

*Scots*

**Junior  
Baseball  
Rules**

# Junior Baseball Rules

## (in summary)

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## **Purpose of this manual**

The following set of rules and terminology is to hopefully help increase the general knowledge of parents and players, which deal with some of the more common game situations that can occur. Also to clearly layout some rules of conduct under which not only players but general club members and parents are expected to adhere to.

## **Code of Conduct**

### ***For coaches, players and parents***

- remember that the kids are playing for fun; winning is just an added bonus
- never ridicule or yell at the players of our team, other teams, parents or umpires; in other words, respect players, their rights and the decisions made
- make your child's experience a positive one and encourage them wherever possible
- if you (your child), is seen to be consistently misbehaving, they may be sent off for a period of time (to be specified by the coach), or in severe cases, may miss a game
- most importantly, be a good sport

### ***Behaviour of Players, Coaches, Club Officials & Members***

- good relationships should be fostered between clubs and their teams before, during and after matches.
- the authority and decisions of the umpire must be respected. Abusive and intimidating language or tactics will not be tolerated by the BBA and should not be directed to any person.
- the coach of each team must insist that their players behave in a sportsmanlike conduct at all times while at the field. Any person acting in an unsportsmanlike conduct and the use of offensive and abusive language may be reported for their actions.
- coaches and players are required to draw attention to their own members and spectators to behave in a suitable manner. They should show support towards their team and not berate and belittle the opposition.

Cited from the Bendigo Baseball Association Rules Manual.

### ***Alcohol***

- No alcohol is to be available or consumed at any junior matches.  
(cited from the Bendigo Baseball Association Rules Manual)

### ***Smoking***

- In line with Vic Health recommendation we do not support smoking at Junior games or practice. SCOTS baseball club is also sponsored by Vic Health, which also prohibits smoking.

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### **Duration of games**

- T-Ball – 75 minutes
- Under 12's & 14's – 90 minutes
- Under 17's – 105 minutes

### **Safety**

All junior players must wear 'doubled eared' helmets with chin straps when:

- going in to bat.
- in a catchers position (but mask must be worn as well).
- there is more than one game (in close vicinity), in progress on the same ground.

We also recommend parents review other personnel protection equipment and purchase as they deem necessary, for example, personal protector (box), mouth guard, playing boots (no metal cleats to be worn).

### **The Strike Zone**

A strike is a legal pitch called by the umpire (that will vary from umpire to umpire due to their personal judgement), which:

- the batter swings at and misses.
- passes through the strike zone (between the shoulders and knees).
- is a foul and the batter has less than 2 strikes.
- becomes a foul tip.
- touches the batter as s/he swings at the ball.

### **Foul Ball**

A foul ball is

- a batted ball that lands in foul territory between home and first or home and third.
- a batted ball that passes first or third bases in foul territory or lands foul past the infield.

### **Base on Balls**

- The batter may go to first base when he has four (4) balls (balls thrown outside the strike zone).

### **Fair Ball**

- Is a batted ball that lands in fair ground in the infield, or passes first or third bases in fair territory, or first lands in fair territory in the outfield.

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### **Foul Tip**

- is a batted ball that goes quickly from the bat to the catcher and is legally caught. It is considered a strike and the ball is live.
- if it is the third strike, the batter is out.

### **Safe Hit**

- A safe hit is where the batter, after hitting the ball, reaches first base before the fielding team can make a play on the batter or on a forced runner.

### **Error**

- An error is given to the fielder where s/he failed to catch, stop or receive the ball, that should have resulted in an out or stopped any runners advancing bases, using reasonable effort.

### **Fielders Choice**

- The runner went out due to the fielders choice.

### **Fly Ball**

- This is where a batted ball is hit high into the air and is most likely to be caught. Runners must retouch their base if any batted ball is caught whether fair or foul.

### **Line Drive**

- This is a ball hit hard that travels sharply and horizontal to the ground. If caught, runners still have to go back and touch their bases.

### **Outs**

Three (3) players outs mean side away.

Main outs are:

- three (3) strikes.
- batted ball caught.
- runner tagged with ball while off base.
- ball is at first before batter reaches the base.
- forced out – the runner is forced to the next base due to a fair ball being hit and the fielder played the base the runner was heading for.
- runner tagged with ball while trying to advance to the next base.
- running off line to avoid a tag.
- foul bunting third strike.
- off base after hit caught, the runner or base is tagged.
- appeal for missed base.
- runners interference.

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### **Runners Interference**

- The umpire may regard that the runner is out if he or she has interfered with the efforts of a fielder fielding a ball. (See also Hit Batted Ball.)

### **Hit Batted Ball**

- the runner is out if hit by a fair batted ball, that has not passed a fielder other than the pitcher.
- the ball is dead.
- the batter advances to 1st base, other runners do not advance unless forced by the batter.

### **Force Play**

- where the runner/s has nowhere else to go except to the next base after a fair ball was hit.
- the runner/s may be put out by the fielder touching the base with the ball in his possession, before the runner reaches that base.
- more than one player can be put out by throwing the ball to other bases in a similar manner.
- runners are also out if tagged with ball while trying to advance.

### **Tag Play**

- Where a runner is trying to advance to a base; attempting to steal or a following runner being put out first has removed the force situation.
- The runner must be tagged with the ball before reaching the base. If the runner over slides the base he may still be tagged out.

### **Dropped Third Strike**

- is a pitched ball called 'strike three' by the umpire, that either did not reach the catcher on the full or is not held by the catcher.
- if first base is open, the batter must try and reach it before being tagged or the ball being held at first base before the batter reaches first base.
- if a force situation exists at first, the batter is automatically out unless there are already two out, in which case, the ball is alive and runner must try and advance.

(This may not apply at some junior levels – see official junior rules).

### **Fly Ball Caught**

- Any batted ball caught, the batter is out.
- Runners must be in contact with their base when the ball is caught, otherwise they must retouch the base before trying to advance at their own risk.

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- If a runner were to leave before the ball was caught, the runner or the base may be tagged with the ball and an appeal is made to the umpire for the out.
- With less than two (2) out, the runners should be in contact with the base as the ball is caught and be ready to advance on the throw if possible.
- If there are already two (2) out, the runners should go on the hit because the ball is caught, it is then three (3) out – side away. But if the ball is not caught, the runners have more chance of advancing safely and possibly extra bases.

### **Infield Fly Rule**

All the following conditions must apply for the infield fly rule to apply

- 1st and 2nd bases occupied, (or 1st, 2nd & 3rd occupied).
- less than two out.
- a fly ball hit that can easily be fielded by an infielder in fair territory.
- the hit is not an attempted bunt or not a line drive
- the umpire must indicate with the call infield fly (if fair)

### **Result**

- The batter is out whether the ball is caught or not.
- The runners must tag up on the catch.
- As the batter is already out, the runners are not forced even if the ball is not caught.
- The runners may advance at their own risk after the ball has been caught or hits the ground – tag play situation.

### **Dead Ball**

The ball is dead and no play can be made when any of the following events occur.

- a foul ball falls to the ground and remains foul.
- the batter is hit by pitched ball (not a strike) and will advance to first base.
- batted ball passes over, under or through the ground limits.
- thrown ball crosses the passed ball line.
- umpire is hit by batted ball in fair territory and the ball has not passed a fielder other than the pitcher.
- runner is hit by batted ball in fair territory and the ball has not passed a fielder other than the pitcher.

The ball cannot be brought back into play until the pitcher has the ball in his possession while in contact with the pitching plate and the umpire calls play.

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### **Running Off Line**

- The runner is out if they deviate more than a metre from their path to avoid being tagged.
- The runner may however, deviate off the line to avoid a fielder in the act of fielding a thrown or batted ball.

### **Two Runners on Same Base**

- Only one runner may legally occupy any one base, if two runners are on the same base – the following runner is out if tagged with the ball.

### **Passed Runner**

- If a runner passes a preceding runner before that runner has been put out, the passing runner is out.

### **Deliberately Dropped Catch**

- If a fielder deliberately drops a catch so as to create another possible out, the batter is out, the ball is dead, all runners return to their original base.

**Note** – the ball must be touched, if not normal rules apply.

### **Batting Blank**

- When a team has less than nine (9) players, a batting blank must be nominated somewhere in the batting order for each missing player.
- When the blank position is due to bat, an automatic out is awarded to the fielding team.

### **How Many Players are Legally Required**

- Seven (7) with a maximum of Nine (9) playing at any given time.

### **Runs Scored**

- One run is scored for each runner that legally crosses home base before three (3) outs have been made.

**Note** –

- if the third out is made on a force play, then no run can be scored on that play.
- if the third out is not a force, any runners that cross the plate before the out is actually made will score.

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### Scoring Uneven Innings

- If at the end of a time limited game, the innings are not completed, the score will revert back to what it was at the end of the last completed even innings. Unless the home side (batting second) is in the lead in which case the final score stands.

### Who bats first

- The away team (second named team on draw for the day). This is to enable the Home team to have the last batting chance for the day.

### Five Minute Rule (applies to finals)

- If the game has more than five (5) minutes before the scheduled finish time from the call of 'side away', and even innings have been played, a further complete innings shall be played.
- If the game has five (5) minutes or less remaining to the scheduled finishing time and completed innings have been played, the game will stop immediately.
- If the game has five (5) minutes or less remaining to the scheduled finishing time and if the inning has not been completed with the home team ahead, then the game will stop immediately.
- If the home team is tied or behind, then the game will continue until either the winning run is scored or until the home side has been retired.

### One-sided Games (not T-ball)

- Any game which has a team leading by ten (10) or more runs after five completed innings, will be concluded at that point, except if the home team is leading by ten (10) or more runs, the bottom half of that innings will not be played. This rule also applies in the sixth and all finals matches.

### Pitching Rules

- Under 12            60 pitches maximum
- Under 14            70 pitches maximum
- Under 16            80 pitches maximum

Curves and sliders are not to be pitched by Under 12 and Under 14 players. (To be judged by the Umpire only).

### Pitching/Catching

- No junior player can pitch and catch in the same match.

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## Pitching Distance

- T-Ball (Under 10)      35' (10.675m)
- Under 12                46' (14.03m)
- Under 14                50' (15.24m)
- Under 16                57' (17.37m)

## Seven Run Rule/Nine Batter Rule

This rule does not apply in finals matches.

### Option One

A maximum of seven (7) runs can be scored in any one inning. (For example, Should a team have already scored 6 runs, and the batter hits safety which scores 2 runs, only the first of these will count to the score, but both will count towards statistical records).

### Option Two

Nine batter rule – A team shall bat for a maximum of nine batters in any offensive innings. As the ninth batter for the innings comes to bat, the scorer shall notify the umpire. At the completion of the ninth batter's turn at bat, the umpire shall call time and should there be less than three out at the time all players on base at the time shall be scored as runs. It shall not be necessary for those runners to cross the plate. Should the batter or base runner be put out to constitute the third out, normal baseball rules apply.

## Batter – T-Ball

- if the batter swings and misses the ball (ie, hits the tee or misses the ball completely), then it will be called a strike, after the third strike and the batter is out.
- a fair ball hit off the tee must pass an arc formed by the pitching distance, otherwise the ball will be called dead and the batter must attempt another swing.
- a batter is allowed a maximum of two (2) bases only on a fair hit off the tee. Any base runner advances at their own risk.

These rules are based on the Australian and Bendigo Baseball Rules.