



9U Overview

This is a brief overview of the Thornhill Baseball philosophy, and some tips on how to structure your approach when coaching in our 9U division.

- All players must have their OWN helmet with a cage on front (highly recommended). Players must wear their helmets in the field as well as when hitting and running.
- Protective cup are highly recommended.....plastic cleats are recommended but not mandatory
- ***Arguing with umpires will not be tolerated. Only a coach may politely discuss a misinterpretation of a rule by calling time, approaching the ump and a quiet conversation. Judgement calls should not be argued regardless of how horrific the call (and there will be many horrific calls). These are usually 14-year-old kids! If you wish you can politely speak to ump between innings. There will be ZERO tolerance for comments from parents.***
- No inning will start after 90 minutes and drop-dead time will be 115 minutes. If game is forced to stop after 2 hours and inning has not been completed the score will revert to previous inning.

Fair Play Rules

- The batting order consists of all the kids who attend the game. If a player shows up late s/he can be inserted into the bottom of the batting order at any point in the game.
- No player can sit two innings before another player has sat one inning and no player shall sit three innings before another players has sat two innings, and so on.... It this rule must be circumvented due to injury or any other reasonable reason the coach must inform the opposing coach.
- No player should play infield twice before another player has played infield once and no player shall play infield three times before another player has played infield twice.

- No player can play the same position 2 innings in a row. Left pitcher and right pitcher are considered the same position.
- No player can play 1st base and pitcher more than 3 times in any game (e.g. a player could play pitcher twice and 1st base once or 1st base twice and pitcher once or first base three times)
- In playoff games each coach should exchange lineups prior to the game with defensive positions assigned for the entire game. If a coach believes another coach is not playing by the above rules he should inform the other coach and the umpire. Only if the coach has been asked to change his lineup and refuses to do so will a protest be allowed.

Field Preparation

- Both teams should help with set up and take down of field. Try and recruit parent volunteers to help with this (recommend setting up a schedule)
- The pitching machine is placed directly in front of home plate at a distance of approximately 44 ft. Coaches should adjust the machine at a distance where it the machine will deliver accurate pitches at an appropriate speed. The objective is to have the machine set up to throw strikes!
- ***Bases should be 65 feet apart from each other.***
- A safety circle with a diameter of approximately 8 feet shall be marked off directly in front of home plate with the pitching machine placed in the centre. No player is permitted to enter the safety circle, which is considered a dead ball area. Enter means that any part of the body enters the safety circle.
- If the machine is not working for whatever reason coaches shall be permitted to pitch OVERHAND to their own team. Each child will get 5 swings (not pitches).
- The pitchers must stand beside the pitching machine outside of the safety circle and behind the release point of the machine. Once the ball is released from the machine, the pitcher may move in front of the line, but may not move through the circle.

Rules of the Game

- A team must have 7 players to play. During regular season games you may borrow a player from another team. In the playoffs if you are short players you may only call up a player from a younger division.
 - If a child gets injured or has to leave the game early they will skip that spot in the order and the team will NOT be penalized.
 - If at the time a game is scheduled to begin, a team does not have a minimum of 7 eligible players, a maximum extension of 15 minutes will be allowed before the plate umpire declares the game forfeited to the non-offending team

- **When playing the field each team should have a catcher, two pitchers (one on each side of the pitching machine), a first baseman, second baseman, shortstop, third baseman and 4 outfielders.**
- Any infielders can ask for time in the infield area. (within the basepaths). Time will be given at the umpire's discretion. If a runner has advanced more than half-way to the next base they will be awarded that base. Suggest drawing a commitment line between 3rd and home before start of each game.
- ***The pitching machine CAN be altered at any time if it is not providing accurate pitches or safe pitches. It should not be altered for height or for speed unless it is throwing faster/slower than intended.***
- Each batter shall receive a **maximum of 5 strikes** as called by the umpire. The batter shall not be called out if the 5th strike is called a foul ball. If a ball crosses the plate over the batter's head or bounces into the dirt, the umpire will not count it as a strike unless the batter swings at the pitch.
- Batters cannot walk or bunt. (Bunts are automatic outs.)
- Base Runners **cannot leave the base** until the batter makes contact with the ball. If an infraction occurs, the ball will be declared dead and runners may not advance. One (1) warning will be issued and for any further infractions. Thereafter the runner will be called out. (Each team may receive 1 warning). No stealing.
- If a batted ball hits the pitching machine or any adult in the playing field, then the ball is declared dead and the batter is awarded first base with the corresponding move of any base runners who may be forced to move. The coach feeding the machine must not interfere with any play being made by the defensive team. Otherwise, the batter will be called out and the runners will be returned to their base of origin. In case of the third out the side is retired.
- ***An inning will be 3 outs or a maximum of 6 runs.***
- ***The coach operating the pitching machine may instruct the batter before feeding the machine, but shall not instruct runners during the play. Penalty: the coach shall be warned. If the action continues, the team will have to find someone else to operate the machine.***
- Batters must drop the bat and not throw it (intentionally or unintentionally) upon hitting the ball. Penalty, each team shall be entitled to one warning per game. After the warning, any further offences by a team shall result in the batter being declared out, the ball being dead and runners returning to their bases.
- Once time has been granted by the umpire, the ball is returned to the Offensive Coach within the pitching circle. At this time, the plate umpire should say "Play" to make the ball live.

- ***If a fielder attempts to throw a runner/batter out at any base and there is an overthrow – no runners may advance as a result of that overthrow. If a runner already showed intention to advance to the next base before the overthrow s/he may continue to that next base.***
 - An overthrow is different than a dropped ball. If player had control of the ball and dropped or the ball went in and out of a player's glove that is not considered an overthrow. If the ball deflects off the fielder's glove then that will be considered an overthrow. **Example #1:** Batter hits the ball to second baseman. Second baseman tries to throw the batter out at first but goes over first baseman's head. Batter may not advance to second base. **Example #2:** Runners at 1st and 2nd. Batter hits ball to shortstop and shortstop throws to 2nd base over the 2nd baseman's head into the outfield. All runners must stay at the base they were going to. The runner who was going to third may not advance home unless there was already intent to do so. **Example #3:** Runner on 2nd base. Batter hits the ball to left field. Runner that was on 2nd base rounds third base and heads for home. Outfielder throws to 2nd base trying to get batter out attempting a double. Ball is thrown over the 2nd baseman's head into right field. If the runner that started at 2nd base was already heading home he will be awarded the run. If he had stopped at third assuming the ball was going to be caught then he must stay at 3rd base. The batter must stay at 2nd base.