: Bunts will NOT be allowed in AA. If a batter attempts to bunt a pitch, they must take the pitch. If a batter shows bunt and then swings away, the umpire will immediately call "dead ball" and declare the batter out and be given a safety warning, the second offense will result in removal from the game

Balls and Strikes: The umpire will call balls and strikes. Batters can strike out in all traditional manners. There are NO base on balls delivered in machine-pitch at bats. There are no hit-by-pitch free bases. If a player is hit by the pitch and needs to be removed, the next batter in the order will be inserted with a fresh count. If the injured player recovers, he can immediately be inserted to hit and then take his regular spot in the batting order thereafter. If the machine pitches four balls during an at ball the hitter remains and the count restarts at no balls and no strikes.

9.00 – The Umpire

BYB Rule 9.04(d) BYB will not require a Game Coordinator.

BYB: Important Considerations for Coaches

Pace of Play

The following requirements are designed to move the game along and as a result make it more exciting for the players:

- Game Time - Games must start at the scheduled time. Teams should arrive early enough before game time to warm-up and prepare.
- Two-hour time limit: No new inning shall be started after two hours. Any inning underway after two hours should be completed.
- Lineups - Coaches should prepare lineups for all six innings before the game and post in the dugout. This will help kids get out to their fielding positions in a timely manner. The head coach must provide the other team with the batting order prior to the start of the game.
- Inning Changes - No more than 2 minutes should elapse from the last pitch of one half inning to the first pitch of the next.
- Pitching - Players should work towards delivering the ball within 20 seconds after receiving it from the catcher. (See rules 8.03 and 8.04).
- The Umpires dictate the pace of play - The coaches might indicate when they are ready, but it is the umpires who should dictate the pace of play. If the coaches and team aren't quite ready to take the field, the umpires will be sure to encourage them to move quickly. In the case of extreme delay, the umpire may call balls to penalize a delaying pitcher, or strikes to penalize a delaying batter

No On Deck Circle

Little League found that many accidents were occurring in the on-deck circle, so they abolished it, about a decade ago. The LL rule says the only player allowed out of the dugout is the batter. That is the only player allowed to be holding a bat.

The enforcement of this rule is a requirement of the coaches. Each team is allowed to have a bench coach, with responsibility for this type of issue. Violation of the rule is a code of conduct violation.

Umpires are instructed to issue a warning to the team that violates this rule. If the team violates the rule a second time, then the batter at-bat will be called out. Play will continue as if the batter had struck out.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRY4uIs7In4>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHFwXJnsC_Y

Sliding/Avoiding Contact

A base runner may not intentionally make contact with a fielder. This is rule 7.09(j). A base runner who in the umpire's opinion initiates contact with a fielder anywhere on the base paths may be called out. A base runner should slide or avoid contact. There is no rule that says a runner must slide. The rule says:

Rule 7.08(a)(3) – Any runner is out when ... the runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag;

First, notice that the runner has two options -- he or she may slide, or he or she may attempt to get around the fielder. The choice is up to the runner. Second, notice that the rule says that, if the runner does not elect to slide, that he or she must attempt to get around the fielder. It does not say that the runner must not contact the fielder.

Consider a common play: The catcher is standing just off the line as the runner approaches. The catcher fields the ball, and starts to step across the line to tag the runner. The runner swerves to his right, trying to avoid the catcher, but the catcher continues his motion toward the runner, and the two collide.

The fact that contact occurred does not mean that the runner is automatically out. In this situation, by swerving, the runner satisfied the rule -- he or she attempted to get around the fielder. Of course, if the runner goes more than three feet to either side attempting to avoid a tag, then he or she can be called out under Rule 7.08(a)(1), but that is another matter entirely.

Finally, read the last half of the rule again. For this paragraph to even apply, the fielder must have the ball and be waiting to make the tag. Thus, for example, if the runner arrives just as the ball is hitting the catcher's glove, this rule doesn't apply

either. Only once the catcher is in position to make the tag does the runner acquire the obligation to slide or attempt to avoid. In fact, if contact occurs before the fielder has the ball, then the fielder is may be guilty of obstruction.

Little League has made this abundantly clear in Make The Right Call, a Little League publication with commentary on how the rules should be applied. In there, it says:

There is no "must slide rule." The rule is, "slide or attempt to get around." The key in this situation is "fielder has the ball and is waiting to make a tag." If the fielder (any fielder, not just the catcher) does not have the ball, and there is a collision, you CANNOT call the runner out. However, if the umpire determines that the runner deliberately attempted to injure the fielder, the umpire could eject the runner for unsportsmanlike conduct.

BYB follows exactly the LL rule. There is no rule that says a runner must slide. The text here is an effort to clarify the rule for coaches. To prevent collisions, a base runner approaching second base, third base, or home plate should slide feet-first if a throw is made in an attempt to get the base runner out — even if the throw is late or off target. A base runner who does not slide may be called out by the umpire if the base runner initiates contact with a fielder.

Note to coaches: If a catcher, without possession of the ball, hinders an offensive player, the correct call is **obstruction**. However, for obstruction to be called, the base runner must, in fact, be hindered. For example, if the catcher is set up across the line while the runner is still rounding third base, there is no obstruction, because the catcher has not yet impeded the progress of the runner. Only when the runner collides with the catcher, or is forced to alter his or her path to avoid or get around the catcher, does obstruction occur.

Finally, once the catcher acquires the ball, he or she may legally block the path of the base runner. Obstruction only applies to a defensive player who is not in possession of the ball.

Note to coaches: A base runner who slides head-first when advancing to a base WILL be called out by the umpire. Head-first slides are permitted only when a base runner is diving back to a base to avoid being doubled off on a line drive or to avoid being picked off.

Note to coaches: A base runner may not slide when advancing to first base. This is rule 7.08(a)(1).

If a base runner is trying to score from third base on a passed ball or wild pitch, the batter must clear out of the batter's box to avoid interfering with the play. If, in the umpire's opinion, the batter does not make a legitimate attempt to get out of the way, the umpire may call the base runner out.

Game Recording and Reporting

Each team is required to keep score. Coaches/scorekeepers should meet after each half inning to ensure that they agree on the score, and to notify each other of lineup changes and substitutions.

The head coach of the winning team (or the home team if the game ends in a tie) is responsible for reporting the following to the league VP within 24 hours after the game:

- The winner and score of the game (the score of a forfeit is recorded as 6-0).
 - The number of innings played.
 - The numbers of pitches and the innings pitched by each pitcher for both teams. Each head coach must record the number of pitches thrown by each of his/her team's pitchers during each game, and must report each pitcher's pitch count to the league VP after the game.
- Each head coach should also report any inappropriate behavior by coaches, players, or spectators.

Fielding a Team at the AA Level

Coaches may use 10 players in the field at a time: one on the pitcher's mound; one at catcher; four at the regular infield positions; and four spread evenly across the outfield. The head coach of the fielding team is responsible for designating an adult (assistant coach or spectator) to stand behind the catcher, against the backstop, to help retrieve wild pitches and passed balls. This adult must make every effort to stay out of the way of plays around home plate.

Rostering Teams

At the Majors and AAA levels, teams are rostered with an effort to create a balanced league with parity among teams. School affiliation is not a consideration in rostering teams at the Majors and AAA levels. At the Majors level, teams will have an equal number of 12 year olds (to the extent enrollment numbers allow) and may have up to one 10 year old per team. AAA teams may be rostered either through a coach draft or by the discretion of the league VP, with a primary goal of parity. AAA teams will also aim to have an equal number of players from each age group (to the extent enrollment numbers allow).

Bench Area

Coaches are allowed to choose two assistant coaches and a scorekeeper to be in the bench area during games. Only head coaches and assistant coaches are allowed on the field during a break in play to instruct players. Only head coaches, assistant coaches, and players are allowed to coach from the first- and third-base coaching boxes (players must wear helmets). Only a head coach is allowed to discuss a play with an umpire. Spectators who are not coaches must watch the game in the areas designated for spectators, and are not allowed on the field or in the bench area with the team. No coach or spectator may stand behind the backstop during a game.

Coaches and Players only in the Bench Area/Dugout

The dugout is not the place for parents, siblings, or interested spectators who want a really close look at the action. Only coaches and players are allowed in the dugout.

Standings and Playoff Seedings

Standings are determined using each team's Total Points (win = two points; tie = one point). The league VP may select an approach for breaking ties based on the number of teams in the league which best suits the needs of the league.

If a given tie breaker does not separate any teams, continue sequentially down the list of tie breakers.

Once a procedure singles a team or teams from the others and there are still teams (two or three) to be separated, they are subject immediately to their specific tie breaker (TWO WAY TIES or THREE WAY TIES respectively). Note however, if one step clearly identifies the highest or lowest ranked team, further tie breaking steps will not affect this result. If a tie breaker clearly separates all teams, no further tie breaking steps are required.

If teams are tied, the following tie-breakers may be applied in the order shown:

Two way ties:

1. Win/Loss Record head-to-head
2. Least runs allowed head-to-head
3. Least runs allowed in the season
4. Most runs scored in the season
5. Team names drawn from a hat

Three way ties:

1. Least runs allowed per game (non-forfeited games only) in games between the three tied teams.

2. Most runs scored in games between the three tied teams.
3. Least runs allowed per game (non-forfeited games only) in all games in the qualifying round.
4. Most runs scored in all games in the qualifying round.
5. Team names drawn from a hat.

Four way ties:

1. Least runs allowed per game (non-forfeited games only) in games between the four tied teams.
2. Most runs scored in games between the four tied teams.
3. If only two teams remain tied, the two way tie breakers shall be applied.
4. Team names drawn from a hat.

Last revised February 6, 2020