



## Hillsborough Youth Athletic Association

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### Machine Pitch-30 League Local Rules and Playing Philosophy

The primary goal of the Machine Pitch-30 League is to continue teaching baseball fundamentals and building player confidence. Machine Pitch-30 League is a division for 5-year-olds with HYAA experience, and 6 year olds as determined by established age scales utilizing a pitching machine. The pitching machine is used to control pitches and increase the amount of action at the plate and on the field. Fear of being hit by a pitch is diminished, making the game safer and improving the playing confidence and ability of all participants. Use of the machine removes the boredom, which is often the result of players advancing beyond the Tee, but not quite ready for the Rookie 40 mph pitching or speed of play. The game is played on a T-ball sized field with volunteer umpires.

The following local rules apply to the HYAA Machine Pitch-30 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 or site supervisor will have final ruling on any disputes.

#### **Team Formation**

1. There will be no player evaluations for MP30.
2. Parent requests for team placement will be considered but are not guaranteed. Requests should be made to the commissioner following registration.
3. All registered players will be placed on teams by the commissioner prior to the season beginning.

#### **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 players 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. It is strongly recommended that all male players wear a protective cup for both practices and games. All male players crouching in the catcher's position are required to wear a protective cup.
5. The catcher is required to wear all protective gear, including leg guards, chest protector, and catcher helmet with throat guard. Players who are not equipped with a protective cup are permitted to play the catcher's position by standing next to the backstop, behind and to the side of the batter. The catcher is not required to use a catcher's glove.
6. It is strongly recommended that all adult volunteers playing the catcher's position wear a protective cup and catcher's helmet.
7. 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. HYAA uses the spring loaded "Louisville Slugger" pitching machine for league play. The pitching machine will be placed with the spikes behind the pitching rubber which is 32ft from the back of home plate with the speed setting adjusted to 30 mph on the Louisville Slugger machine [setting details]. The pitching machine will be sited in to deliver the ball across the middle of home plate in a youth players' the strike zone.
2. The ball used in this division is medium / firm core baseball similar to a T-ball.
3. Only bats marked "Approved for TBall" and that are Metal or Composite bats are permitted for use. Wood bats are not allowed to be used by players in either game or practice settings.

#### **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.
3. Pre-game warm up will be conducted in the outfield in the assigned dugout. No batting practice in the batting cages or fielding practice on the infield is allowed prior to games.
4. Only players, coaches, and adult volunteers are permitted in the dugout.
5. No food, candy, snacks or chewing gum is allowed in the dugout or on the field.
6. Games must start on time. Coaches, by prior agreement, should start games as early as possible.
7. Coaches must agree on pitching machine setup to reduce machine adjustments during gameplay.
8. 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.
9. Games must start on time.
10. No standings or score is kept during the regular season, and no outs are recorded during games. However, players who are deemed out during the course of the game should return to the dugout.
11. A team may begin a game with a minimum of seven players in uniform. Players arriving late will be added to the bottom of the batting order immediately upon arriving no matter the point of the game.
12. 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. On the rescheduled game date, the game will resume where play left off, including outs already recorded, runners on base, and with the batter who was at bat when the game was called. No game will officially end due to darkness or weather.
2. Game duration will be a maximum of 6 innings. Games cannot commence a new inning after 75 minutes. A new inning is considered "started" at the same instant that the 3<sup>rd</sup> out of the previous inning is recorded. The home team shall be entitled to complete any inning started unless ahead in the score going into the bottom half of the final inning. Otherwise, the game will be called due to time limitations.
3. In case of rain, a game will be complete if 3 innings have been completed. Rained out games will be played as specified by the league commissioner. The game times will take the place of the first practice and take as many time slots as needed to play all rained out games from the week.
4. Home team will provide new balls for each game. Both teams will bat the same game ball during play. If a ball becomes unusable or is hit out of play a new ball can enter the game. If a new ball enters the game, the pitching coach for the batting team can request practice pitches to make sure the machine is aligned for the new ball.
5. Each team will be allowed one time out per inning with a time limit of one minute.
6. Players must play a complete inning in the field before they can be substituted unless there is an injury.
7. Any player may reenter the game if the player being replaced has played a complete inning.
8. Players must walk behind the pitching machine when going from one side of the infield to the other.
9. Pitching machine: If a batted ball hits the pitching machine prior to a fielder touching the ball, the play will be called dead, and the batter will be awarded first base. Only forced runners advance. If a batted ball hits the pitching coach prior to a fielder touching the ball, the play will be called dead, the batter will receive a re-pitch and the pitch does not count against the batter. No runners may advance.
10. The adult coach volunteer operating the pitching machine is 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. If he or she does not, then the batter will be declared out and no runners may advance.
11. The transition between dirt and grass will be used for determining infield versus an outfield hit.

### **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 and each player will bat every inning regardless of number of outs made.
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, the batter will be called out. 4. Any batter throwing a bat will receive a warning the first time. The second time the batter will be called out. 5. Each batter will receive 3 pitches and then the Tee will be brought in for the player to hit from.
6. If a pitched ball is extremely high or low the coach of the batting team can request a "no pitch", and if granted by the defensive coach will not go against the batter's number of pitches.
7. No bunting will be allowed. A full swing must be taken, and the ball must travel beyond the five-foot circle from home plate to be a fair ball. A ball remaining in the five-foot home plate circle will be called foul.
8. Players must stay in the dugout when not batting. The on-deck batter is permitted to warm-up in the on-deck circle. The pitching coach will call the batter to the plate from the on-deck circle when the preceding play is over.
9. Baserunning rules:
  - a. Base runners are allowed up to 1 base on an infield hit (ball does not travel into the outfield). If the ball travels to the outfield even if touched by an infielder from the defensive team it will be considered an outfield hit.
  - b. Base runners are not allowed to advance on an overthrow of any base by a defensive player throwing from within the infield.
  - c. Base runners can advance at their own peril on a ball hit to the outfield until the ball crosses the plane between the infield and outfield. Upon the ball crossing the infield plane any base runner less than halfway to the next base must return to the previous base once time is called.
  - d. There will be no advancement on the bases in response to a thrown ball traveling out of bounds (in the dugout, over or through the fence). The offensive coaches should hold players up at the base the player was just approaching upon defensive coaches holding up both hands acknowledging the ball is "out of bounds".
  - e. No lead offs are allowed. Base runners leaving before the ball is hit will be called out. Runners missing a base will be called out.
  - f. Sliding: Base runners should be encouraged to slide feet first on all close plays, except when running through first base. A player is automatically out for sliding headfirst. A dive back into a base from overrunning the base is not considered a headfirst slide. Players are not allowed to slide into 1st base.
  - f. Base coaches cannot touch the base runners while the ball is in play. If the coach touches a runner, they are out. If this is the third out, any runs scored during this play don't count.
  - g. Any baserunner intentionally taking their helmet off will be called out.
10. The coach or adult volunteer of the batting team will operate the pitching machine.
11. The pitching coach must say "Ready", pause, "Pitch" prior to releasing the ball from the pitching machine. Pitching before the defense is ready will result in a "no pitch" and a warning from the volunteer umpire, ejection if continued.

### **Defensive Game Play**

1. No player is allowed to play consecutive innings in the same position and all players must play a minimum of 1 inning in the infield, and 1 inning in the outfield. No player can sit out a 2nd inning of defense until all players have sat out 1 inning of defense.
2. The Defensive team is allowed 3 coaches on the field. The coaches must be in the grass in foul territory; one on the first base side, and one on third base side and if necessary one behind second base.
3. No chatter will be allowed towards the batter at any time.
4. There will be NO infield fly rule.
5. Each team can field 11 players on defense. The eleventh player will be placed in any position outside the infield. Only 5 players are allowed in the infield.
6. There will be no defensive warm-ups between half innings.
7. Players in infield positions may not cross the plane of the pitching machine until the ball is batted.
8. The pitcher's position will be with 1 foot in the 12ft (6ft radius) half circle surrounding the pitching machine. The player cannot be in front

of the pitching machine until the ball is batted. The pitcher's circle is an established safe area to prevent players from running into the pitching machine and possibly becoming injured. Defensive players may field a batted ball in the pitcher's circle.

9. When a player is out, they are to be removed from the field.
10. Players should be encouraged to play the catcher's position in the required gear for each team each inning.

### **Post-Game**

1. Visiting 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. All coaches need to make certain that all facilities are clean and locked up before leaving.

### **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.
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 priority.