

GVAA BASEBALL

1st/2nd Grade League RULES

SUMMARY:

o Everyone should be getting plenty of playing time, with players rotating positions on a fairly regular basis. If you see a team putting the same players in the same positions, it is your responsibility to make the Division Commissioner aware of the situation. For this division, outs and runs will count. The score should be kept on the scoreboard with each team responsible for making sure the score is correct after each inning. No Standings are kept for this division.

o Rule C: 10 players in the field, using 4 players spread across the outfield

o Rule D2: Player's role as pitcher: Beginning with 4th inning, pitchers are on the mound for each new batter. When the batter's count reaches "ball four", the batter does not take first base, and a coach becomes pitcher until the at bat is completed. When new batter comes up, player resumes role as pitcher (subject to the same "four ball" count again).

o Rule D1: Coach's role as pitcher: Coach pitches entire first three innings, with max of 7 pitches per batter. When serving as relief pitcher, there is a max of 3 pitches by a coach to any batter. Both limits are extended by foul balls.

o Rule D7: "The Halfway Rule" Ball must be controlled by an infielder in the dirt portion of the field to stop runner advancement. Finish the play to completion and then send the runners back (if they're safe but were less than halfway when ball was controlled in infield). This lets the defense and offense learn how to make plays. Runners never stop halfway in "real baseball"

o Rule E: There is a 5 run max per inning, with 10 run mercy rule after four innings. If time permits, teams can continue playing after the game was decided by 10 run rule if the coaches agree to play (stop keeping score at that point, and work on seeing players at new positions). This rule applies to regular season and playoffs.

o Rule H: Baserunners can "steal" third base only, and only if the pitcher is a player (not a coach).

o Rule L: In regular season, players can not appear in more than 1 inning as a pitcher, even if pitch limit of 35 is not met. During playoffs, they may appear in 2 consecutive innings, but the pitch limit of 35 per player still applies.

o Rule O (Optional): Apprentice umpires will be used to relieve coaches from the burden of acting as umpire. They will make some mistakes in calling the game – please be patient and try to work with them.

GVAA Baseball 1st/2nd Grade Rules

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GVAA Baseball
1st/2nd Grade Developmental League Rules

A. Official Rules

With the exception of rules noted below, Developmental games are played under Official Baseball Rules as amended by Babe Ruth Cal Ripken League rules.

Field Dimensions: Mound-46 Feet, Bases-60 Feet.

Games 1-2- All Coach Pitch

Games 3-12- 3 innings Coach Pitch/ Kid Pitch

B. Use of Players / Substitutions

1. Each player must play a minimum of four (4) innings in the field during a six-inning game. No player shall sit for a second inning before all players have sat for one inning.

Unlimited defensive substitutions are to be used and are critical to compliance with the minimum play provision.

2. Players are to be rotated through all positions with no player continually playing the same position. All players should play at least 2 innings in the infield. If the coach feels that a player is at a safety risk while

playing in the infield, it is the responsibility of the coach to bring this to the attention of the division commissioner and discuss it with the parents. A decision can then be made as to which positions this player is safe to play.

3. A continuous batting order is to be used, whereby all team players bat consistent with the lineups exchanged immediately before each game. Any player that arrives late for a game shall be placed at the end of the batting order. In instances where a player is either injured or too ill to continue playing during the game, that player's turn can be skipped without penalty. Consensus should be reached for these circumstances, between both teams' coaches and the umpire, before the inning begins. The continuous batting order does not change throughout the game and is therefore independent of the defensive changes made.

4. In order to keep the game moving along and minimize delays between innings, a pinch runner may be used (only when there are two outs) for a player who will be catching the next inning. This "courtesy runner" must be the player on the bench who was placed out for the second out of the inning. This is the only instance where a pinch runner may be used, absent player injury, illness, or other extreme circumstances.

C. Positions in the Field

Teams will have 10 players in the field: Pitcher, Catcher, 4 Infielders and 4 Outfielders. Outfielders must play a minimum of 6 feet beyond the perimeter of the infield. The 4th outfielder should be positioned consistent with the other three outfielders and should not be positioned just behind second base where he could be expected to cover second base on a play, for example. Outfielders may only field a ball in the infield if it is a pop up.

D. Batting

1. For the first three (3) innings of each game, coaches will pitch to their own team. All coaches will pitch from a position directly in front of the pitchers mound whereas all players will pitch from the pitchers mound. The defensive team is to position a player defensively in proximity to the coach-pitcher on either side of (but not in front of) the pitching rubber (serving as a “pitcher” defensive position.. Each batter is permitted to receive a maximum of SEVEN (7) pitches from a pitcher coach during any turn at bat. If the player does not put the ball into play (or strike out) at any point up to and including the seventh pitch from the coach, the at bat shall be considered a strikeout and an out recorded. If the seventh pitch from the coach results in a foul ball, the at bat continues under the same scenario as the

seventh pitch (a pitch not struck will result in a strikeout being recorded.)

2. In the fourth inning and beyond, players will pitch to each batter, with coaches serving as relief pitchers consistent with the following:

Upon reaching a “ball four” count to a batter (example, ball four taking place with a batter’s count of three balls and two strikes,not to be confused with “four pitches thrown”), the batter is not awarded first base and the player pitcher is relieved at pitcher by a coach from the team at bat. With a coach pitching, the strike count carries over from the player pitcher and does not restart, umpires will continue to call strikes (strikeouts can occur) and runners (including the batter) will have the opportunity to advance only on balls hit into play.

Each batter is permitted to receive a maximum of up to three (3) pitches from a relief pitcher coach during any turn at bat. If the player does not put the ball into play (or strike out) upon the third (3rd) pitch from the coach, the at bat shall be considered a strikeout and an out recorded. If the third (3rd) pitch from the coach results in a foul ball, the at bat continues under the same scenario as the third pitch (a pitch not struck will result in a strikeout being recorded.)

When a coach comes in to pitch, the player removed as pitcher from the defensive team is to be positioned defensively in proximity to the coach-pitcher on either side of (but not in front of) the pitching rubber.

For the next batter, the pitcher will once again be a player, with a coach returning to pitch again if the batter gets to a “ball four” count. There is no limit on the number of times this can happen in an inning (except within the bounds of the run limit per inning being in place).

4. Bunting is not permitted in this Division.

5. Batters hit by a pitch DO NOT receive a free pass to first base, (although, in the spirit of sportsmanship, the coach of the defensive team may graciously offer first base to a batter who gets absolutely drilled by a pitch!) Any pitcher hitting three (3) batters will be replaced by another pitcher for reasons of safety and not allowed to return as a pitcher for the remainder of the game.

6. On plays where the ball never leaves the infield, runner advancement is limited to one base from where the runners were when the play began, unless the throw goes out of play (throws that go over the fence, or into a dugout will result in all runners being advanced one additional base).

7. On balls hit into play into the outfield, a base runner cannot advance any further than where he is at the moment the retrieved, incoming ball is in possession of the cutoff man and he “has control” of the ball. At that point, the play should continue through to its natural completion, however, runners that were not halfway to the next base at the time the ball returned to the infield will be sent back to the previous base. The ball is deemed “in control” when the cutoff man (infield player only) has caught the ball in the dirt area of the field or has returned to the infield dirt after cutting off the ball from a throw from the outfielder. (Note: A shortstop merely catching a ball in shallow left-field grass does not meet “in control” status the ball must be in the infield dirt, held by an infielder)

For example, a runner is past the halfway point on his way to third base when the ball is thrown to the cutoff man and in his “control”, the runner can continue to third base and will be allowed to stay there if he makes it to the base without being put out. He is not automatically safe at third just because he was already past the halfway point.

Similarly, a runner that is not past the halfway point to third base when the ball is thrown to the cutoff man and in his “control”, is not automatically entitled to a free

pass to return to second base. The play should continue through to its natural completion. If the runner is tagged while retreating back to second base, he is considered out. If the runner continued to run to third base during the same play and is thrown out, the out stands as well. He is sent back to second base after the play is completed provided he made it to third before being put out, or if play has been halted as a result of an attempted out at another base.

Finishing the plays through to natural completion promotes intelligent base running and defensive work consistent with older levels of baseball, while mitigating the risks associated with overthrows. Judgment regarding whether a runner has passed the halfway point is solely the responsibility of the umpire and is not to be questioned. The umpire will raise his arm when he considers the cutoff man to be in control of the ball to assist with making the halfway determination. It can be difficult for the umpire to simultaneously note (among other things) when the ball passes into the infield, where each runner is located, and whether runners are touching the bases. So if an umpire asks a coach from either side for some assistance in determining any of these items, please be truthful knowing that you too could be faced with the same difficult situation.

8. There is no additional advancement on any errant throw (originating from either infield or outfield) that goes past any base, unless the throw goes out of play (all runners are then advanced one additional base). For example, there's a base hit to the outfield, and runner is attempting to go from first to third. Outfielder's throw goes past the third baseman, however, the runner cannot advance to home and all other runners are to return to the base they were entitled to at the time of the errant throw.

E. Game Completion and Mercy Rule

A regular game consists of six (6) innings (unless a tie score forces extra innings), with the game becoming official after completion of four (4) innings. (3-1/2 innings if the home team is ahead after the top of the fourth inning). If the score is tied after six innings the game should continue into extra innings, but regular season games will still be subject to the normal time limits in place.

When weather (rain, lightning, darkness) prevents the completion of at least six innings, games shall generally revert back to the last completed inning for determination of final score. At that point, tie games (during the regular season only) that have completed four innings of play should officially be declared a tie and not resumed.

Additionally, no new inning (top half) shall begin for any regular season game (including extra-inning games) after the game has reached the 2 hour mark (subject to adequate daylight). Exception: For all Saturday games (including the final game of the day), the no new inning cutoff will be at the 1 hour, 45 minute mark.

Mercy rules: In this Division, a team can score no more than five (5) runs in any inning. Once a team scores 5 runs in an inning (or has seen three outs made) that turn at bat is completed. Exception: if the 5th run is scored as a result of a home run hit over the fence, all runs shall count on that play.

Games shall be called when either team leads by ten (10) or more runs at the conclusion of the fourth or fifth inning, or earlier upon the agreement of both head coaches.

At that point, play can continue for developmental purposes upon mutual agreement by the coaches, however, the game's official outcome (and final score) will have already been determined.

F. Not Enough Players

A team can begin a game with as few as 7 of their official team players present. If additional players arrive

after the start of the game, they should be entered at the end of the batting order. A team with less than 9 players may “borrow” players in each inning to play a defensive outfield position. That player will be determined by the “lending” team’s coach, however, the player should be instructed to play the field to the best of his abilities. “Borrowed” players are for defensive purposes only and are not eligible to bat for the other team.

For the regular season, the games are to be played and scored no matter how many players end up showing up for the team that doesn’t have enough players. Since we don’t keep standings there is no reason to have a team forfeit. For the playoffs, if the team does not have its own 8th player show up by the end of the second inning, the game can be declared a forfeit but still played through to a reasonable end for the players’ developmental purposes.

G. Leading Off Base

Runners may leave a base only after a pitched ball has been hit into play or after the pitch has crossed home plate. Leading off base is not permitted in this Division.

See Babe Ruth Cal Ripken League rules for penalties. In general, here is a good rule of thumb to follow regarding runners leaving early: a stealing runner that

leaves early can be thrown out during the play, and will be returned back to the base if successfully advancing on a ball not hit into play by the batter. If the ball is hit into play, the runner that leaves early can be called out or limited in his advancement if the umpire is of the judgment that the runner benefited unfairly from leaving too early. (There's no such thing as a "re-do" here as far as the batter is concerned, so a ball put into play by the batter will see the "early-bird" base runner determined as either out or safe, per the umpire's judgment).

Once a pitcher has possession of the ball on the mound (need not actually be on the pitching rubber) base runners can no longer advance and are expected to return to their base in preparation for the next pitch. However, the base runner must return safely to the base and may be thrown out at any time while attempting to return to the base.

H. Stolen Bases and Runner Advancement on Wild Pitches & Passed Balls

No Attempts Permitted Except to an Unoccupied Third Base

Advancing on an attempted steal, wild pitch or passed ball is permitted only while attempting to advance from second base to third base, and only if there is not already a runner at third base at the start of the play.

Runners may only steal third if the ball has gotten passed the catcher. This is to allow coaches to place players at catcher that can't make the throw to third. If the catcher's throw eludes the player covering third base on a runner's attempt to advance to third base as outlined above, no additional advancement (by any runner) is permitted. This promotes catchers trying to make an out on an advancing runner without risk of error. Such attempted advancement is permitted only when a player is pitching. (Coach pitchers could potentially advance a runner by throwing a wild pitch to their own team – we want to avoid this possibility).

Otherwise, advancing on an attempted steal, wild pitch or passed ball is not permitted at this time. Runners attempting to advance in a situation where they are not permitted to advance can be tagged out through the natural completion of the play, and if they “safely” reach the base in a situation where they are not permitted to advance, they will be returned to their previous base. (example: A runner tries to advance home on a wild pitch. If tagged out, the out stands. If he reaches home safely, all runners are returned to the bases they were at when the pitch was made).

Runners are permitted to advance on balls put into play consistent with the official rules of Baseball that are generally used, provided the runners are abiding by the

rules regarding taking leads as outlined above (one foot on the base when the pitch crosses home plate or is struck by the bat).

No further running may occur once the ball has been returned to the pitcher for the purposes of pitching to the next batter.

I. Infield Fly Rule

This Division does NOT use the Infield Fly Rule.

A fly ball at this age is usually anything but routine and as such, the focus will be on catching the fly ball rather than assuming the play will be made. Similarly, players at this level are usually not skilled enough to “fake” a catch in order to attempt a double play.

J. Obstruction and Interference

Defensive players without the ball are to yield the base to oncoming runners and should not stand in the runner’s base path while not making a play. This is very common and result in player collisions. Obstruction (failure to yield to the runner a base, or base path if the fielder does not have the ball or is not attempting to make a play) should result in a verbal warning being issued to the defensive player.

Base coaches should closely monitor this and instruct players to move out of the way if there is no play to be made. Pay close attention to where position players are standing during the at bat that they are not standing in the basepath. Repeated instances of obstruction could result in the umpire essentially placing the runners where he thought they would have advanced if the obstruction had not occurred. In doing so, the umpire is of the judgment that the player's progress was so severely impeded that he would have otherwise advanced to the base with ease were it not for the obstruction.

If a base runner makes no attempt to avoid a fielder in the base path pursuing a ball and makes contact that prevents the defensive fielder from making a play, interference should be called and the base runner is called out. The umpire makes a judgment to place the runners based on where they were at the time of the interference, not necessarily where he thinks they would have ended up had the interference not occurred. (The defense gets the benefit of the doubt here, for an infraction on the offensive team)

Also, base runners that are struck by a batted ball in fair territory are declared out and the play is immediately dead. (Official rules provide a loophole here where the rule does not apply if the ball has

already passed an infielder who could have made the play....we're not going to make that determination for our purposes). The batter goes to first base and all other runners remain where they were before the play, unless forced to advance. A runner cannot score from third when this happens.

For example: bases loaded, runner from second gets hit by ground ball between second and third. That runner is out, the batter goes to first, the runner on first is forced to second, and the runner that began the play on third remains there, as the runner being put out between second and third removes the force for the runner on third.

K. Contact Rule and Head-first Sliding

If in the umpire's judgment a runner attempting to reach any base intentionally and maliciously runs into a defensive player, he will be called out on the play and ejected from the game. The runner must slide or otherwise attempt to avoid contact.

Head-first sliding is not allowed. Exception is when a player is diving back to a base from a somewhat stationary position, while not trying to advance to the next base. Base runners attempting a head-first slide while advancing to the next base will be automatically

called out in all instances, and will be ejected from play for a second infraction in any single game.

Enforcement of the sliding / contact rules is entirely an umpire's judgment call and may not be appealed.

L. Pitching Rules

There is a per game pitch count limit of 35 for this division, requiring any pitcher to be removed upon completion of the batter during which the pitcher reaches the 35 pitch limit. During the regular season, pitchers are permitted to pitch not more than 1 inning per game (still subject to the pitch count limit), with any portion of an inning counting as 1 inning.

In the playoffs, pitchers will be permitted to pitch two innings per game and those innings must be consecutive innings. (Any portion of an inning pitched counts as 1 inning for any player.) For example, a pitcher throws 26 pitches in inning 1, and then in inning 2 reaches his 35th pitch. He is permitted to finish pitching to that batter, and then must be replaced regardless of game situation. Another example, a pitcher throws 28 pitches over 2 innings, but still must be replaced based on the 2 inning limit even though he is still within the pitch count limit.

No pitcher may pitch more than 6 innings per week, or more than 105 total pitches, over any rolling seven day

period (regardless of the number of games played in that week,). This provision will be in place during playoffs, as well as regular season.

Violations of the pitching rules are viewed with great disdain by the league and will result in forfeiting of games.

Pitching activity must be reported by each team to the league when submitting scores by email at the conclusion of each game. Pitchers' use will be reviewed regularly by the division commissioner and league officials. (see item R below for reporting instructions)

M. Field Preparation and Reconditioning, Warm-up's

Both teams are responsible for preparing the field before the game. This includes the batter's box, pitching mound, bases, and anything else that needs to be addressed. Fields should be properly raked and lined prior to the start of every game. When it starts to get hotter it is also a good idea to water the field periodically. This all helps in keeping our fields in the best condition possible and giving the players the best playing experience possible.

General team warm-ups are not to be conducted on the infield. Instead, the outfield area is to be used in addition to the batting cages, where preference is usually provided for games on the immediate schedule. Both teams are also responsible for cleaning up the field after games as well. Fields should be left in a condition that makes them ready for another game's use. Filling in holes around home plate and the pitcher's mound will increase the likelihood that the field is still playable the next day if there is rain overnight. Additionally, before leaving the dugout area, coaches and team members are responsible for picking up any trash and scanning the area for any items that might otherwise be left behind.

N. Dugout Behavior

Cheering for teammates is encouraged and a great way to keep players' minds on the game at hand. However, it is requested that loud, team rally chants and songs be discouraged, particularly while the pitcher is in his wind-up and delivery. Hitting the fence with bats or rattling the fence is not permitted at any time. Coaches are not allowed to yell instructions to their players while the pitcher is delivering his pitch in an attempt to tip off the batter. This guidance applies to coaches and parents as well, with all parties being

expected to act within the context of the GVAA Code of Conduct.

O. Coaches' Roles and Umpires

A coach from the batting team has the responsibility for assuming the pitching role following the batter reaching a "ball four" count from a player pitcher.

Early in the season, the defensive team can position one coach in the outfield to provide verbal assistance to players during the game. This should be discontinued at the midpoint of the season, to the point that defensive coaches remain in the dugout the entire game in preparation for tournament play. It is also helpful to have a coach (from the defensive team) stand behind the team's catcher, to provide help with the catcher's positioning and to also help speed along the game by making the throws back to the pitcher. The coach should not physically interfere with or assist the player and should gradually be discontinued by the time the post season tournament begins.

(Optional) GVAA will use apprentice (less experienced) umpires for this division. Generally, umpires have complete charge of the game and have final say on all matters. Please keep in mind that this is a learning experience for them, too, and your assistance in helping them during certain situations is

greatly appreciated. Abusive, offensive, or belligerent language directed at players, umpires or coaches by anyone (including parents) may result in forfeit at the umpire's discretion.

Coaches and parents are expected to be supportive of the umpire's efforts and maintain the flow of the game in the interest of quality play.

P. Protests

In this Division, protests should be strongly discouraged and any differences should be resolved quickly between the coaches.

Protests will be accepted on rule interpretations only. No protests will ever be permitted on judgment calls made by the umpires. If a head coach wishes to protest a game, he/she must contact a GVAA Board member on duty immediately to resolve the situation.

Q. Rescheduling Rainouts and Other Stopped Games

The Division Commissioner has the responsibility of deciding whether to begin games. Once games are started, any decision to stop a game is the result of consultation between the game's umpire and a Board member on duty.

Rained out games are to be replayed in their entirety, unless the rained out game has been declared official or the coaches of both teams agree to resume an otherwise unofficial game that had begun before being rained out.

All makeup games will be played in the next available opening in the league schedule. The Commissioner responsible for scheduling will confirm arrangements with the coaches and have the final decision regarding the rescheduling. Any game not played in the reassigned time may be considered a forfeit by the team(s) that fail to show up.

League officials reserve the right to modify rainout makeup rules (including the decision to not make up a game), particularly during periods where there is a backlog of rainouts or other league activities.

Team scorekeepers should confirm the game score with the other team periodically throughout the game. In instances where a discrepancy exists and cannot be readily resolved, the home team's scorebook is to be considered the official scorebook.

Teams are required to record the pitch count and innings pitched for every pitcher at the conclusion of every game.

(Playoffs Only) Additionally, final scores are to be emailed (by both teams: win or lose, home or away) within 24 hours to the email address used by the league. In doing so, coaches should also report their team's pitching activity for the day.