

GENERAL RULES FOR N.W.R.A.A.

T-BALL INSTRUCTUAL PROGRAM

Ages 3 and 4

Program Overview

T-ball is often a child's first exposure to baseball. Their experiences at this level can impact their future participation in organized sports. Let's make their experiences good ones!

This is the time to teach basic baseball skills and sportsmanship and to ensure that every child has fun playing the game. The objective of T-Ball is full participation and equal playing time for all. **The program's goal is not only to provide equal playing time, but to also provide equal position playing. Each player should be given the same amount of opportunities to play each position.**

The ordinary and basic rules of baseball as prescribed by USSSA Baseball, Inc. will apply in regards to batters, batted balls, runners, force outs, tag outs, fly outs, ground balls, running the consecutive bases, and play in the field. The following rules are expressly for T-Ball and supersede any USSSA Rules for regular league play.

FIELD OF PLAY

Bases will form a diamond shape, and will be 60 feet apart. At the center of the diamond, a 10 foot circle will be drawn. This will be the pitcher's circle. An additional foul area immediately in front of home plate will be added: a semi-circle chalk line will be drawn from baseline to baseline beginning 15 feet from home base. A batted ball must reach the arc to be declared a fair ball.

BASIC GAME RULES

1. Official starting times for games are scheduled by the league. The commissioner retains right to alter game times.
2. Game length will be three (3) full innings or 1 hour, which ever occurs first. Each team will bat three (3) times and field three (3) times.
3. The determination of inclement weather and darkness will be decided by the proper authority in this order: (1) the league commissioner, (2) onsite NWRAA baseball board member, or (3) an agreement between the two head coaches.

4. Score is not kept in T-ball.
5. Playing Time.
 - A. Each player will play defensively every inning. Positions are: 1st base, 2nd base, 3rd base, shortstop, buckstop (in front of 2nd base), pitcher, catcher, and the remaining players will spread out in the outfield.
 - B. Players must rotate every inning between infield and outfield positions.
 1. Outfield position will include all positions located in the outfield. Outfielders must begin play on the outfield grass.
 2. Infield positions will include pitcher, 1st base, 2nd base, 3rd base, shortstop, buckstop, and catcher. The pitcher must begin play with two feet in the pitcher's circle.
 - C. Players may not play the same position twice in one game.
 - D. If a team has less than nine- (9) players, any standard baseball positions can be left vacant except pitcher or first base. Players must still rotate position every inning. Players who played an outfield position the prior inning must play an infield position.
3. Each team will bat their entire line-up every inning. Every player on the roster and in attendance will be placed in the batting order (*extended batting order*).

Note: There will be no outs rewarded to the opposing team if a player bats out of order. If a batter bats out of turn - return to the original order as best possible.
4. A batter may not be tagged out by any defensive player except the first baseman before he reaches first base.

Note: Outs at first must be recorded by a fielder making a throw to first base or the first baseman can make the play unassisted. Once the runner reaches first, the normal rules apply (he may be tagged out attempting to return to first). The intent is to teach baseball fundamentals, we do not want to encourage players to chase base runners all over the field.
5. Begin Play: Play begins when the coach places the ball on the 'T'. Each batter receives a maximum of 5 swings to put the ball in play. If by the 5th swing, the ball is not put into fair play the batter will be declared out. A batted ball must reach the arc and be within the foul lines to be declared a fair ball. Foul lines are considered in play.
 - A. Pitcher must begin play with two feet inside the pitcher's circle. If the pitcher moves outside the pitching circle before the ball is put in play by the batter, the batter has the option of accepting

the result of the play or may declare a no swing and redo the play.

6. End Play: Once the pitcher has ball control within the circle the ball will be declared dead. Any base runner that has not reached the halfway point between bases will go back to the base he just passed. If he has reached the halfway point or beyond, he will be awarded the next base.
 - A. This rule does not apply in the case of a batter going to first base. If the pitcher gains control of the ball before the batter reaches the halfway point while trying to reach first base, he will be awarded first base.
 - B. In the case of a "Hit Ball" being fielded by the pitcher without the player leaving the circle. If the pitcher makes no attempt to make a play, forced runners can advance one base only and the ball will be declared dead. Any unforced runner, who has not reached the halfway mark by the time the pitcher controls the ball, must return to the last base attained.
 - C. In the case of a pop fly being hit to the pitcher. Tagging up on fly balls is not permitted.
 - D. If the pitcher fields the ball outside the circle and attempts to make a direct play, but inadvertently steps into the circle, this will not be counted as control within the circle.
 - E. In the case of runners being forced to advance to the next base and the pitcher while in the circle electing not to make a play before they reach the halfway points, the runners will be awarded the next base, the play will be declared dead. An out cannot be recorded simply by the pitcher controlling ball within the circle.

Note: if a ball is hit sharply to a fielder and is then quickly thrown to the pitcher before the forced runners are able to reach the halfway point, the forced runners will be awarded the next base. An unforced runner will not be allowed the next base unless he/she has reached the halfway point.
 - F. The designated pitcher is the only one that can stop the play by having ball control within the circle.
7. Players, when tagged or forced out, must return to the dugout. This lesson itself is a good first lesson for a T-ball player.
8. Base runners while in the act of running the bases must try to avoid coming in contact with a defensive player. Base runners must step around a defensive player. Rule infraction – runner will be declared out.

9. A defensive player can not impede the advancing of a player running to the next base. Rule infraction – runner will be awarded the next base.
10. Base runner can not stray more than 3 feet either side of the base line to avoid being tagged out by a defensive player with the ball. Rule infraction – runner will be declared out.
11. Base runners may not tag –up on all fly balls.
12. Helmets shall be worn at all times for the batter and runners.
13. **No sliding.** A player will be called out for sliding in a game. A player may dive back to a bag to avoid being tag.
14. A base runner cannot leave the base that he occupies until a ball is placed in play by a batter – BATTER MAKES CONTACT WITH THE BALL. The runner must remain in contact with the base. Rule infraction – runner will be declared out.

COACHING

1. There should be no more than four coaches, including the head coach and an adult helper in the dugout- within the chain link fence.

The only people that are allowed within the confines of the field of play are the players, the above mentioned coaches, and the umpires. The head coach is responsible for all representatives of his teams.

2. Two defensive coaches will be allowed within the boundaries of the “Field of Play”. These coaches may offer advice to the defensive players as long as they do not interfere with the ball or make contact with the players. Intentional interference will result in the awarding of an extra base for each base runner.
 - A. If the ball unintentionally strikes a coach in the outfield he is considered a part of the “Fair Playing Field” if he is within the confines of the foul lines.
3. There can be three offensive coaches on the “Field of Play”. One behind the plate assisting the hitter, one at first base, and one at third base.
 - A. On offense a coach cannot intentionally come in contact with a player of either team or make contact with the ball while it is in play. If player contact is made, the offensive player involved will be called out. In the case of ball interference, the lead runner will be called out.

- B. Do not allow players to climb on the fence in the dugout area. An adult must be in the dugout to supervise them.
- C. Do not let players stray from the field or the dugout area between innings. Keep them on the field or in the dugout during the complete course of the game, except in extenuating circumstances.
- D. It will be the home teams' responsibility to chalk and line the field in a proper manner and perform any pre-game maintenance to the field to put it in playing condition. This should be completed at least 15 minutes prior to game time. Continued violation of this rule will result in a game suspension.

- The home team must provide the game balls and helmets.
Helmets will be available at the snack stand.

- E. It will be the visiting teams' responsibility to rake the infield dirt area and generally put the field back into playing condition after a game is completed. Continued violation of this rule will result in suspension.

- It is the responsibility for the visiting team to return the helmets to the snack stand if there is no game to follow on the same field.

- F. If a coach wants to re-schedule a game, or alter the schedule for any reason, that coach, or his designee, must contact all the involved head coaches and work out all the particulars prior to notifying and gaining approval of the commissioner. When the commissioner subsequently approves or disapproves the changes, the initiating head coach must then re-contact all involved coaches to let them know that the commissioner has approved or disapproved of the changes. The head coach must also notify the concession stand coordinator. All of this must be done in a timely manner that will allow all involved coaches time to notify all of the teams' players.

- G. NWRAA does not provide umpires for T-Ball. The commissioner can establish a volunteer umpire process if he so chooses. In this case the games have an official umpire. However, if no umpire is present, the offensive coach at the plate will make all calls at home plate and act as the official umpire if a play requires a call (Example pitcher control in the circle). The offensive coach at first base will make all calls at first. The offensive coach at third base will make all calls at third. A defensive coach in the outfield will make all calls at second.

- H. Any coach that consistently fails to notify a player/parent of practices and/or game times and places will be suspended from his responsibility and another person will be put in his place. Any

detrimental action toward a player/parent will not be tolerated and will be dealt with harshly. If a legitimate problem arises between a coach and a player/parent, the situation needs to be immediately brought to the attention of the commissioner.

NOTE: These rules are “Working” rules and can be amended by the commissioner as needed as the season progresses. The commissioner will be responsible for notifying all involved personnel of any rule changes. Do not abuse these rules. Keep in mind the spirit in which they are written and apply them with the same spirit in mind. Often common sense will solve all the problems that will arise.

FINAL NOTE: *The ultimate rule of T-Ball is to teach every kid the basic fundamentals of baseball, to participate fairly, to enjoy and love the game of baseball, while instilling the true meaning of sportsmanship. Every kid is looking at each coach as a role model, therefore; the actions of the coaches will forever be instilled in the kid’s mind. Act Accordingly!*