

March 4, 2018



***VBRBL Junior Farm (Coach Pitch/Machine Pitch.)  
Baseball Rules***

***Mission Statement***

Virginia Beach Recreation Baseball League (VBRBL), is hereby created to develop within the participants an appreciation for sports and the role that sports play in the formation of moral values, good citizenship and community. The primary emphasis shall be on the youth of our community

***Enforcing VBRBL Policy***

**1. Objectives Of The Game**

- a. Coach Pitch Baseball is a game between two teams of 9 players on defense and a continuous batting order on offense, consisting of the entire roster. The game is played under the direction of a team manager on a playing surface compliant with these rules and under the jurisdiction of one or more league certified umpires.
- b. The objective for each team is to win by scoring more runs than the opponent while maintaining sportsmanship and respect for all participants, spectators and officials.
- c. The winner of the game shall be the team that shall have scored, in accordance with these rules, the greater number of runs at the conclusion of a regulation game.
- d. The purpose of this association is first and foremost to teach sportsmanship. Our league and its game officials will not tolerate any actions, statements or other spectator behavior that is disrespectful to anyone present. This includes any comments directed toward the officials. In the judgment of League Officials any comments including those such as "Awe come on ump" are unsportsmanlike and will subject the team to forfeiture of the game without warning.

**2. The Playing Field**

- a. The playing field shall be laid out using the following instructions. Instructions annotated with an asterisk are recommendations only.
- b. The infield shall be a 52-foot square. \*
- c. The outfield shall be the area between the two foul lines formed by extended the two sides of the square. The distance from home base to the nearest outfield fence shall be 140 feet or more. \* The infield shall be graded so that the pitcher's plate, baseline, and home plate are level.
- d. The infield and outfield, including the boundary lines, are fair territory and all other area is foul territory.
- e. The catcher's box extends approximately 6 feet 4 3/4 inches from the rear of home plate. It is determined by extending the foul lines 9 feet beyond the back of home plate. \*
- f. The batter's box shall be rectangular, 6 feet by 3 feet. The inside line, if used, shall be parallel to and four inches away from the side of home plate. It shall extend forward from the center of home plate 3 feet and to the rear 3 feet. \*
- g. The coaches' boxes shall be 4 feet by 8 feet and shall not be closer than 6 feet from the foul lines.
- h. The home plate shall be a five-sided slab of whitened rubber. It shall be a 12-inch square with two of the corners filled in so that one edge is 17 inches long, two 8½ inches and two are 12 inches. It shall be set in the ground with the point at the intersection of the foul lines. The black beveled area of home plate shall not be considered as part of home plate.
- i. Canvas bags (or acceptable equivalent) shall mark first, second, and third bases. First and third shall be located entirely within the infield. The bags shall be 14 inches square and not more than 2 1/4 inches thick.
- j. The **pitcher's plate** shall be a rectangular slab of whitened rubber 18 inches by 4 inches. The distance between the front of the plate and the rear point of home plate shall be **36 feet** – a chalk circle 8 feet in circumference will be placed around the pitching rubber.
- k. The ball shall be a league approved design weighing no less than five ounces no more than 5 1/4 ounces and measure no less than 9 inches no more than 9 1/4 inches in circumference.

- I. Bats must be League-Approved and are subject to inspection by the game officials. They must be smooth and rounded made of wood or aluminum. They shall not be more than 33 inches in length, **not more than 2 3/4 inch in diameter**. If made of wood it may be no smaller than 1 1/16 inches in diameter (one inch for bats less than 30") at the neck. Bats may be taped or fitted with a rubberized sleeve for a distance not to exceed 16 inches from the small end. **No laminated bats are allowed**.

### 3. Player Equipment/ Uniforms

- a. Players shall wear a uniform consistent with the other players on the team. No player shall wear any shoe containing steel spikes or cleats. Molded cleats are permissible.
- b. Players may not wear watches, rings, pins, earrings, jewelry or other metallic items.
- c. The catcher shall wear a catcher's mitt and, if male, a protective cup. The first base-man's glove may not be more than 12 inches long from top to bottom and not more than 8 inches long across the palm, measured from the base of the thumb crotch to the outer edge of the mitt. All other fielders may wear a glove no more than 12 inches long or more than 7 1/4 inches wide measured in the same manner as the first baseman's glove.
- d. Catchers must wear a throat guard attached to the catcher's mask. All catchers' equipment must be worn while warming up, during practice and throughout games.
- e. **All batting helmets must be NOCSAE approved**. Any player off the bench must be wearing a batting helmet. Only one batter may be warming up with a bat at a time. Batters not on the field must be in the designated "on deck" area. Players are to remain seated in the dugout area.

### 4. Definition of Terms

- a. **Authorized Adult**: An adult volunteer, recognized by their representing recreation association as either Head Coach, Assistant Coach and/or Team Parent, and completed all necessary background checks and required training as mandated by the VB Parks & Rec; Sports Management/City Wide Athletics, and is identifiable by city issued identification card which is to be worn at all times. Only Authorized Adults shall be permitted in the dugout and on the field of play during games.
- b. **Base Coach**: A manager or coach who is stationed in the coach's box at first or third base to direct the batter and the runners. If a minor (under the age of 18) is used, he/she must wear a helmet.
- c. **Batter's Box**: The area in which a batter must stand during a time at bat.
- d. **Bench or Dugout**: Is the seating facilities reserved for players, substitutes and no more than four (4) coaches when they are not actively engaged on the playing field. Batboys and/or batgirls are not permitted. During live ball situations there shall be no more than one adult representing a team inside the fenced area. In the event there is an infraction of this rule the opposing coach shall note it to the umpire who will assess an out during the offending team's at bat. Play will not resume until the offending team is in compliance with this rule.
- e. **Catch**: The act of a fielder in getting secure possession in the hand or glove of a ball in flight and firmly holding it before it touches the ground providing such fielder does not use cap, protector, pocket or any other part of the uniform in getting possession. It is not a catch if simultaneously or immediately following contact with the ball, the fielder collides with a player, or with a wall, or if that fielder falls down, and as the result of such collision or falling, drops the ball. It is not a catch if a fielder touches a fly ball which then hits a player of the offensive team or umpire and then is caught by another defensive player. If the fielder has made the catch and drops the ball while in the act of making a throw following the catch, the ball shall be judged to have been caught. **IN ESTABLISHING THE VALIDITY OF A CATCH THE FIELDER SHALL HOLD THE BALL LONG ENOUGH TO PROVE COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE BALL AND THAT RELEASE OF THE BALL IS VOLUNTARY AND INTENTIONAL.**
- f. **Catcher's Box**: The area within which the catcher shall stand until the pitcher delivers the ball.
- g. **Coach**: One adult designated to perform such duties as the manager may designate.
- h. **Offensive Coacher**: An adult coach or manager who occupies the coacher's box at first or third base to direct a runner or batter.
- i. **Defensive Coacher**: An adult coach or manager who occupies the outfield to direct a team's defense, at no time shall this coach interfere with a live ball or physically assist a defensive player. There shall be no more than two (2) coaches permitted at any one time and must be made known at pregame meeting with officials.
- j. **Dead Ball**: A ball out of play because of a legally created temporary suspension of play.
- k. **Fair Ball**: A batted ball that settles on fair ground between home and first base, or between home and third base, or that is over fair territory when bounding to the outfield past third or first base, or that touches first, second or third base, or that first falls on fair territory on or beyond first base or third base, or that, while on or over fair territory touches an umpire or player, or that, while over fair territory, passes out of the playing field in flight. **NOTE: A fair fly ball shall be adjudged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time such fielder touches the ball.**
- l. **Fair Territory**: The part of the playing field within, and including the first base and third base lines, from home base to the bottom of the playing field fence and perpendicularly up-wards. Home plate,

- first base and third base and all foul lines are in fair territory.
- m. Force Play: A play in which the runner legally loses the right to occupy a base by reason of the batter becoming a runner.
  - n. Forfeited Game: A game declared ended by the umpire-in-chief in favor of the offended team by a score of 6-0, for violation of the rules.
  - o. Foul Ball: A batted ball that settles on foul territory between home and first base, or between home and third base, or that bounds past first or third base on or over foul territory, or that first falls on foul territory beyond first or third base, or that while on or over foul territory, touches an umpire or player or any object foreign to the ground. NOTE: A foul fly shall be judged by the relative position of the ball and the foul line, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time such fielder touches the ball.
  - p. Foul Territory: The part of the playing field outside the first and third base lines extended to the fence and perpendicularly upwards.
  - q. Foul Tip: A batted ball that goes sharp and direct off the bat to the catcher's hands and is legally caught. It is not a foul tip unless caught and any foul tip that is caught is a strike, and the ball is in play. It is not a catch if it is a rebound unless the ball has first touched the catcher's glove or hand.
  - r. Home Team: Home teams bat last and shall occupy the first base bench unless otherwise marked.
  - s. Illegally Batted Ball: A ball hit by the batter with one or both feet on the ground entirely outside the batter's box
  - t. Infield Fly: No infield fly rule for Jr. Farm / Coach Pitch.
  - u. Inning: That portion of a game within which the teams alternate on offense and defense and in which there are three put outs for each team. Each team's time at bat is a half-inning. It will be held that an inning starts the moment the third out is made completing the preceding inning.
  - v. Interference:
    - 1) Offensive interference is an act by the team at bat, which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders, or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play. If the umpire calls a runner out for interference, all other runners shall return to the last base that was, in the judgment of the umpire, legally touched at the time of the interference, unless otherwise provided in these rules.
    - 2) Defensive interference is an act by a fielder that hinders a batter from hitting a pitch.
    - 3) Umpire interference occurs (1) when an umpire hinders, impedes, or prevents a catcher's throw attempting to prevent a stolen base. (2) When a fair ball touches an umpire in fair territory before passing a fielder.
    - 4) Spectator interference occurs when a spectator reaches out of the stands or over the retaining fence, or goes out on the field to touch a live ball.
    - 5) Coach / Pitching Machine interference occurs (1) when a batted ball hits the pitching machine (2) when a batted ball hits the coach occupying the pitchers position; or the coach / pitcher is forced to make a play to defend his/her self. In either case the ball is declared dead, the batter will be granted first base and all runners may advance 1 base.
    - 6) On any interference, the ball is dead.
  - w. Live Ball: A ball that is in play.
  - x. Manager: Person appointed by the Association to be responsible for the team's actions on the field and the sole representative of the team to communicate with the umpires and the opposing team. The manager shall always be responsible for the team's conduct, deference to the officials and observance of the rules. If the manager leaves the playing area he/she shall designate the coach as the substitute manager with the duties and rights of the manager.
  - y. Obstruction: The act of a fielder who while not in possession of the ball or not in the act of fielding the ball, impedes the progress of any runner.
  - z. "Play": The umpire's order to start a game or resume action following a dead ball.
  - aa. Strike: No need to call balls or strikes in Coach Pitch
  - aa. Strike Zone: The area from the batter's knees to the batter's armpits when the batter is in a normal stance.  
The batter shall determine the normal strike zone by the batter's stance when swinging at a pitch.
  - bb. Suspended Game: A game that has been delayed and will be resumed at a later date.
  - cc. Tag: The action of a fielder in touching a base with the body while holding the ball securely in the hand or glove, or touching the runner with the ball or the hand or glove holding the ball.
  - dd. Tie Game: A regulation game with identical runs scored by both teams.
  - ee. "Time": Called by umpire to indicate a temporary suspension of play.

## 5. The Game

- a. Length
  - 1) Jr. Farm / Coach Pitch Baseball is a maximum of **six (6) innings or 1 hour 30 minutes**. Games ending in a tie are recorded as such. A new inning may not be started after the 1 hour and 20 minutes has elapsed.

- 2) A game is official (if stopped due to weather or darkness) after **five (5) complete innings** have been played (**4 1/2 if the home team is ahead**) even if the time limit has not been reached.
- b. At Bat
- 1) The batting team can have not more than three (3) Authorized Adults on the field of play during the game to act as a.) Pitcher and b.) Base Coaches. A fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) Authorized Adult can act as "Bat Boy" if needed.
  - 2) The batting order shall consist of the entire roster, minimum of 8 players. Players arriving after the start of the game will be placed at the end of the batting order.
  - 3) An automatic out will be assessed to the ninth (9<sup>th</sup>) spot in the order whenever only eight (8) players are present. No automatic outs shall be assessed to a team starting with nine (9) players.
  - 4) An automatic out shall be assessed if it has been determined that a player has batted out of order, all base runners shall return to their previously occupied base at the start of that bat, the previously batter shall take their turn, and the order shall return to its original status.
  - 5) **5 run rule** is in effect. When the batting team scores 5 runs or is issued 3 outs in their half of the inning, that ½ of the inning is considered over and the batting team takes the field. This implies to the final inning / at bat as well.
  - 6) There is no "Mercy Rule"
- c. Base Running
- 1) When there is a viable attempt by a defensive player to throw the ball back to, or the ball has been thrown back to the pitcher's circle and "reasonably controlled" by a defensive player, the play is dead and base runners may no longer advance. Runners that have advanced more than half way "during a live ball" will be allowed to continue to the next base – this shall be the umpires' discretion.
  - 2) When a batted ball stops within the pitcher's circle prior to touching a defensive player, coach or pitching machine, the play is dead and base runners may no longer advance. Runners that have advanced more than half way "during a live ball" will be allowed to continue to the next base – this shall be the umpires' discretion.
  - 3) A base runner may not lead off or steal any base under any circumstance.
  - 4) One (1) base may be advanced on an overthrow (out of play). Field boundaries will be in accordance with the ground rules as discussed with the official prior to the game. Base runners advance at their own risk.
6. Pitching
- 1) The Coach (or designated Authorized Adult representative) pitches to his own team. The coach / designated adult may pitch to his/her team "or" utilize a league provided mechanical pitching machine (to a child catcher) or from within the pitching circle (36 feet).
  - 2) If a Coach is not utilizing the pitching he/she must remain within the chalk-circle and must pitch overhand to each batter.
  - 3) The Coach cannot switch from Coach Pitch to Machine Pitch or vice versa during some players at bat (example; Player with 2 strikes against them when the coach is pitching cannot be changed to the machine). Such changes shall result in an automatic out, regardless of pitch count.
  - 4) Not all batters on the team utilizing the pitching machine have to hit from it. This is as per coach's discretion based on the batters hitting proficiency.
  - 5) If a team elects to utilize the pitching machine, it shall be set up prior to the start of the game and left in play for the duration of the game.
  - 6) Five (5) pitches per player. **If a batter has 3 swinging strikes within 5 pitches "or" the batter does not hit the ball fair within the 5 pitches the batter is called out.** If the batter fouls off the 5<sup>th</sup> pitch they are awarded one more pitch. If the batter fouls off the 6<sup>th</sup> pitch, he/she is out.
7. Starting the Game
- a. The umpire will proceed to home plate where the managers of each team shall meet 5-10 minutes before the scheduled start time to discuss game rules and ground rules.
  - b. The home team will sit on the 1st base side unless otherwise marked and is responsible to maintain the official scorebook and should get the scorebook signed by the official upon completion of the contest (complete, or not complete game).
  - c. A team can start with a minimum of eight (8) players to avoid forfeiture.
  - d. There will be a five-minute grace period for any team not having at least eight (8) players. If any teams cannot field the minimum of 8 players, the game is forfeited.
  - e. Any players arriving after the start of the game shall be added to the bottom of the batting order and both the Official AND Opposing team shall be notified. They will be allowed to take their defensive positions at the start of the next inning.

- f. The players of the home team shall then take their defensive positions. The first batter of the visiting team shall take position in the batter's box, the umpire shall call "play ball" and the game shall start.
  - 1. The defensive team will field no more than 10 players in the field, consisting of 4 outfielders, 4 infielders, catcher and "pitcher"
  - 2. When the defensive team fields 9 players, the coach can elect to either;
    - a) Field 3 outfielders, 4 infielders, and "pitcher"; **OR**
    - b) Field 4 outfielders, 4 infielders and "pitcher"
  - 3. When the defensive team fields 8 players, they will field 3 outfielders, 4 infield, and a "pitcher".
  - 4. When the catcher position is not to be fielded, an Authorized Adult shall act as catcher for the pitcher/machine and the "pitcher" shall cover any defensive plays at the plate.
  - 5. The defensive team can have not more than two (2) Authorized Adult in the outfield to Coach their outfielders. Any contact between the outfield coach and a live ball, intentional or not, the ball shall be considered dead, the batter awarded 1<sup>st</sup> (or 2<sup>nd</sup> if advanced more than half way) and all base runners advance. – This will be at Umpires discretion.
- g. When the ball is placed in play, all players other than the pitcher and catcher shall be in fair territory. Players other than the pitcher and catcher may be stationed anywhere in fair territory during the game.
- h. The umpire shall have the authority to call a game on account of weather, field conditions, etc.
- i. Except for the batter, runner, or base coaches, no member of the offensive team shall leave the dugout area. An Authorized Adult and catcher may leave only to warm up.
- j. No manager, coach or player shall at any time, whether from the bench or the playing field or elsewhere...
  - 1) Incite or try to incite through words or gestures, a demonstration by spectators.
  - 2) Use languages, which will in any manner, refer to or reflect upon opposing players, umpires or spectators.
  - 3) No fielder shall take a position in the batter's line of vision with the intent of creating a visual distraction to the batter.
  - 4) Engage in "chatter" intended to distract the batter. Players may shout words of encouragement to the pitcher, batter, etc. of their team in unison or otherwise.

#### **8. How A Team Scores:**

- 1) One run shall be scored each time a runner legally advances and touches first, second, third and home before three players are put out to end an inning. However, a run does not score on a play where the third out is made by the batter-runner before touching first base, by any runner being forced out, by a preceding runner who failed to touch one of the bases.
- 2) Once a team has reached its inning maximum runs the ball is declared dead and no other runs may score.
- 3) The score of a regulation game is the total number of runs scored by each team at the moment a game ends.
- 4) When a game is halted; the score, runner positions, etc. shall freeze at that point and resumed at the discretion of the umpire or association officials.
- 5) The game is considered no contest if the minimum amount of innings are not completed.

#### **9. It is interference by a batter or runner when:**

- 1) After a third strike, the batter hinders the catcher in an attempt to field the ball.
- 2) After hitting or bunting the ball fair, while holding the bat, the bat hits the ball in a second time in fair territory. The ball is dead and no runners may advance. If the batter runner drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, and in the determination of the umpire there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball then the ball is live and in play.
- 3) The batter intentionally deflects the course of a foul ball in any manner.
- 4) Before two are out and a runner on third base, the batter hinders a fielder in making a play at home base; the runner is out.
- 5) Any member or members of the offensive team stand or gather around any base, to which a runner is advancing, to confuse, hinder or add to the difficulty of the fielders. Such runner shall be declared out for the interference of teammate or teammates.
- 6) Any batter or runner who has just been put out hinders or impedes any following play being made on a runner. Such runner shall be declared out for the interference of a teammate.
- 7) If, in the judgment of the umpire, a base runner willfully and deliberately interferes with a batted ball or a fielder in the act of fielding a batted ball with the obvious intent to break up a double play, the ball is dead. The umpire shall call the runner out for interference and also call out the batter-runner because of the action of the runner.
- 8) In no event may bases be run or runs scored because of such action by a runner.
- 9) In the event that a base coach touches a runner during a live ball situation the runner shall be declared out.

- 10) With a runner on third base, the base coach leaves the box and acts in any manner to draw a throw by a fielder.
- 11) In running the last half of the distance from home to first base while the ball is being fielded to first base, the batter-runner runs outside (to the right of) the three-foot line, or inside (to the left of) the foul line and in the umpire's judgment, interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base or attempting to field a batted ball.
- 12) The runner fails to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball, provided that two or more fielders attempt to field a batted ball and the runner comes in contact with one or more of them the umpire shall determine which fielder is to benefit from this rule, and shall not declare the runner out for coming in contact with a fielder other than the one the umpire determines to be entitled to field such a ball.
- 13) A fair ball touches the batter or runner in fair territory before touching a fielder. If a fair ball goes through or by an infielder and touches a runner immediately back of said in-fielder or touches the runner after having been deflected by a fielder, the umpire shall not declare the runner out for being touched by a batted ball. In making such decision, the umpire must be convinced that the ball passed through or by the infielder and that no other infielder had the chance to make the play on the ball, if in judgment of the umpire, the runner deliberately and intentionally kicks such a batted ball on which the infield had missed a play, then the runner shall be called out for interference.
- 14) Penalty for interference - The runner is out and the ball is dead.

#### **10. Minimum Play**

All players present in uniform will be included in the batting lineup for the entire game and must play two (2) complete innings; six (6) consecutive outs in the field. Players on the bench must be placed in the field no later than the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning. Insert tardy players at the end of the batting line-up if they arrive after the game begins. Any player arriving after the start of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning is only required to play 1 inning in the field.

#### **11. Halted games due to time/weather**

Once a game is started, the decision to continue play or stop, because of the condition of the diamond and weather condition, or time/daylight constrains, will be determined by the umpire, and his/her decision will be final. In the event the game is temporarily halted, the teams will not leave the immediate area until the umpire has made a final decision. If the game cannot be finished, it will be ruled either as

- a) No contest if the requirements of an official game are not met; **OR**
- b) An official game if 5 innings have been completed (4 1/2 if home team is ahead).

Above mentioned games will not be scheduled for continuation.

#### **12. Cancelled Games/Weather**

When possible, game cancellations will go out no less than 1 hour before game time. Any game cancelled due to weather will not be rescheduled unless there is the potential for less than an eight (8) games season. Any deviation will be determined by the majority vote from the participating Rec. Associations. In the event that the Heat Index is at 105 degrees at game time, the game will not be played.