

Instructional Division Rules (Baseball and Softball)

Revised January 2015

The Instructional League is designed to introduce the basic fundamentals of baseball/softball to four through six year old boys and girls. Emphasis will be on sportsmanship, team concepts, and fair play.

“Success must be seen in terms of children EXCEEDING THEIR OWN GOALS rather than surpassing the performance of others.”

RULES:

1. Playing Age – Baseball – Any boy four years old on May 1st of the current year and not older than six on May 1st of the current year. Exceptions must be approved by the League Director.
2. Playing age-Softball-Any girl four years old on or before January 1st of current year and not older than six, before January 1st of the current year. Exceptions must be approved by the League Director.
3. Four year olds will be permitted to play provided a parent/guardian is on the field with the 4 year old at all times.
4. The League Director will assign each child to a team dividing evenly those children with previous experience and those children with non-experience.
 - a. Siblings will be put on the same team, unless otherwise requested by their parents.
 - b. After the League Director has made team selections, a list of the team members with their contact information will be given to each team Manager.
5. Games will be played as follows:
 - a. Each game will have a time limit of 60 min. or 6 innings whichever comes first.
 - b. All players will play in the field each inning. Coaches will allow players to play infield and outfield each game. No child shall play outfield all season. Coaches will keep in mind safety and player skill level when deciding positions.

- c. We do not keep track of runs or outs. A child is sent to the dugout in the event of an out, although the inning does not end with three outs.
- d. A team's offensive half shall be terminated when the offensive team bats half of their players. If a team has an odd number of players, they will bat an odd number one inning, then even the next, and so on (i.e. 9 players...5 will hit in the 1st inning, 4 in the 2nd inning, then repeat as time allows). No player will bat in consecutive innings to accommodate for one team having fewer players than the other. The last batter should be announced to the defensive team as a courtesy. The last batter is not a free-for-all, or 'home run.' The intent is to play the batted ball as if there are two outs in the inning. Runners should not be cut loose to run until tagged at the plate, as this does not promote proper base-running fundamentals. At any time during the inning, including the last batter, play will end when an out is recorded, the lead runner is stopped from advancing, or if Rule 5e or 5m is satisfied.
- e. Play will stop when the defensive team returns the ball within a 20-foot diameter circle around the pitching mound. The ball does not have to be caught cleanly but must touch the pitcher's helper inside the circle. Play will stop and no base runners may be advanced when the pitcher's helper touches or is touched by the ball while standing in the 20-foot circle. Players are also not permitted to call 'time' to stop play or raise hands as if signaling 'time'.
- f. If a player, in the coach's opinion, is more than halfway between two bases at the time the ball reaches the 20-foot circle (and is touched by the pitcher's helper), they will be awarded that base. Excessive advancement of runners will not be permitted. If sending a runner at a higher level of play would typically result in the runner being put out then the runner should not be sent. Again, our intent is to promote proper base running fundamentals.
- g. The Coach or Asst. coach of the team at bat will do all pitching. Boys will be pitched to overhand and girls will be pitched to underhanded.
Note: The Coaches will be allowed to pitch any distance from home plate as he or she determines is needed to allow each batter equal chance to hit the ball. We want the child to be given every chance to learn proper hitting fundamentals. Coaches are encouraged to pitch to the boys from a knee to lessen the effect of the height difference between the coach and player
- h. Each batter will be allowed six (6) pitches to hit the ball. If a batter has not hit the ball fair at the end of six (6) pitches, it shall be placed on the "tee" for the batter to hit.
- i. There are NO WALKS ALLOWED.

- j. All outfielders must be in, or at the edge of, the grass and all infielders must not be positioned in the baseline until after the ball is hit. Up to 4 adults are permitted on the playing field for purposes of instruction while their team is on defense...exception is if the number of 4 year old players warrants more.
- k. All offensive players will sit on the bench in the dugout; only exception will be the batter and the on-deck batter. The game will not continue until all players are seated on the bench.
- l. No catcher's position. Coach of the batting team will retrieve pitched balls.
- m. All runners are limited to one base on over throws to first base at their own risk, even if additional plays are made by the defense.
- n. The home team will line the diamonds.
- o. Each team is to bring one new ball to each game.
- p. For the safety of the kids, helmets must stay on until the player reaches their dugout.
- q. Heart protection and a helmet with mask will be worn by pitcher's helper position.

“Our main goal is for every child to have fun and learn the fundamentals of the game. It is our hope that every child ends the season anxious to play again the following year.”