

Updated 01/2025

Rochester Youth Athletic Association (RYAA) - 8U Coach Pitch Rules

Ages: 7-8 (Younger players may participate with 1 prior year of t-ball experience and coordinator approval)

The goal of the 8U Coach Pitch program is to help players develop their baseball skills by learning how to hit, field, and run the bases. Players will also begin to understand the structure of the game with coach-pitched balls. There should be an emphasis on fair play and good sportsmanship.

1. Playing Field and Equipment

- **Bases:** Set 60 feet apart.
- **Pitcher's Mound:** Located 40 feet from home plate.
- **Bat:** No restrictions on bat size or weight.
- **Cleats:** Metal cleats are **not permitted**.
- **Catcher's Gear:** Players behind home plate must wear proper protective equipment (chest pad, face mask, leg guards, optional cup).
- **Ball:** Regulation league baseball will be used.
- **Home Team:** Determined by a coin flip before the game, will start play in the field.

2. General Game Information

- **Team Size:** A team must have at least **8 players** to play. Teams can "borrow" players from the opposing team if needed.
- **Batting Order:** Coaches shall keep the same batting order throughout the game. Please change up the order each game.
- **Defensive Players:** A maximum of **10 players** may be in the field, with up to **4 outfielders**.
- **Umpire:** RYAA will do their best to provide 1 umpire. Umpires are typically high school students, please be respectful. Poor sportsmanship/behavior by coaches/fans will not be tolerated.
- **Coaches:** The emphasis is on equal playing time for all participants to ensure a positive and inclusive experience for everyone.
- **Cancellations:** All weather-related cancellations will be posted by 4:30pm the day of the game/practice (earlier if fields are not playable). Posted on the RYAA Facebook page and by email notification.
- **Weather:** Keep your eye on the sky. Game is cancelled if lightening is visualized. See RYAA Weather Policy for details.

3. Starting and Ending the Game

- **Game Length:** A game is **5 innings** or **65 minutes**, whichever comes first. No new inning may start after 65 minutes of play. If an inning is started, it must be completed.
- **Minimum Game Length:** A game lasts at least **3 full innings**.
- **Coaches on the field:**
 - **Base Coaches:** Adult coaches may be in the first and third base coaching boxes while their team is at bat.
 - **Defensive Coaches:** Two defensive coaches may be on the field, either in foul territory or the outfield (with agreement from both teams). Coaches can call time out to instruct players, with approval from the umpire.

4. Putting the Ball in Play

- **End of Half Inning:** The half inning ends when:
 - **3 defensive outs** are made, or
 - The batting team scores **7 runs**.
- **Base Running:**
 - If the ball is in control by an infielder and the runner has not reached halfway to the next base, they must return to the previous base.
 - On a hit that stays in the infield, the batter and runners may advance **one base**.
 - On a hit that goes into the outfield, runners and batter may advance until the ball is returned inside the infield or to its extensions in foul territory.
- **Overthrows:** Runners cannot advance on an overthrow in the infield.
- **Infield Fly Rule:** Does not apply in 8U Coach Pitch.
- **Hidden Ball Trick:** Not allowed.

5. The Batter

- **Helmet:** A league-approved batting helmet must be worn while hitting.
- **Pitches:** The batter has **7 pitches (strikes)** to put the ball in play. After 7 pitches, batter is out. Coaches can mutually decide to increase to 9 pitches for the first few weeks.
- **Foul Balls:** A batter cannot be out on a foul ball.
- **Bunting:** Bunting is **not allowed**.
- **Hit Batter:** If the batter is hit, it is considered a **ball** and the batter continues to bat.
- **On-Deck Circle:** Only one player is allowed in the on-deck circle. Other players should remain on the bench.

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- **Throwing Bats:** Players who throw their bat or helmet will be called out. Coaches may issue **one warning per team per game** before calling the player out. Player shall be removed from the game if behavior continues.

6. The Runner

- **Hit by the Ball:** If a batted ball hits a runner, the runner is out and returns to the bench. The batter gets first base.
- **Lead-offs and Stealing:** Lead-offs and stealing bases are **not allowed**.
- **Helmet:** Batting helmets must be worn while running the bases.
- **Interference:** Interference will only be called if it is **deliberate** or **willful**.
- **Sliding:** There is no sliding required, but players must avoid contact with defensive players. If there is a play on the runner at any base, the runner must slide or avoid contact. A play is when the defensive player is within 5 feet of the base with the ball or in place to receive a thrown ball. If the runner does not slide and there is contact with the defensive player, the runner is called out (a defensive out). Deliberate barreling at any base will result in ejection from the game.
- **Outs:** A player who is out must return to the bench, not stay on base.

7. The Pitcher

- **Pitching:** An adult coach will pitch the ball to the batter using an **overhand delivery**. The coach may move closer to the batter, if needed, to assist the player in hitting the ball.
- **Player Pitcher Position:** The player in the pitcher position must remain within **6 feet** of the adult pitcher.
- **Interference:** The adult coach must make every attempt to avoid interfering with the ball in play.

8. The Fielder

- **Fielding Requirements:** Coaches should ensure all players have a chance to play infield at least once during the game unless safety concerns arise (e.g., lack of attention, risk of getting hit by the ball).

9. The dugout

- Only the player entering the batter's box and on deck is to have a bat, no bats in hands in the dugout.
- A parent/coach should be in charge of the dugout at each game at all times.

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10. Practice

- Starting at the designated date in April, teams will practice **twice weekly** until games begin, then once weekly at designated field time.
- Stay off wet infields. Help care for our fields by practicing in the grass only when fields are wet/muddy.

11. Coaches

- Thank you for volunteering. You will find this season to be memorable both for you and your players. Coaching this age can be both challenging and rewarding, reach out to your team parents for help this season, it takes a crew to coach these teams! I want to make this season as smooth as possible for you, please reach out to me with any questions/concerns @ baseball@ryaa.org
- Here is a great link for practice ideas.
 - <https://www.littleleague.org/play-little-league/coach-pitch/>

These rules are designed to make the game fun and educational for young players while promoting teamwork, sportsmanship, and skill development.

Contact information:

General email: baseball@ryaasports.org

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RYAA BASEBALL/SOFTBALL WEATHER POLICY

1. In the event of cancellation due to field/weather conditions, an email and post on the RYAA Facebook page will be sent out by 4:30pm the day of.
 - a. If there is not a post/email by 4:30pm, the game/practice is on. We will try our best to send out notification sooner if fields can not be prepped in time for game/practice.
2. If you step on the field and it leaves behind a foot print, it is TOO WET. Please stay off to protect our fields. If fields are too wet, please use the grass area only.
3. If you see or hear thunder/lightning, immediately suspend your game or practice and instruct everyone to go inside a sturdy building or car.
Sturdy buildings are the safest place to be (Concession stand bathrooms if at park or restrooms by field 6)
4. Outdoor activity can resume 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder or flash of lightning. At any point if lightning occurs again, the 30 minutes delay starts over.
5. Use your best judgement, if you question the safety, cancel the game/practice and send players and families home.
6. If the heat index is over 100 degrees, practice/games will be cancelled. There are exceptions to this for our 12U + divisions with appropriate breaks/hydration time. We will follow IESA/IHSA guidelines for ages 12+. Please reach out to the program coordinator if there are concerns/questions.