

# Interlock Baseball Rules

## Rookie Ball Division

### Purpose

The rookie ball division is an instructional division. The emphasis is placed on instructing the players how to throw and catch a ball, and how to hit a pitched ball.

We are committed to providing appropriate levels of baseball for everyone with the emphasis being placed on skill improvement and enjoyment of the game. Winning, losing, and what the score is, should not be important at this level. Winning isn't everything, but the effort to win is.

### Rule# R1: Game Rules

- R1.1** Unless stated otherwise stated in this document, the official rules of baseball will apply.
- R1.2** The infield fly rule does not apply.
- R1.3** When an infielder or the catcher makes a direct attempt to throw the ball to the pitcher, the umpire will call time. Coaches should understand that once the defence has control of the ball in the infield, they should hold their runners. All base runners will be placed according to where they were when time was called. They will be sent to where they were going if they are past the halfway line, otherwise they will be sent back. The placement of the runners will be at the discretion of the umpire. Questioning the umpire's judgement on this will be cause for immediate ejection from the game. As coaches move to higher divisions they will not be able to just send their runners. Why embarrass young ball players by trying to force them to make a play on one of your runners. It doesn't teach good base running.
- R1.4** If the ball is overthrown from the infield during a play and reaches the outfield, any runners should only advance one base. Runners will be placed as above for throws to the pitcher. Normal baseball rules apply for overthrows into foul territory, that being the runner advances one base.

### Rule# R2: Game Duration

- R2.1** No new inning will start after an hour and a half.
- R2.2** It is an official game after four (4) innings of play.
- R2.3** Games called due to curfew, darkness, weather, or any other reason before becoming an official game will be replayed in their entirety.
- R2.4** All games begin at the scheduled start time unless they are delayed by a previous game or the umpires arriving late. In these cases, time begins with the first pitch.
- R2.5** A team will have a fifteen (15) minute grace period from the scheduled start time to field a team of no fewer than eight (8) players. If a team is unable to field a team of eight (8) players, the game will be defaulted to the opposing team and a final score of 7 to 0 will be recorded. However, the team with fewer than eight (8) players will borrow players from the opposing team and an exhibition game will be declared and played.

### **Rule# R3: Scoring**

- R3.1** A maximum of five (5) runs may be scored per half inning of each inning, with Rule R3.3 also in effect.
- R3.2** Innings shall be 3 outs or 5 runs, or a maximum of 10 batters.
- R3.3** A team trailing by more than 5 runs in any inning may score enough runs to catch up to, but not go ahead of, the other team. The 3 outs and 10 batters rule still applies.

### **Rule# R4: Pitching**

- R4.1** The pitcher must stand beside the pitching machine, outside the safety circle and behind the release point of the pitching machine. Lines shall be drawn from the release point to four (4) feet beyond the safety circle. The pitcher must stand on or behind the line until the ball is released from the machine.
- R4.2** Any player who assumes the pitching position in an inning must wear a regulation-batting helmet with the chinstrap done up.
- R4.3** Only the pitcher may return a live ball back to the pitching machine operator.
- R4.4** The speed of the pitching machine is to be agreed upon before the game starts. If there is not an agreement, the umpire will make the decision.
- R4.5** The speed of the pitching machine cannot be changed except at the end of an inning. However if the machine becomes erratic, then it can be adjusted at any time by the umpire. Anyone caught tampering with the machine will be ejected from the game.
- R4.6** Each pitch must be considered hittable by the umpire in order to count as a pitched ball. Questioning an umpire's judgment on this has the same penalty as arguing the strike zone. It is immediate ejection from the game.
- R 4.7** The umpire will signal the machine operator to start each batter's turn by saying "play ball" when everyone is ready.
- R 4.8** The Umpire will operate the Pitching Machine in Welland. A coach of the team at bat will operate the Pitching Machine in Fonthill.
- R 4.9** To make the game faster and to allow more innings to be played, 10 game balls will be used. The balls will be placed in a bucket, and pitching will continue until all the balls have been used, or until a break in the play occurs. The catcher or home plate umpire should place the pitched balls that have not been hit behind the plate against the backstop until a break occurs, and the bucket can be refilled.
- R4.10** If a close play at home plate requires a player to retrieve the ball in play from the backstop, the umpire should use discretion in allowing the player to retrieve a ball in close proximity if it is not clear which of the balls sitting at the backstop is in play.

### **Rule# R5: Lead-offs and Stealing**

- R5.1** A runner may not lead-off, attempt to steal or steal a base.
- R5.2** Base runners shall not leave their bases until the pitched ball has been struck at and hit by the batter.
- R5.3** If a base runner leaves his base before the pitched ball has crossed the plate and the batter does not hit the ball the umpire will call time and return the runner to the base he occupied before the pitch was made. The umpire will issue a team warning for lead-offs. If the same team has a player leading off again the player will be called out.
- R5.4** If a base runner leaves his base before the pitched ball has crossed the plate and the batter

hits the ball, the runner shall return to his original base (if the batter is retired) or he must return to an unoccupied base nearest the one he left depending on the advance of the batter.

**R5.5** There are no passed balls or wild pitches. A runner cannot advance if the ball goes behind the catcher.

### **Rule# R6: Batter**

**R6.1** Each batter shall receive five (5) pitches. The batter must either put the fifth pitch in play **or** strike out to end his/her at bat. There are an unlimited number of foul balls on the 5th strike.

**R6.2** Batters cannot walk or bunt. If the umpire rules that a batter attempted to bunt, the batter will be declared out and the base runners cannot advance.

**R6.3** If a batted ball hits the pitching machine, the ball bucket, or any adult in fair territory, the ball is declared dead and the batter is awarded first base and each base runner will advance one base if forced to advance

**R6.4** If a batted ball goes through the pitching circle without touching anything, it is a live ball. The batter and any runners, advance at their own risk.

### **Rule # R7: Substitutions**

**R7.1** Each team shall consist of ten players defensively. The positioning is the same as regular baseball with the tenth player being a second centre fielder.

**R7.2** There will be a continuous batting order.

**R7.3** Any player arriving late will be placed at the bottom of the batting order.

**R7.4** Defensive substitutions are unlimited. Coaches may move players in and out freely. It is important for the development of a player's skills that a player have the opportunity to play positions in both the infield and outfield. No player shall play the entire game in either the outfield or infield positions. Infield players (including the catcher) are limited to a maximum of two (2) innings at any one position. Any innings in which a player is sitting out of the game do not apply to this ruling.

**R7.5** If the scheduled catcher is on base when the second out is made the catcher will have a courtesy runner to speed up play. The courtesy runner will be the last player called out.

**R7.6** No player will sit out a second time until every other player has sat out once. This rule then follows, that no player can sit out a third time until every other player has sat out a second time or no player will sit out a fourth time until every other player has sat out a third time. .

**R7.7** No player will sit out two (2) consecutive innings.

**R7.8** There is a system of call-ups used by the association. This allows coaches to get enough players from a lower division team, so their team doesn't have to forfeit as a result of not having enough players. Players called up must become part of the roster for the game and they must be played the same as everyone else during the game. Players must be from a lower division, such as T-Ball. Players from another Rookie Ball team may not be used.

## **Rule# R8: Field Dimensions**

- R8.1** The pitching machine is placed forty-four (44) feet from the tip of home plate.
- R8.2** An eight (8) foot diameter safety circle shall be marked off directly in front of home plate and its centre shall be forty-four (44) feet from home plate. Only the pitching machine and the person operating the pitching machine are allowed in the circle. No player is permitted to enter the safety circle, which is a dead ball area. Enter means if any part of the player's body enters the circle. If a player enters the circle the ball will be declared dead and the batter will be awarded first base. All runners will advance if forced.
- R8.3** Lines shall be drawn from the release point of the pitching machine to four (4) feet beyond the safety circle in a direction towards first and third.
- R8.4** The distance between all bases will be sixty five (65) feet. There shall be a line marked half (1/2) way between all bases including home plate.
- R8.5** The diagonal distance (the distance between home plate and second base) is ninety-one feet, eleven inches (91'11")

## **Rule# R9: Field Conduct**

- R9.1** Abusive and/or foul language by coaches, players, or spectators will result in ejection from the game and/or park. The harassment policy set forth by Baseball Ontario will be strictly enforced.
- R9.2** No arguments will be permitted between any coaches, players or spectators and the umpires. The umpire's decision is final. This behaviour will result in ejection from the game and/or the park.
- R9.3** No arguments will be permitted between any coaches, players, or spectators. This behaviour will result in ejection from the game and/or park.
- R9.4** The use of tobacco products by players, coaches and umpires in any form, is prohibited from the time they enter the park until they have vacated the park. This behaviour can result in ejection from the game and/or park.
- R9.5** The abuse of equipment may result in ejection from the game.
- R9.6** In the event a player and/or a coach is ejected from a game, the following shall apply:
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|-----------------------|--|
| Ejected first time    | one (1) game suspension  |
| Ejected a second time | two (2) game suspension  |
| Ejected a third time  | indefinite suspension pending review by a committee of representatives from each association |
- Any ejection for fighting and/or physical abuse of an umpire is an automatic indefinite suspension pending executive review. Suspension duration is not affected by the beginning of the playoffs and such carry through regardless.

## **Rule# R10: Equipment**

- R10.1** Metal spikes are not allowed.
- R10.2** All players must wear an appropriate athletic support.
- R10.3** The bat boy/girl, on deck batter, batter, and all base runners must wear a protective helmet with flaps covering both ears. Chinstraps are mandatory.
- R10.4** Players are to wear the uniform and protective equipment provided by their association. Anyone not in uniform will not be allowed on the field, nor will anyone be allowed on the field wearing an ejected player's uniform.
- R10.5** Wooden bats are allowed providing they conform to the rules of baseball.
- R10.6** Runners are instructed to slide or attempt to avoid making contact with a fielder. The contact rule of the Ontario Baseball Association will be strictly enforced.

## **Rule# R11: Special Responsibilities**

- R11.1** The home team is responsible for putting the bases and the pitching machine out before a game and putting them away after the game.
- R11.2** The visiting team may have the diamond twenty five (25) minutes before game time for a ten (10) minute warm-up. The home team may have the diamond fifteen (15) minutes before game time for a ten (10) warm-up if time permits. Warm-ups should commence along foul territory before game time.
- R11.3** Rosters for games will be completed before game time and exchanged between the teams.
- R11.4** It is important that coaches realize that time is of the essence and it is important to keep the game moving.

## **Rule# R12: Postponements and Forfeits**

- R12.1** The park convenor of each association will make the decision to postpone a game where field conditions are unplayable prior to the start of a game. Where possible, this decision should be made in sufficient time to advise coaches and umpires. The game will be rescheduled.
- R12.2** Once the umpire has taken the field to start a game, the umpire is the only one who can cancel a game. If this occurs before it is an official game, then the game will be replayed in its entirety.
- R12.3** All postponed games will be replayed as soon as possible.
- R12.4** If a team is left with fewer than eight (8) players as a result of an injury during a game, then a player or players should be borrowed from the other team and the game completed.