



Hillsborough Youth Athletic Association

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T-Ball League Local Rules and Playing Philosophy

The primary goal of the T-Ball League is to teach young players the fundamentals of baseball in a supportive team environment. The T-Ball League is a division for 4- and 5-year-olds as determined by established age scales utilizing a batting Tee. To prevent sporting competition to take precedence over learning, neither game score nor inning outs are kept in T-Ball. All players bat once per inning regardless of the score or number of outs. All players play defense each inning regardless of score or number of outs.

The following local rules apply to the HYAA T-Ball Division. Any rule, topic or situation not covered in this document will automatically default to the Cal Ripken/Babe Ruth 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, and hat. Jerseys must be tucked in, and hats facing forward. Uniform customization is prohibited except for 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. Uniforms are not required for practice.
3. No player will be allowed to wear jewelry during practices or games.
4. The catcher is required to wear a catcher's mask or the adjustable batting helmet with mask. The catcher will be positioned behind the batter and behind the white marked line and does not squat in the catcher's position.
5. The catcher is not required to use a catcher's glove.
6. All OFFENSIVE players are required to wear batting helmets when anywhere in the field of play. Runners should not remove their helmet until in the dugout.

Equipment

1. HYAA utilizes a rubber batting Tee. All batters must hit off the Tee. No pitching to a batter is allowed in the T-Ball League.
2. The batting Tee will be placed on top of home plate. The batter will hit the ball from this location.
3. T-Ball league players do not use the batting cages.
4. Only Metal or Composite T-Ball bats are permitted for use. Wood bats are not allowed to be used by players in either game or practice settings. The bat must be labeled as "Approved for T-Ball".

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. Player safety must be a priority to all coaches and adult volunteers. Report any / all problems or potential safety issues to the League Commissioner or Field Supervisor.
3. 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.
4. Pre-game warm up will be conducted in the outfield in the area of assigned dugout. No batting practice in the batting cages or fielding practice on the infield is allowed prior to games.
5. No food, candy, snacks or chewing gum is allowed in the dugout or on the field.

6. Games must start on time.
7. In case of rain, games will be canceled. T-Ball league games are typically rescheduled during one of the team's practice times, based on field availability.
8. Practices are scheduled by the commissioner only. There are no extra practices allowed. Rained out practices will not be rescheduled.

General Game Play

1. Games will consist of a maximum of 4 innings.
2. If an inning can be started prior to the 75-minute mark, then that next inning will be started and completed.
3. No standings or score is kept during the regular season, and no outs are recorded during games.
4. The team's batting order will consist of every player that is on the roster and at the game.
5. The offensive coach must advise the defensive coach if a strong batter is up to bat, so the defensive coach can adjust defensive players for their safety.
6. All players must play at least one inning of outfield and 1 inning in the infield each game. No player is allowed to play consecutive innings in the same position on the field during regular season or Fun Day.
7. The adult coaches on the field are not allowed to interfere with the defensive teams' ability to play the ball. The adult must try to get out of the way of the defensive player, including line of sight and /or throwing lane.
8. A team may begin a game with a minimum of 7 players in uniform. If 7 players are not available at game time then the two teams shall combine and split players evenly to form two teams. If a player arrives late, they shall be added to one of the two teams and play shall continue.

Offensive Game Play

1. The coach of the batting team controls the start of game play.
2. The batting team's coach must check the fielding teams' readiness by holding up the ball and calling out "READY". This is to signal the batter is about to swing.
3. The batting team's coach will place the ball on the Tee and signal the start of play to both the batter and fielding team by calling out "PLAY BALL" for each swing.
4. The Tee must be removed from the plate before a runner comes home
5. Offensive coaching will be limited to base coaches at first and third base.
6. A continuous batting order will be used. All players on the team roster will bat regardless of their play defensively.
7. Players must stay in the dugout when not batting. The on-deck batter is permitted to warm-up in the on-deck circle. The home plate coach will call the batter to the plate from the on-deck circle when the preceding play is over.
8. The batter must have both feet in the batter's box when the ball is hit.
9. No lead offs are allowed. Base runners leaving before the ball is hit will be sent back to the previous base. Runners missing a base will be called out.
10. Baserunning rules:
 - a. On an infield hit, runners advance one base. On an outfield hit, runners may advance two bases. On a hit to the fence, runners may advance three bases.
 - b. Base runners are not allowed to advance on an overthrow of any base by a defensive player throwing from within the infield or outfield.
 - c. Base runners are not required to slide in close plays, however, if a baserunner does slide, he/she must slide feet first. A player is automatically out for sliding head first. A dive back into a base from overrunning the base is not considered a headfirst slide.

Defensive Game Play

1. No more than 3 defensive coaches are permitted in the field to help instruct the players. The coach is not allowed to touch or interfere with a live ball being played.
2. Play is stopped when an out is made, an infield has control of the ball, or a ball thrown from the outfield has crossed the plane of the infield.
3. No chatter will be allowed directed towards the batter at any time.
4. All players play on defense. Only six players are allowed in the infield (including the catcher). The additional players will be placed in any position outside the infield.

Officiating / Sportsmanship

1. The coaches of both playing teams will serve as umpires. The coaches must work together to umpire the game fairly in the best interest of the players.
2. There is NO score kept, and no outs are recorded in T-Ball, however an out by the defensive team should be acknowledged (runners may remain on base)
3. Any batter throwing a bat will receive a warning the first time. The second time the batter will be called out. Any runner intentionally taking their helmet off will be called out.
4. Any player, coach or spectator exhibiting unsportsmanlike behavior (verbal or physical), or throwing any piece of equipment in an unsportsmanlike manner will be ejected. The incident will be referred over 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 coaches' discretion, keeping safety of all the children at the highest

At the conclusion of the season, each player should have a basic understanding of baseball. Below are specific goals each player should master.

General:

- Where is the Infield
- Where is the Outfield
- Where are Dugouts
- What is an Out and how to make one
- What is a double play
- What is a Single, Double, Triple, Home Run

Positions:

- Know where each infield and outfield position is located
- Know the appropriate location they should place themselves when playing each defensive position (ex: the first baseman does not stand on the base during game play)

Hitting:

- Correct way to hold the bat
- Proper batting stance
- Proper swing technique and follow-thru

- Understanding of dropping the bat after they hit
- Ability to set themselves up for a given at bat

Catching:

- Proper 'Ready' position
- Ability to stop a ground ball with their glove
- General ability to defend an infield position
- General ability to play outfield positions

Throwing:

- Throwing overhand
- Proper throwing stance
- Stepping into the throw
- Follow-through with the throw
- Understanding of the appropriate amount of power to use when throwing

Base Running:

- Understanding to the sequence of bases
- Understanding to touch or tag each base
- Understanding not to pass teammates already on base