

Dear CAA Families,

My name is Ryan Herdrich and I am the Director of 5-8 year old Baseball and I wanted to communicate changes coming for the upcoming season at the 5-8 year old levels. For those that were involved in our Machine Pitch program last year, you had a taste of what is to come.

Background:

For the past couple seasons we have been discussing ways to improve player skill development, improve the flow of games, and increase the passion for baseball for all players at the Machine Pitch level. We have spent many hours evaluating what other associations offer for this 7-8 year old age group and numerous ideation sessions about what we can do to improve. Last year we introduced some of these ideas and based on our findings have decided to make some changes, which were approved by the Baseball Operating Committee board members.

Changes:

For the 2024 season, we will be moving all of our 5-8 year old baseball to a coach pitching and away from the pitching machines. The 7-8 year old level will maintain mostly the same rules that they had before but will have a coach pitching to the players instead of the manual machine.

As part of these changes, we are also excited to introduce a rebranding of our In-House Baseball Program levels:

- 5-6 year olds: Rookies
- 7-8 year olds: Minors
- 9 year olds: Majors

Benefits:

Based on findings, we anticipate that this change will facilitate better development of our players in a multitude of ways. In our trial of this last season, it led to more innings played, more balls put into play, more scoring, more fielding, higher player engagement, and an overall better baseball

experience for all involved. Our hope is to not only develop the players offensively by increasing at bats and allowing players to learn to pick up arm motion, but develop the players defensively. The more balls put in play at a quicker clip will lead to more fielding, throwing, and catching opportunities. Development on both sides of the ball will create a more exciting environment where players will start to understand the game of baseball.

We understand that change can evoke passionate responses, and some may not agree with the decision. We kindly ask for your understanding that these changes are solely driven by our commitment to the better development of all players and creating an engaging environment within our association.

Stay tuned for updates on our website, including the official rules, rebranding details, and upcoming season dates. We will also be discussing this at our annual Parent meeting in February. We are eagerly anticipating another fantastic season and appreciate your continued support!

Best regards,
Ryan Herdrich
Director of 5-8 Year Old Baseball