Branchburg Baseball Club Playing Rules

National, American, AAA, AA, and Rookie

(updated 10FEB2025)

Section A - General Rules / Reminders

- The Branchburg Baseball Club follows Babe Ruth/Cal Ripken Rules unless superseded in these rules.
- Alcohol is not permitted at the field or any other facility the Branchburg Baseball Club uses. Coaches, assistant coaches, umpires and/or spectators found with, or smelling of alcohol will be removed from the field and will be suspended for at least one week.
- No children or spectators will be allowed to operate Branchburg Baseball Club machinery. Children are not to be near the fryer or grill, or on the club “Gator” / cart. Only authorized adults may use these machines.
- Do not drive personal vehicles outside of the designated parking areas. No cars are to be driven directly to the fields to drop off children or equipment. If you have a special need, you must first get approval from the Branchburg Baseball Club Board of Directors.
- Team managers are responsible for making sure all equipment, tarps, and scoring systems are returned to the proper areas in the club dugouts. Scoreboards should only be operated by team coaches or parents.
- Spectators should refrain from smoking cigarettes and cigars while the game is being played.

Section B – Conduct

- All participants, players, coaches, managers, as well as parents, are required to read and sign the BBC Code of Conduct prior to participating in the Branchburg Baseball Club.
- Only a manager can make an appeal to the ruling umpire on their rule decision. Judgment calls such as “strikes”, “balls” (unless a check swing), “safe”, “out”, “fair” and “foul” calls cannot be appealed.
- If the manager feels the umpire has made a decision contrary to the BBC or Babe Ruth/Cal Ripken playing rules, the manager or acting manager (not a coach or player) shall call time and, if granted, may approach the umpire and discuss with the umpire their interpretation of the rule. The umpire’s decision will be final. Time is not granted until the umpire says “Time”.
- No Game Protests will be allowed. The plate umpire’s judgment is final. Spectator

control is the responsibility of the team manager.

- Spectators cannot observe the games behind the backstop within 25 feet. It is suggested they observe the game on the bleachers provided.
- Any player, manager, or coach using foul or bad language shall be immediately ejected from the game.
- Managers, coaches, and players shall not dispute, question, or appeal any judgment call made by the umpires. Any manager, coach, or player that questions a judgment call will be immediately ejected from the game after one warning. If the umpire feels that their behavior is severe, they can be ejected from the game without a warning.
- If a manager argues and is belligerent or verbally abusive to an umpire or opposing manager or coaches, the umpire may award a victory by forfeit to the other team and will then leave the field.
- If an umpire feels that a manager has lost control of their players behavior, the game will be ended immediately and a forfeit will be awarded to the other team.
- The umpire's officiating begins upon their arrival on the field and ends upon their departure. Attempting to discuss any umpire's decisions with them before or after the game or after they have left the field is prohibited and may result in ejection from the game even though it has ended. Possible further disciplinary action from the Board may occur upon review.
- Throwing equipment is prohibited at all times. An umpire may eject a player for throwing equipment on the field, on-deck area, or in the dugout after one caution. If the umpire feels that the behavior of the player is severe, the player can be ejected from the game without a caution.
- Player safety and the values of good sportsmanship are to be emphasized above all other considerations. Unsportsmanlike conduct, including off-color language, trash talk, intentional base path collisions, bean balls, and bat or helmet throwing are not to be tolerated and will result in an ejection without a warning from the umpire.
- Any manager, coach, player, or spectator ejected from a game will receive a mandatory minimum of one game suspension and may receive further discipline from the Board upon review of the incident. It is the manager's responsibility to report any player ejections to his or her league's commissioner or other BBC Board member immediately following the game's conclusion. The home plate umpire shall be responsible for informing the Umpire-in Chief or other BBC Board member of any manager, coach or spectator ejections.

Section C – Participation

- Only adults certified by the New Jersey/Rutgers Youth Sports Council are to be allowed on the playing field or in the bench areas. No exceptions to this rule will be allowed. In addition to the Rutgers Safety certification, all managers and administrators are required to be cleared via a league-approved and administered background verification service.
- Only uniformed players, managers, coaches, and umpires shall be permitted on the playing field and dugout during the games.
- All players must remain in their dugout when the team is at bat except for the batter, base runners, the "on deck" batter, and the first and third base coaches. When the team is in the field, all reserved players and coaches shall be in the dugout. Only one manager and three assistants are allowed in the dugout.

- Players shall not be used for base coaches unless there is not a coach available. If the player does coach, the player must wear a helmet.
- No one is permitted to bring any food in the dugout while a game is being played.
- All players must be in the batting line up at all times. For example, a 12-player team will have a 12-player batting order.
- For any team in the field for six innings, a player must play four (4) innings. For any team in the field for five innings, a player must play for three innings. A player must not sit for more than one (1) consecutive inning at a time.
- Free substitution for players in the field is allowed but the batting order cannot be changed.

Section D - League-Wide Start and End of Play

Minimum Players

- At least eight players are required for a team to start an official game in Minors 60, Majors 60, Majors 70, and Pony. Players who arrive after the game has started are placed at the bottom of the batting order. Play may continue with less than eight players in the event of an injury, at the managers' discretion. For the sake of fair play, the last batted out may play right field on a team with less than nine active players.
- A team is allowed to use a substitute player(s) if and only if it has less than nine (9) players present for a game. This player(s) must be a registered player in the Branchburg Baseball Club and will be supplied by the playing team's league commissioner or BBC Board Member. Commissioners will have a list of players from their respective league who are available upon request to play one league higher than their league. At no time will a manager attempt to obtain his or her own players directly to fill voids in their lineup. It is the manager's sole responsibility to make sure he or she can field a team prior to the day of the game. Managers should contact their league's commissioner or BB Board Member as soon as they know they will not have enough players for a particular game. Substitutes must play the outfield and must be placed in the last spot of the batting order. If there are only eight (8) players, then the umpire will not declare an out for the 9th batter/player or injured player.
- If a player must leave during the game, the player's manager must inform the opposing manager. The player's turn in the batting order is skipped. No out will be declared whenever that player's subsequent turn(s) at bat occurs.

Forfeits

- Forfeits due to player shortages should be avoided unless completely necessary. The goal is to find a way to play the game, not gain an easy team victory through an opposing team's player shortage.
- If a team cannot field a full, the opposing team will provide as many outfielders as necessary to bring the other team to 9 players in the field.
- If there is a need for the umpire to declare a forfeit, the winning team will be awarded a 7-0 victory.

Home Teams

- Home teams occupy the first base dugout and are responsible for raking, grooming, and lining the field, if needed.
- The home team is responsible for supplying two new baseballs for the game.

- Umpire pay will be handled through the snack shack.

Pre-Game

- For all fields except WOP1 and WOP2, all pre-game activity is to be conducted in the outfield area.
- The infield will be left in game-ready condition for all fields with a dirt infield, including WOP17.

Time Limits

- The home plate umpire will keep the official game time. No new inning may start after 1 hour and 45 minutes from the scheduled starting time.
- It is the responsibility of the managers and umpire to make certain the game begins at its scheduled time. The BBC uses a third-party service to schedule umpires. Please allow the umpire sufficient time to reach the field as many umpires now are scheduled for multiple games per day and may be coming from a game in a nearby town.
- All games must end 10 minutes before the start of the next scheduled game.
- A game on a lighted field must end no later than 9:50 p.m.
- If a game ends due to darkness prior to the completion of an inning, the last full inning played will be the basis of the game's outcome.
- Games ending in a tie will be recorded as such.
- Delay tactics by managers, coaches, or players will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and will not be tolerated.
- Four completed turns at-bats by the team who is losing constitutes a complete game.
- Umpires will be the final word for calling games because of darkness. Coaches are not to involve themselves in the decision unless asked.
- Extra Innings (in the event of a tie after regulation play) are allowed so long as it does not conflict with any of the other rules listed above.

Game Results

- The winning team manager is responsible for reporting game results immediately to the league commissioner or BBC VP.

Equipment

- Bats must conform to the 2018 USA Baseball Bat standards and contain the USA baseball stamp (see picture below). Barrel Maximum on these bats is 2 5/8".



- Players caught using a non-USA bat will be declared out and all baserunners returned to their previous bases. A players second offense with using a non-USA bat will cause the player to be ejected from the game.
- Players must be attired in uniforms supplied by the League. Uniforms consist of a hat, shirt, and pants. Players cannot pay in shorts.
- All catchers are required to wear a protective cup. All other players are encouraged to wear one. All managers must ensure that catchers are wearing a protective cup before they are placed into the game at that position.
- When behind the plate, the catcher must wear a protective mask with a throat guard, chest protector, shin guards, cup support, protective headgear, and a

catcher's glove.
- Catchers warming up new pitchers behind dugouts are required to wear a mask with a throat guard, helmet, and protective cup.
- Batters and base runners must wear protective helmets. Although not required, all players should consider wearing a face guard and heart guard.
- Sneakers and molded cleat shoes are the only approved footwear allowed. Metal spikes are not allowed.

Batting

- The lineup will consist of all players on the team.

Player Rotation

- Each player must play at least one inning in the infield before the end of the fourth inning. Catching and pitching positions are both considered to be infield positions.
- Each player must play at least one inning in the outfield during the game. Further rotation of players through positions is strongly encouraged. The spirit of this rule is to give all players additional experience at playing different positions.
- No player can sit out a second inning until every player on the team has sat out at least one inning. Exceptions will be made in extreme instances only, such as injury.
- Managers are highly recommended to remove pitchers who are struggling to throw strikes. It is encouraged, not mandated, to remove a pitcher if he or she has walked and/or hit 4 batters in an inning.

Pitching

- The below pitch count rules will be used:

League	Daily Max Pitches	Required Rest 0 Days	Required Rest 1 Day	Required Rest 2 Days	Required Rest 3 Days	Required Rest 4 Days	Max Inning Limit per Game
AA	40	N/A	1 to 20	21 to 40	N/A	N/A	2
AAA	60	1 to 20	21 to 35	36 to 45	46 to 60	N/A	2
American	65	1 to 20	21 to 35	36 to 50	51 to 65	N/A	2
National	75	1 to 25	26 to 40	41 to 55	56 to 65	66+	3

- It is the responsibility of each manager to maintain are accurate pitch count.
- Pitcher's Warm-Up - 8 pitches are allowed upon entering a game with 5 pitches in each ensuing inning.
- Pitcher's Equipment and Attire: Umpires, and not opposing coaches, have the authority to order appropriate changes if they deem that a pitcher's glove-color, undershirt, wristbands, etc. may create an unfair advantage.
- Pitcher's Removal - Once a player is removed from pitching, regardless of whether the player remains in the game or not, the player may not return to pitching in that same game.
- Pitchers' Sideline Warm-up: Pitchers warming up in foul territory must face the outfield fence with their back to plate. A "spotter" facing the field must be used to protect pitchers from batted and thrown balls. Catchers warming up new pitchers are required to wear a mask with a throat guard, helmet, and protective cup. All players must wear helmets.
- Balks:
  - No balks are called in AA, Minors 60 or Majors 60.
  - In Majors 70, a pitcher will receive a warning for the first balk committed. The pitcher's second offense will result in a balk being called by the umpire.
- Intentional walks are not permitted.

- Pitching Conferences: A manager or an assistant coach may visit the mound twice in an inning. Upon the second visit, the pitcher must be removed from the pitching position.

Strike Zone

- The strike zone is from the letters to the knees over the plate plus one ball width on each side of the plate.

Courtesy Runner

- A courtesy runner may be used for the catcher with two outs in any inning.
- The player who made the last batted out becomes the courtesy runner.
- The runner who was replaced by the courtesy runner must take the field as the catcher.
- On exceptionally warm days, the managers of the game may agree to expand this rule to include pitchers and catchers with less than 2 outs. This should be agreed to with the umpire prior to the start of the game.

Base Runner Avoid Rule

- The base runner must avoid contact with a defensive player if there is a “play” at the base the base runner is attempting to advance to.
- If the base runner makes contact with the defensive player directly involved in a play, the base runner will be declared out. A “play” is defined as a defensive player attempting to put out the runner by tag or force play while the ball is in flight towards the play or the defensive player has possession of the ball.
- This is a judgment call made by the umpire.

Headfirst Sliding

- Headfirst sliding while attempting to advance to any base is prohibited. The first team violation will be a warning. The second violation will require the base runner to return to the previous base. The third violation will result in the base runner being declared out. In all scenarios, if the defensive team records an out in a head-first sliding situation, the out will stand.
- Headfirst sliding when returning to a base is permitted at all times.

Throwing the bat

- If a player throws a bat while at bat after swinging or hitting the ball, it will result in a warning to the batter.
- The second time the same batter throws the bat he will be declared out. If the action is severe, the batter can be declared out and ejected from the game without a warning.
- This is a judgment call made by the umpire.

Helmets

- Batting helmets must be worn at all times while in the batting cages, on deck areas, and in the live ball areas. Violations will result in a team warning initially with a second offense resulting in an ejection.

On-Deck Batter

- The on-deck batter must be in the batting cage while swinging a bat to loosen up.
- The double-deck batter may get his helmet and bat but may not swing a bat until he enters the on-deck cage in his proper turn.
- Players are not allowed to exit the dugout to warm up for upcoming at bats. There are several fields with active walkways near and behind the dugouts. Swinging bats in these areas may result in in advertent injuries to players or spectators.

Catcher

- The catcher must properly wear catcher's gear at all times.
- The team manager is responsible for ensuring that buckles and clips are properly fastened, masks and helmets are properly fitted, and that protective cups are worn.

Jewelry

- When a player is in the live ball area all jewelry is to be removed, except for medical emergency alert chains which must then be taped over, or religious medals which must then be taped over and covered by clothing.

Inclement Weather

- Lightning
  - Umpires shall stop play at the first sign of lightning or nearby thunder.
  - Players and spectators should seek cover away from the field and bleachers preferably in a motor vehicle.
  - The game will resume 30 minutes from the last lightning/thunder.
- Rainouts
  - The BBC will communicate field closures through team managers and the BBC website at www.branchburgbaseball.com.
  - Field closures will be determined prior to 4:30 p.m. for weeknight games and by 8:00 a.m. for Saturday games with a 9 a.m. start time. A decision regarding Saturday afternoon and evening games will be made by 12 p.m.
  - If the weather is uncertain, assume there will be a game.
  - The BBC will reschedule rainouts as long as fields are available and time allows within the league master schedule. Leagues that end the season with playoffs will be given top priority to make up their games.
  - Games should be played during showers until the umpire halts play, or, if an umpire is not present, until the managers agree to stop play. However, if umpires are not present, but games on adjacent fields have umpires, then managers must follow decisions made on those adjacent fields.

Tiebreakers

- Standings for all divisions will be maintained on the BBC website and will be used to determine playoff seedings.
- Tiebreaker criteria:
  - 1st tiebreaker: head-to-head record.
  - 2nd tiebreaker: runs allowed.
  - In the event there are two or more teams tied and all teams have the same record against each other, runs allowed will be used to break the multiple team tie. Any further ties will be broken using the rules stated above.
- All official games count toward the standings, including games ending in a tie.

Playoffs

- All playoff games are played under the same league-wide and division rules used throughout the regular season.
- Playoff games are played to a conclusion and therefore the 1 hour and 45 minute time limit rule does not apply.
- Minors 60: The 5 run per inning rule will apply in playoff games. Due to the nature of the 5 run rule, there will be a mercy rule of 11 runs at the end of the 4th inning and 6 runs at the end of the 5th inning.
- Majors 60 - The 6 run per inning rule will apply in playoff games. Due to the nature

of the 6-run rule, there will be a mercy rule of 12 runs at the end of the 4th inning and 7 runs at the end of the 5th inning.

Section E - Division Rules of Play

National (Majors 70)

- **End of Turn at Bat**
  - A team's turn at bat ends after three outs are recorded.
  - The 5-run / 6-run rule does not apply in this league.
- **Pitching Limits and Safety**
  - April games - A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 2 innings in one game. One pitch thrown in an inning constitutes one inning pitched. The pitch count limits still apply.
  - May and June games – Follow the pitch count guidelines.
  - Pitch count guidelines
    - Max pitches per game – 75
    - 1 to 25 pitches thrown – 0 days rest required
    - 26 to 40 pitches throw – 1 day of rest required
    - 41 to 55 pitches thrown – 2 days rest required
    - 56 to 65 pitches thrown – 3 days rest required
    - 65+ pitches thrown – 4 days rest required
  - Pitchers who reach the maximum number of pitches allowed during an at bat may finish that at bat.
  - Balks - During the regular and post season, one balk warning per pitcher per game will be allowed. After the first warning, all balk rules apply.
  - Managers need to be mindful of pitcher over-usage and must stay in communication with players regarding other teams that they may be pitching for. The BBC has communicated with travel team managers that rec baseball is a higher priority than spring travel leagues and that pitcher usage needs to be deferred to the needs of the rec team manager.
- **Dropped 3rd Strike & Infield Fly Rule** – These rules are used in Majors 70.
- **Bat Size** - As stated in league wide rules above, all bats must conform to the 2018 USA Baseball bat rules. All bats must have the USA Baseball stamp.
- **Mid-inning defensive changes are allowed only in the following instances:**
  - Due to a change of pitcher, the pitcher and one other field player may swap positions. The pitcher may also go to the bench and a bench player may replace the fielder who has come into pitch.
  - If a player is injured, the injured player may be substituted from the bench only and other players may not change positions.
  - The spirit of this rule is intended to keep players from swapping positions in the middle of an inning due to changing game situations.
- **Mercy Rule:**
  - After 4 innings, if a team is leading by more than 10 runs**,** the official game will be over with the score at this point reported to the league. The umpire will be sent home. It's encouraged to continue playing the remainder of the

game to get players extra work. An assistant coach can umpire in these situations.

- **Base Stealing**
  - All bases are open for stealing.
  - Straight steals of home are a player safety issue for the baserunner, batter and catcher and are not allowed. Stealing of home is only permitted on passed balls or wild pitches. Baserunners who attempt a straight steal of home will be called out and all other baserunners who may have advanced will be returned to their original bases.
  - Base runners may lead off from the base while the pitcher has the baseball.
  - Once a team has a lead of 10 or more runs, the team leading can no longer steal bases or advance to the next base on a passed ball.
  - A player who steals a base or advances on a passed ball when his team is leading by 10 or more runs will be returned to the previous base. The team that is losing by 10 or more runs may continue to steal bases.

American (Majors 60)

- **End of Turn at Bat**
  - A team's turn at bat ends after 3 outs or 6 runs are recorded.
- **Pitching Limits and Safety**
  - A pitcher may throw a maximum of two innings per game as long as the pitcher remains under the total number of pitches per game guidelines.
    - Max pitches per game – 65
    - 1 to 20 pitches thrown – 0 days rest required
    - 21 to 35 pitches throw – 1 day of rest required
    - 36 to 50 pitches thrown – 2 days rest required
    - 51 to 65 pitches thrown – 3 days rest required
  - Pitchers who reach the maximum number of pitches allowed during an at bat may finish that at bat.
  - Managers need to be mindful of pitcher over-usage and must stay in communication with players regarding other teams that they may be pitching for. The BBC has communicated with travel team managers that rec baseball is a higher priority than spring travel leagues and that pitcher usage needs to be deferred to the needs of the rec team manager.
- **Infield Fly Rule -** The infield fly rule is not used in American.
- **Dead Ball -** The ball is dead when the pitcher controls the ball on the pitching mound, defined as the dirt rise or portable mound in the middle of the infield about 6 feet in diameter.
- **Fielding Positions** - Normal fielding positions are used.
- **Base Stealing**
  - Base runners are permitted to steal 2nd and 3rd base.
  - Base runners are not permitted to steal home or score on a passed ball/wild pitch.
  - Base runners cannot score on overthrows to 3rd base during stolen base attempts. They are permitted to score on overthrows to 3rd base during

batted ball game action.
    - Base runners may not leave the base until the pitched baseball crosses the front of home plate. Base runners who leave early will be sent back to the previous base.
    - There is no limit to the number of stolen bases per at bat.
    - Once a team has a lead of 10 or more runs, the team leading can no longer steal bases or advance to the next base on a passed ball/wild pitch. A player who steals a base or advances on a passed ball when their team is leading by 10 or more runs will be returned to the previous base. The team that is losing by 10 or more runs may continue to steal bases.
- **Bunting** – Bunting is permitted.
- **Dropped Third Strike** - This rule does not apply in Majors 60.
- **Mid-inning defensive changes are allowed only in the following instances:**
    - Due to a change of pitcher, the pitcher and one other field player may swap positions. The pitcher may also go to the bench and a bench player may replace the fielder who has come into pitch.
    - If a player is injured, the injured player may be substituted from the bench only and other players may not change positions.
    - The spirit of this rule is intended to keep players from swapping positions in the middle of an inning due to changing game situations.

AAA (Minors 60)

- **End of Turn at Bat**
    - A team's turn at bat ends after 3 outs or 5 runs are recorded.
- **Pitching Limits and Safety**
    - A pitcher may throw a maximum of two innings per game as long as the pitcher remains under the total number of pitches per game guidelines.
        - Max pitches per game – 60
        - 1 to 20 pitches thrown – 0 days rest required
        - 21 to 35 pitches throw – 1 day of rest required
        - 36 to 45 pitches thrown – 2 days rest required
        - 46 to 60 pitches thrown – 3 days rest required
    - Pitchers who reach the maximum number of pitches allowed during an at bat may finish that at bat.
    - Managers need to be mindful of pitcher over-usage and must stay in communication with players regarding other teams that they may be pitching for. The BBC has communicated with travel team managers that rec baseball is a higher priority than spring travel leagues and that pitcher usage needs to be deferred to the needs of the rec team manager.
- **Infield Fly Rule -** The infield fly rule is not used in AAA.
- **Dead Ball -** The ball is dead when the pitcher controls the ball on the pitching mound, defined as the dirt rise or portable mound in the middle of the infield about 6 feet in diameter.
- **Fielding Positions**
    - 4 outfielders will be used. 10 players total in the field. The feet of all outfielders

must be touching the outfield grass.
    - Infield positions will be normal.
    - Teams with only 9 players will use 3 outfielders.
    - Games may be played with teams having only 7 or 8 players, but outfielders should be borrowed from the end of the other team's batting lineup to get to 9 fielders.
- **Base Stealing**
    - Stealing of 3rd base is permitted.
    - Stealing of 2nd base and home is not permitted.
    - Base runners may not leave the base until the pitched baseball crosses the front of home plate. Base runners who leave early will be sent back to the previous base.
    - Baserunners may steal only one base per at bat. Baserunners advancing on a passed ball counts as a stolen base.
    - Baserunners may not advance to the next base on errors made during the stolen base attempt, i.e.: errant throws from the catcher, mishandled balls by the fielder, etc.
    - Once a team has a lead of 10 or more runs, the team leading can no longer steal bases or advance to the next base on a passed ball. A player who steals a base or advances on a passed ball when their team is leading by 10 or more runs will be returned to the previous base. The team that is losing by 10 or more runs may continue to steal bases.
- **Bunting** – Bunting is permitted.
- **Dropped Third Strike** - This rule does not apply in Minors 60.
- **Mid-inning defensive changes are allowed only in the following instances**
    - Due to a change of pitcher, the pitcher and one other field player may swap positions. The pitcher may also go to the bench and a bench player may replace the fielder who has come into pitch.
    - If a player is injured, the injured player may be substituted from the bench only and other players may not change positions.
    - The spirit of this rule is intended to keep players from swapping positions in the middle of an inning due to changing game situations.

AA (formerly Machine Pitch)

- **End of Turn at Bat**
    - A team's turn at bat ends after 3 outs or 5 runs are recorded.
- **Pitching Limits and Safety**
    - Innings 1, 2, 5 and 6 will be coach pitch
    - Innings 3 and 4 will be player pitch
    - A pitcher may throw a maximum of two innings per game as long as the pitcher remains under the total number of pitches per game guidelines.
        - Max pitches per game – 40
        - 1 to 20 pitches thrown – 1 days rest required
        - 21 to 40 pitches throw – 2 day of rest required
    - Pitchers who reach the maximum number of pitches allowed during an at bat

may finish that at bat.
    - Managers need to be mindful of pitcher over-usage and must stay in communication with players regarding other teams that they may be pitching for. The BBC has communicated with travel team managers that rec baseball is a higher priority than spring travel leagues and that pitcher usage needs to be deferred to the needs of the rec team manager.
- **Infield Fly Rule** - The infield fly rule is not used in Machine Pitch.
- **Bunting** – Bunting is not permitted.
- **Base Running**
    - Base stealing is not permitted.
    - Base runners may advance more than 1 base on balls hit to the outfield and on player errors.
    - Baserunners may advance a maximum of 2 bases.
    - Once a batted ball is returned to the area of the pitcher's mound, runners can no longer advance. Runners in between bases are awarded the next base if they have advanced at least half way to that base.
    - The focus of baserunning should be to teach how it is properly done, not to take advantage of players who have made errors or are slow getting to field a ball.
- **Dropped Third Strike** - This rule does not apply.
- **Pitching**
    - Coaches will pitch from a distance of 30 to 46 feet from home plate.
    - During coach pitch innings, the team on defense will have a pitcher's helper on defense to either side of the pitching mound, but not in front of the coach.
    - Players will pitch in front of the pitching mound at a distance of 40 feet from home plate.
- **Batting**
    - Each batter will get 5 coach pitches to hit the ball.
    - 3 swinging strikes and the batter will be out.
    - If the batter reaches the 5th pitch and does not put the ball into play, the batter is out.
    - If the batter fouls off the 5th pitch, the batter will be given another opportunity to put the final pitch into play.
    - During player pitch innings, the batter will start with a count of 1-1.
    - Batters hit by a pitched ball from a coach will not be awarded 1st base.
    - Batters hit by a pitched ball from a player are awarded 1st base.
- **Fielding**
    - 4 outfielders will be used.
    - The catcher position will be used.
        - Catchers must be fully equipped and must wear a protective cup.
        - If the player at the catcher position does not feel comfortable using a catcher's mitt, the player may wear his fielding glove.
        - Managers are encouraged to use a different catcher each inning.

Rookie

- **Bases**
  - Using the provided portable bases, space the bases 45' apart.
  - Some fields used for Rookie at Old York School and Stony Brook School have bases already spaced 45' apart. The portable bases will not be needed at these fields.
  - As the season progresses, teams may decide to use the normal 60' bases. This should be agreed to by the team managers prior to starting the game.
- **End of Turn at Bat**
  - A team's turn at bat ends after all its players have batted once.
  - No scores are kept.
  - Outs are not recorded.
  - Optional: If the teams playing each other have an unbalanced number of batters, the team with the lesser number of batters will allow enough players to bat twice in each inning to ensure an equal number at bats for both teams in the game.
    Example - If one team has 8 and the other 6, two players on the team with 6 players should bat twice each inning.
- **Hitting**
  - No strikeouts.
  - Players hit from a batting tee.
  - Ball must land five paces from home plate to be considered a hit.
  - Starting on May 1st (or sooner if agreed upon by managers) coaches may pitch to those batters ready to face "live pitching." Depending upon the player's ability and confidence, this can be underhand or overhand. If a fair ball is not hit after 5 "good" pitches, then the tee must be used to finish that particular at bat. To keep the pace of the game moving, no more than 5 pitchers are permitted unless the 5th pitch is a foul ball or a bad pitch.
  - Bunting is not permitted.

- **Fielding**
  - Coaches are on the field to provide instruction throughout the game, including during plays, but they SHOULD NOT handle batted or thrown balls. Kids need to move, let them run after the ball in the outfield.
  - Everyone plays the field. Nobody sits out.
  - The four infield positions and the pitcher's "fielding" position remain intact, there are no catchers, and all other players play in the outfield.
  - Outfielders must play far enough behind infielders to be "fair" to the hitter, as well as to give infielders room to learn how to play their positions.
- **Base Running**
  - Players may only advance one base, even on balls hit to the outfield.
  - Once coach pitch begins in May, players may advance one extra base on balls hit to the outfield. Advancement stops when the ball is returned to the infield, even if it is not controlled by an infielder.
  - Any runner who is put out on the base paths will stay on base.

- **Catching** - Coaches catch.
- **Challenger Field**
  - For any games or practices located on the Challenger field, spikes or cleats are not allowed. Only sneakers are allowed on this field.
  - Any violation of this rule may forfeit BBC use of the field.
- **Game time limits**
  - 2 hours of playing time have been allotted on each field for games. Managers are encouraged to use as much of that time as possible to work with the players to further develop their playing skills. 75 minutes is a recommended time allotment for this age group.
  - The first 30 minutes of the game should be used for warm-up and skill development.
  - A full 3 innings are normally played, but managers should feel free to extend the game beyond that at their discretion to continue working with the players as long as it fits within the 2 hours that have been allotted on the field.

Batting Cage Etiquette (sent to BBC membership on 5/29/24):

- Regarding the usage of the batting cages at White Oak Park, the cages are open and available for the general public to use on a first come first serve basis. There are no reservations of cages available. We expect that the batting cages will be shared courteously throughout all our members and the community.
- Even though no reservations for the cages are available, we do ask that our members politely defer usage of the cages to teams who are arriving to warm up immediately preceding games being played. During weeknight evenings, this is generally in the 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. time frame. On Saturdays, this could be anytime up to an hour prior to our 9am, 11am, 1pm, 3pm and 5pm