



## Hillsborough Youth Athletic Association

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### Exchange League Local Rules and Playing Philosophy

The primary goal of the Exchange League is to further build and refine fundamental skills while introducing pitching and basic game strategy. Exchange League is a division for 9- and 10-year-olds as determined by established age scales introducing player or “kid” pitching. The game is played on a 60-foot diamond, 46-foot pitching mound, and all games are called by official umpires.

The following local rules apply to the HYAA Exchange Division. Any rule, topic or situation not specifically covered in this document will automatically defer to the Cal Ripken / Babe Ruth Baseball rule book. The league commissioner will have final ruling on any disputes.

#### **Uniform / Protective Gear**

1. Playing uniform is defined as the HYAA team jersey, pant and hat. Jerseys must be tucked in, and hats facing forward. Uniform customization is prohibited with the exception of a player's first name, last name or number embroidered (1/2" tall maximum) on their hat only.
2. Players must be in full uniform when playing in a league game. (Regular or Post-Season). Uniforms are not required for practice.
3. No player will be allowed to wear jewelry during practices or games.
4. It is strongly recommended that all male players wear a protective cup for both practices and games.
5. All male catchers are required to wear a protective cup.
6. The catcher is required to wear all protective gear, including leg guards, chest protector, and approved one-piece catcher helmet/ mask with throat protection.
7. The catcher is not required to use a catcher's glove.
8. All offensive players are required to wear batting helmets when anywhere in the field of play or in the batting cage – runners should not remove their helmet until in the dugout.

#### **Equipment**

1. The batting cages are for HYAA use only. Only one player and one coach will be allowed in the batting cage.
2. Bat Rules
  - a. The bat may not exceed 33" in length, and the bat barrel may not exceed 2 $\frac{5}{8}$ " in diameter. Only 2 $\frac{5}{8}$ " maximum barrel non-wood bats marked USA Baseball will be allowed. Wood 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ " barrel bats are allowed.
  - b. Only approved bats should be present in the dugout.
  - c. If a player is caught using a non-approved bat before they bat, the bat will be immediately removed from the game. d. If a player is caught using a non-approved bat during or after their at-bat, the batter will be called out, and any runners that advanced during the at-bat will return to the bases they occupied at the beginning of the at-bat. The bat will be immediately removed from the game.

#### **Pre-Game**

1. Coaches from both teams are responsible for site preparation on game days. This includes repairing any damage caused by water, gathering player and game equipment as well as repairing/removing safety issues (fence tears/rocks/etc...). The Home team is responsible for lining the infield to specification prior to game play.
2. Players are not permitted on the field until their coach arrives and it's time for warmups. Only players, coaches, and adult volunteers are permitted in the dugout.

3. Thirty-five minutes prior to the game start time, the Home team will have use of the batting cage for 15 minutes. Twenty minutes prior to the game start time, the Visiting team will have use of the batting cage for 15 minutes. Both teams will be ready to start the game 5 minutes prior to the start time. Batting warm-ups will not be delayed for late arriving players.
4. Thirty-five minutes prior to the game start time, the Visitor team will have use of the field to warm-up for 15 minutes. Twenty minutes prior to the game start time, the Home team will have use of the field to warm-up for 15 minutes. All on-field warm-ups will end 5 minutes prior to the stated game start time. For second games on weeknights, there may not be any infield practice depending on the status of the first game.
5. A team may begin a game with a minimum of 7 players in uniform. If 7 players are not available at game time then that team must forfeit. If there is a forfeit the teams can play a scrimmage, however only players from the teams scheduled to play can participate. Players arriving late will be added to the bottom of the batting order immediately upon arriving no matter the point of the game. There is no "OUT" penalty for playing with 7 or 8 players.
6. Coaches must provide their batting order to the opposing team at least 5 minutes before game time. A team's batting order will consist of every player that is on the roster and at the game.
7. Games must start on time.
8. Each team will provide its own scorekeeper. The home team is the official scorekeeper. Scorekeepers should confer between innings to make sure they have the same score. If they are different, scorekeepers must notify the managers and home plate umpire before play resumes. The on-site field rep will stop game play until the discrepancy is resolved.
9. (Exchange Field Only) The home team will be responsible for running the concession stand. Coaches will assign a parent volunteer to run the concession stand prior to the start of the game. No kids under 14 are allowed in the concession stand without adult supervision or commissioner approval.
10. (Exchange Field Only) The visiting team will be responsible for running the scoreboard. The area above the concession stand shall be treated as a neutral zone. Abuse of sitting in this area will not be tolerated.
11. Practices are scheduled by the commissioner only. There will be no extra team practices allowed. Rained out practices can be rescheduled based on field availability and commissioner approval.

### **General Game Play**

1. Before the first pitch is released, coaches will agree on the game start time and the home team scorekeeper will record it. The game can be delayed or suspended due to darkness or weather conditions if the game duration has not reached the minimum of 4 innings (3 ½ if home team is ahead). For regular season only if minimum innings are met the score reverts to the last completed inning and the game is final. On the rescheduled game date, the game will resume where play left off with remaining time limit left to play, including outs already recorded, runners on base, with the batter who was at bat when the game was called.
2. Game duration will be a minimum of 4 innings and a maximum of 6 innings. Regular season games (weekend or weeknight) cannot commence a new inning after 90 minutes as long as 4 innings have been completed. A new inning is considered "started" at the same instant that the 3rd out of the previous inning is recorded. The home team shall be entitled to complete any inning started unless leading into the bottom half of the final inning. Otherwise, the game will be called due to time limitations.
3. Each team will be allowed two time outs per inning with a time limit of one minute. The pitcher must be removed from the game on a manager's second trip to the mound in one inning.
4. A seven run rule will be in effect each inning. Play ends if one team is ahead by 15 runs after 4 innings, or by 10 runs after 5 innings.
5. Starting players must play a complete inning in the field before they can be substituted unless there is an injury.
6. Any player may reenter the game if the player being replaced has played a complete inning.

### **Offensive Game Play**

1. Offensive coaching will be limited to base coaches at first and third base.
2. A continuous batting order will be used. All players on the team roster will bat regardless of their play defensively. If a player is unable to continue playing in the game, their batting spot will be skipped without penalty.
3. The batter must have both feet in the batter's box when the ball is hit. If one foot is out of the box when the ball is hit, the batter will be called out.

#### 4. Baserunning Rules:

- a. Base runners may not lead off. A runner cannot advance until the pitcher releases the pitch to the plate. A runner leaving any base early will be called out.
  - b. Base runners may not advance when the pitcher has returned to the pitching rubber with the ball in his / her possession.
  - c. Sliding: Base runners must slide feet first on all close plays, except when going to first base. In the umpire's opinion, if a player does not slide on a close play, the runner will be called out and the ball will be dead. A player is automatically out for sliding head first or for sliding into 1st base. A dive back into a base from overrunning a base is not considered a head first slide.
  - d. Base coaches cannot touch base runners while the ball is in play. If a coach touches a runner, the runner is out. If this is the third out, any runs scored during this play do not count.
  - e. Base runners may advance a maximum of 1 base at their own peril on an overthrow by the catcher during a steal attempt where the ball is not put into play by the batter.
5. The catcher must have a pinch runner if on base with 2 outs. The pinch runner will be the player who made the last out. If less than 2 outs, the catcher must run for him/herself.

#### **Defensive Game Play**

1. Each player must play a minimum of 1 inning of defense in the infield. No player can sit out a 2nd inning of defense until all players have sat out 1 inning of defense. Penalty for not following this rule is forfeiture of the game. If the player's nonparticipation is a result of the manager's deliberate action, the manager will be suspended for one game. A second violation by the same manager will result in permanent suspension from managing or coaching in HYAA. If a coach feels a player's safety is at risk with the mandatory inning of infield play, a meeting between the coach, player parent, and commissioner is required to create an exception for that player.
2. No chatter directed towards the batter will be allowed at any time.
3. Any ball hit out of bounds (ex: under the fence) is live until the defensive player holds their hands up to the umpire signaling to the ball out of play.
4. The infield fly rule is recognized and enforced.
5. To stop play, the defensive team must make the lead runner stop.
6. The distance from the front of the pitching rubber to the back of home plate will be at 46 feet.
7. Pitchers will be permitted to pitch three innings per game. However, once a pitcher is taken out, he cannot return to the mound during that game. An inning will be counted if a single live pitch is thrown. Pitchers are permitted to pitch a maximum of 5 innings per week of the season, and inning counts shall reset after 2 consecutive days of rest. If any team breaks this rule, the game shall be forfeited. Coaches are encouraged to follow pitch-smart guidelines latest version published by Major League Baseball. (see bottom of this rules set.)
8. Between innings new pitchers will receive 8 warm up pitches while returning pitchers will receive only 5 warm up pitches.
9. Any pitcher hitting three batters in a game must be removed from the mound.
10. There is no penalty for balks however it is strongly recommended an umpire calls a balk and explains his call to the pitcher, but the result of the call is "no play." This approach is instructional and amounts to giving the pitcher a "warning" of what is an illegal maneuver. If the infraction is repeatedly made by a single pitcher, the umpire has the authority to remove the pitcher from the game as a pitcher only. Leniency will be stressed as this is a teaching/learning process.
11. Pitchers are required to pitch from the stretch position when runners are on-base.

#### **Post-Game**

1. Visitor team is responsible for dragging the field after the game. Both teams are also responsible for cleaning the dugout and emptying the trash in the dumpster.
2. Managers are responsible for communicating game score and any issues to the commissioner.

3. All coaches need to make certain that all facilities are cleaned and locked up before leaving.
4. Last team to play or practice on Saturday will be responsible for field maintenance. This will include trash pickup for the entire field, dragging the field, repairs to the batter's box and restroom cleaning. This will be a team effort, participation is required.

### **Officiating / Sportsmanship**

1. The umpire has authority over the field of play, and has authority to eject coaches, assistant coaches, players, and spectators at any time while at the field of play. The league commissioner or field representative may be consulted to interpret local rules; however, the umpire's ruling is final.
2. The umpire may issue one warning prior to the start of the game for the following:
  - a. Any offensive language by the manager, players, or spectators.
  - b. Any team member throwing any piece of equipment or acting in an unsportsmanlike manner.
  - c. Any player throwing a bat will be called out.
3. Only head coaches are allowed on the field to discuss any call with the umpire. If needed, scorekeepers, assistant coaches, and / or the league's nightly field supervisor may be called in. The umpire, commissioner and field supervisor have the authority to eject coaches, assistant coaches, players, and spectators at any time while at the field of play. Any person ejected must leave the premises immediately. The incident will be referred to HYAA Board of Directors for further action at the discretion of the Board up to and including expulsion from the league.
4. Any coach, player or spectator exhibiting unsportsmanlike behavior (verbal or physical), or throwing any piece of equipment in an unsportsmanlike manner while at the field of play will be ejected. The incident will be referred to HYAA Board of Directors for further action at the discretion of the Board up to and including expulsion from the league.

### **Weather Policy**

1. Coaches will decide the adverse weather policy for their own practices. For games, the coaches will communicate and let the commissioner know 2 hours before the game time, to allow adequate notification of parents.
2. When there is any lightning visible in the area, play will immediately stop and players will seek nearest shelter. After a minimum of 15 minutes from the last lightning strike, play may resume at the umpires' discretion, keeping safety of all the children at the highest priority.

### **Tournament (Spring Only):**

1. A pool play tournament will be held at the conclusion of the regular season. Pool play seeds for the post season tournament will be based on the draft order pulled at random at the pre-season coach's meeting. The pool play seeds shall be awarded in reverse of the draft order (1st to draft is last seed, last to draft is first seed). Upon completion of pool play, the top 2 teams from both pool A & B advance for semifinal game A1 vs B2, B1 vs A2. Winners play a championship game.
2. Pool play games will be played with time limit & slaughter rules in effect. Semifinals, finals, and world series will play, without a time limit, a regulation 6 inning game unless ended by slaughter rule, extended because of a tie score, or the home team is ahead leading into the bottom of the final inning.
3. A forfeited game results in a score of 5-0 for the winning team.
4. Determination of Pool Play Standings (Section 11.05 Playing Rules; Babe Ruth Official Playing Rules):
  - a. Win-Loss Record
  - b. Results of Head to Head Competition
  - c. Fewest Runs Allowed
  - d. Run Differential with a maximum of 10 per game
  - e. Coin Toss

## **Major League Baseball Pitch Smart Guidelines**

- Focus on athleticism, physical fitness, and fun
- Focus on learning baseball rules, general techniques, and teamwork
- Do not exceed 80 combined innings pitched in any 12 month period
- Take at least 4 months off from throwing every year, with at least 2-3 of those months being continuous
- Make sure to properly warm up before pitching
- Set and follow pitch-count limits and required rest periods
- Avoid throwing pitches other than fastballs and change-ups
- Avoid playing for multiple teams at the same time
- Avoid playing catcher while not pitching
- Players should not pitch in multiple games on the same day
- Play other sports during the course of the year
- Monitor for other signs of fatigue
- Pitchers once removed from the mound may not return as pitchers
- No pitcher shall appear in a game as a pitcher for three consecutive days, regardless of pitch counts

Age	Daily Max (Pitches in Game)	0 Days Rest	1 Days Rest	2 Days Rest	3 Days Rest	4 Days Rest
9-10	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+