

# T-BALL GROUND RULES

## OBJECTIVES

Above all else, Bellaire Little League expects each player to have a safe and enjoyable learning experience. The emphasis in T-Ball is placed on developing a basic understanding of the game. This is a non-competitive program. Winning is positively the least important item. One player's ability should never be compared to another's. Each player should be evaluated on his or her own effort and attitude. Positive re-enforcement is a must at this level; no player can be a failure at 5 or 6 years old.

Bellaire Little League would like to see managers working together during games, with the goal of providing the best possible learning environment.

Bellaire Little League policy regarding playing time and positions is clear. At the T-Ball level, we use a safety ball (e.g., the "Incredi-ball"), which has greatly reduced the potential for serious injury, therefore, we have determined that each player should have the opportunity to play each position equally. The thinking is "How can a player learn to play first base if he/she never has the chance to play first base?"

Bellaire Little League expects each manager at this level to develop a rotation based on the 5 infield positions, which will give each player the same opportunity to play each position equally if they attend the games and practices. This is not for a game-by-game basis, but a "for the year" requirement. The ability to catch and throw is not the deciding factor in T-Ball — the opportunity to develop and grow, and to be exposed to each position is the primary objective.

Managers are expected to help "police" the base paths, e.g., first baseman standing in front of the base runner on first base. The first and third base coaches have the best view of this situation. Base coaches should notify defensive coaches when an unsafe situation exists. Defensive coaches should be aware that they may be notified of this situation from time to time by the offensive coaches and should not take offense at these notifications. Managers should resist physically moving the players, but instruct them where to stand so they are not in the base path.

## GENERAL RULES

- Home team occupies third base bench.
- The manager is responsible for the conduct of his/her team players, spectators and coaches.
- Poor sportsmanship will not be tolerated. NO taunting of batter, fielders, or coaches making the calls as umpires.
- Players are required to either be on the bench or on the field the entire game - NO EXCEPTIONS. Do not allow players to continuously roam around or sit with their parents.
- PLAYERS MUST WEAR UNIFORM PANTS.
- PLAYERS MUST WEAR SNEAKERS OR CLEATS. No sandals/open-toed shoes.
- Players should be encouraged to make the proper play, e.g., pitcher throws to first base rather than running it himself/herself or rolling the ball.
- Outfielders must stay out of the area designated for the infielders, approximately 10 to 15 feet behind the base path. Four infielders plus pitcher in the infield - all others in outfield.
- Outfielders must throw the ball into the infield to make an out. Outfielders cannot make tags or force outs at the bases, but can catch fly balls for an out.

- Play stops when the ball is returned to the infield. The infielder need not have control of the ball. (in the event a runner is more than halfway to next base, allow him/her to advance.)
- It is the obligation of the manager to rotate all players between the infield and outfield. Your players should play every position on the team and no player shall play outfield for more than two consecutive innings. Keep records so that you track players by position played during the season to ensure that he/she plays all positions equally in comparison with the rest of the team.

## GAME PLAY

**Batter:** A batter shall be called out when after hitting the ball and before reaching first base, he or the bat in any way touches the ball while in fair territory. If, in a game a batter throws or wildly swings his bat after hitting (or attempting to hit) the ball to the extent, that his coach believes other players are endangered, time-out will be called and the coach will discuss the infraction with the batter. If it happens during the game again, the batter will automatically be called out. The tee will be used for the entire season, no coach pitching will be allowed in games for any players.

Each batter gets 6 swings, with coach helping on subsequent swings until the batter hits the ball.

**Batting Order:** A continuous batting order will be used. The batting order will consist of all eligible players. Once established, the order cannot be changed except for injury or players arriving late or leaving early. In an effort to expedite the game, all batters will take their turn at bat every inning, regardless if three outs are made by the team in the field.

**Helmets:** The batter and each runner will always wear protective helmets.

**Stealing and sliding:** No base-stealing is permitted. Players are allowed to slide, but head first sliding is not allowed.

**Throws from the outfield:** Once the ball reaches the infield, runners may not advance (possession by an infielder not necessary); runners halfway to the next base may advance to the base at risk of being put out.

**Overthrows at the bases:** Runners may not advance on an overthrow.

**Batted ball:** A batted ball must be hit at least 15' into fair territory before the ball is live (batting coach will call).

**Bunting:** No bunting is allowed.

**Infield fly rule:** Does not apply.

**On deck:** There is no on deck circle. Players **must** remain in the dugout until it is their turn to bat. Players **shall not** pick up a bat until it is their turn to hit. EXCEPTION - Unless manager or coach is providing instruction to player a safe distance away from the other players.

**Game period:** The official game start time is the scheduled start time. The game consists of a time limit of 50 minutes. No new inning will start after 45 minutes of play. Only 1 minute will be given to each team between innings to get ready offensively and defensively.

Scoring: There is a five (5) run limit per inning or three outs. The home team shall be allowed to bat in the bottom of the last inning even if they are behind by more than (5) five runs and prior to the 50 minute time restriction.

## PLAYERS

**The catcher:** No catcher position will be played

**The pitcher player:** The player shall have at least one foot inside the pitching circle when play begins. The pitching circle shall be 8' in diameter, centered on the pitching plate (46' from home plate).

**The infielders:** Each infield player must be in a "set position" ready to field the ball. They may not be placed on the grass part of the infield. This rule is in effect to give an otherwise less developed batter an equal chance to attain first base.

**The outfielders:** Remaining players will play the outfield positions. They must be positioned in the outfield area.

**Rotation:** No player shall be allowed to play the same position for more than one inning per game, and every player should play an infield position at least (1) inning per game. A player should not be allowed to play an infield position when in the opinion of the Manager, the player may be at risk of injury solely because of lack of skills. The Manager must present this option to the player's parents and the T-Ball League Rep. A player may play pitcher and first base one inning each game, e.g. pitcher 1<sup>st</sup> inning and 1<sup>st</sup> base in the 2<sup>nd</sup> inning.

**Game playing time:** A manager should ensure that a player rotation carries over from game to game and different players play 1<sup>st</sup> base and pitcher.

## COACHES

**Dugout:** Each team should have a dugout coach who keeps track of the batting order and ensures batters are ready to hit when it is their turn in the order. Absolutely no food or drinks (with the exception of water or sports drinks) are allowed in the dugout during the game.

**Bases:** Adults must coach first and third base and must stay in foul territory in proximity of the base they are coaching. A base coach is not allowed to interfere with the defensive or offensive player. If they do, the runner will be called out. The base coach will be the umpire at their respective base.

**Defensive coaches:** Two coaches may roam the outfield grass and give instruction to both the infielders and outfielders. These coaches are not allowed on the infield during play. One of these two coaches will be responsible for calls at 2<sup>nd</sup> base.

## UMPIRES

**Home plate:** A coach from the offensive team shall position himself to the side of the tee when the batter is hitting. He is responsible for making calls at the plate and for removing the batter's tee if a runner is attempting to score. If a batter hits a ball in front of the plate that in his/her judgment will not reach the required 15 ft. minimum the ball should be called dead.

**Other bases:** See coach's section above.

There will be no arguing with opposing coaches. ACTING AS AN UMPIRE, THE COACH'S DECISION STANDS. GIVE THE ADVANTAGE TO THE INFIELDER. If there is a dispute, it should be handled professionally between innings or after the game. Coaches are to serve as role models to players and spectators.

## PRE-GAME/POST-GAME

**Pre-game:** Home team is responsible for making sure the baselines are well marked. Each team will also provide a new ball ("Incredi-ball" soft core) for the game. Visitors should assist the home team in preparing the field.

**Post game:** Managers will be held responsible to clean up their respective side of the field following practices and games (including trash). It is the responsibility of the managers to get their equipment and players out of the dugout immediately after the game.

**Rescheduling:** It will be the responsibility of the managers to reschedule all games. Please check with the T-Ball Rep for field availability.

**Weekly Touches:** During the regular season, except for rain outs and other rescheduled games, each team will be limited to no more than (2) touches per week.

**Tobacco, Alcohol & Profanity:** The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the playing field, benches and dugouts. Smoking is not permitted on League facilities. The use of alcoholic beverages or profanity is prohibited anywhere at the League's baseball complexes.