



Stratford Minor Baseball
House League
5U Coaches Guide

Mission

4/5U "T-Ball" House League for children aged 4-5 is the first introduction of our young baseball players to traditional Baseball rules of play. The concepts of safe vs out, force plays, tagging, positional play, base running strategies, innings and competition are all important new elements in a young player's development. Individual players skill development is the main emphasis in this age division (throwing, catching, fielding & hitting).

Code Of Conduct

The Stratford Minor Baseball (SMBA) House League Committee has assured players, coaches and umpires that it will provide them with an environment at all SMBA events that is safe and secure so that they can carry out their duties and responsibilities.

Bullying and Harassment

Bullying is a form of abuse at the hands of peers that can come in different forms at different ages. Bullying is defined as repeated aggression in which there is an imbalance of power between the person who bullies and the person who is being victimized and is understood as a disrespectful relationship problem.

Bullying is offensive, cruel, intimidating, insulting and humiliating behaviour. Combined with the misuse of power it can be physical or verbal, direct or indirect. Children or youth who bully are typically cruel, demeaning and hostile towards the target of their bullying. The issue of bullying between youth under the age of 12 years old is not addressed by law. However, bullying behaviour is similar to harassment in that it is defined as the hurtful interpersonal mistreatment of another person.

Harassment is defined as conduct, gestures or comments which are insulting, intimidating, humiliating, hurtful, degrading or otherwise offensive to an individual or group of individuals.

This creates a hostile or intimidating environment for sports activities and negatively affects performance in those sports activities. Any of the different forms of harassment must be based upon prohibited disciplinary Human Rights legislation. Some types of harassment include, but are not limited to racism, disability harassment, sexual harassment and criminal harassment. Bullying behaviour is not permitted within SMBA. Any concerns should be reported to the coach or the division convenor.

Role of Coaches and Parents in Reporting Concussions (Baseball Ontario)

Coaches and parents play a key role in concussion safety and management. It is critical for all coaches and parents to be aware of concussion signs and symptoms, and what should know what to do if a concussion occurs.

The most important decision is whether to remove the player from the play until further evaluation is completed by a medical practitioner. The saying "If in doubt, sit them out" is the safest approach for coaches to take if they suspect that a player has suffered a concussion. If a coach even suspects a player has sustained a concussion or is exhibiting any signs or

symptoms of a concussion, they are not expected to diagnose the player, but the following steps need to be taken:

1. Remove the player from the game
2. Inform the parents that the player may have sustained a concussion
3. Request that the parents ensure the player receives proper medical attention from a trained health care professional and undergoes a concussion evaluation.
4. Complete an incident report.
5. Obtain medical clearance before the player is allowed to return to play.

For parents: If your child has sustained a possible concussion, stop them from playing right away. Do not leave them alone and get them proper medical assessment and treatment immediately.

The most up to date information on concussion management can be found under Risk Management (within About Us) on the Baseball Ontario website (baseballontario.com)

Player Uniforms

All players must wear a team shirt (SMBA Provided), team cap, Short or Pants (encouraged) running shoes or rubber cleats (Not Metal). No open-toed shoes or visible jewelry allowed.

Players are to provide their own glove, helmet with double ear flaps and chin strap. Bats are optional and 1-2 bats will be provided by SMBA.

All players on the playing field (players coaching 1B/3B, batters, on-deck batters and runners) must wear double-ear flap helmets with a chin strap.

SMBA House League Rules

These rules apply to all 5U house league games within SMBA, unless otherwise noted.

The Official Rules of Baseball, published by Baseball Canada, is the basic rules publication.

These rules apply to regular season play.

Positions

All teams will have a maximum of ten (10) fielding positions. Players can be positioned in standard baseball infield positions (1B, 2B, 3B, SS, Pitcher and Catcher) Outfield can consist of four (4) players spread evenly across the field.

5U does not require a catcher, and helmet/mask is not being provided so no catcher should be behind the batter. If a player is taking the Pitcher position, they must be a minimum four feet (4FT) behind the mound. Omitting the pitcher position is allowed at the team's discretion, if the team does not have nine (9) other players in the field.

Playing Rules

To begin the game, coaches shall instruct the home team to take their positions in the field, place the tee of the batting team on home plate and call "play" for the first batter of the offensive team.

- 1) Aim to start the game no more than five (5) minutes after "game time" as scheduled by the league. Teams can arrive a few minutes early and use park space to warm up or play catch. (Mindful of spectator safety).
- 2) The "home team" take the field in the top of the inning consists of once through the batting order. The Batting Team will call "Last Batter" and that batter will attempt to

round the bases on their fair batted ball. The inning will be deemed over once the "Last Batter" completely rounds the bases.

- 3) The Batting Team's Coaches will be on the basepaths helping runners and another coach putting ball on Tee and helping hitters.
- 4) The fielding team's coaches will help players field the ball and one coach will be in the pitcher's area to receive the ball.
- 5) Each Batter will get 5 "Strikes". A Strike is considered when the batters swings and fails to bat the ball in play (ie miss, foul or not past dead ball line). If a Batter incurs 5 Strikes then the Batting Coach instruct the Batter to swing and the coach will roll/toss a ball into the infield. The batter can attempt to reach first base safely as normal. We encourage you to be fairly consistent with the "5 strikes" approach as it helps with the flow of the game and retains the players attention. One batter swinging and missing for a prolonged period becomes tedious and awkward.
- 6) ***There are no strike outs.***
- 7) When the Batter bats a ball in play the Batter will drop the bat and run the bases as normal. Balls that do not pass the 10' "Dead Ball Arc" are called Dead or Foul and the batter will be provided another opportunity to bat.
- 8) Base Runners cannot get tagged or forced out. Base runners can continue running the bases until the fielding team returns the ball back to the batting team's coach.
- 9) Base Runners advance at their own risk on fairly batted balls. Once the ball is returned to the infield the umpire/coach will hold the base runners. Runners who are more than halfway to a base will be awarded that base. If less than halfway they will be returned to the previous base. There is no advancing on overthrows (ex. Runner on first, batted ball fielded by short stop. Runner is advancing to second, short stop throws ball to batting team coach/pitcher, missed by pitcher. The runners would be held at second and first).
- 10) There are no lead offs, steals or advancing on overthrows.

Scoring System

No score will be kept. We encourage focusing developing player skills and endorsing a positive team environment. Any individual or team highlights are to be sent to the league convenor.

Length of Game and Time Limits

All games will start at their designated time. All games will be scheduled for sixty (60) minutes. No new innings will commence after the forty-five (45) Minute mark.

Lightning Rule

In the interest of player safety, if any Coach or Convenor at a game observes lightning or hears thunder, they will immediately end the game. All cancelled games should be reported to the convenor if they are not present. The rescheduling of cancelled games will be at the sole discretion of the league and may be subject to umpire and diamond availability.

Ejections

Ejections are at the sole discretion of the convenor. If a team has a player ejected (Or injured), then said player's spot in the batting order will be removed but NOT counted as an automatic out.

Umpires

There are no Umpires. The fielding team coach (who will be in the field assisting their team) will serve as umpire for “stop play” calls when the coach/pitcher receives the ball.

Coaching Basics

People become coaches for many reasons; because they have a child in sports, because they were an athlete themselves, or because they want an opportunity to help in their community. Some coaches step forward; some are asked to help. No matter what the reasons, all coaches have the same roles. You will be a teacher, a leader, and sometimes will even act as a counsellor.

Organize a Great Practice

To begin, break your practice down into five (5) to ten (10) minute segments following this order:

Introduction

-Explain briefly what will happen today, and what they will learn.

Warm up

- Get the athletes moving and get them ready for activity
- Raise body temperature through vigorous activity
- start slowly, then slowly increase the pace
- flexibility exercises (From general stretching to sport specific, slow static stretching)
- activities that employ basic skills (i.e. throwing) but keep them moving

Review previously learned skills

- Utilize drills that give them an opportunity to practice fundamental skills or skills that they learned recently

Learn new skills

- Describe the new skill
- pick 2-3 teaching points to emphasize
- provide drills that utilize the new skill
- make sure everyone gets to participate (Avoid long lines of standing around)
- provide feedback and encouragement
- change or modify skills as athletes improve

Game-like activities and/or conditioning

- Simplified game situation (Reduce area of play, number of players, rules, etc)
- Incorporate fitness activities if appropriate

Cool Down

- Decrease level (intensity) of activity gradually
- Stretching exercise (for muscles most used in practice)

Wrap up

- Review practice and plan with athletes
- prepare them for next practice or game
- do your own personal evaluation... What could be better next time?

Plan for a Game Day

Warm up

- Prepare for game activity as you would practice

Establish what we want to do today

- play fair
- good sportsmanship
- do our best
- tactics and skill reminders (good defence, good throws etc.)

Post competition wrap up

- Highlight the positive things that happened
- Praise effort- BE POSITIVE
- Ready them for next practice
- Evaluation of the game (Make note of performance and accomplishments, make note of things that need to be addressed at the next practice)

Thank you again for choosing to be a coach with the Stratford Minor Baseball House League. As I'm sure you're aware there is a lot to take in. However, now that you have started the most important thing is to use what you have learned....to enjoy your athletes, your sport, the competition, and to have fun. The real rewards for your efforts are not in the awarding of trophies or medals but in the words of an athlete who, at the end of the season, extends to you a heartfelt "Thanks Coach".

Enjoy your season, your athletes and everything coaching has to offer.