

## Winter Springs Babe Ruth Rules

### Rookie Division

#### Home Team & Visiting Team Responsibilities

The home team is responsible for the following:

- Setting up and storing away the pitching machines. Machine shall be set 46 feet from the back of home plate. The front 2 legs of the pitching machine are placed at 46 feet. Pitching machine in use shall be Blue Flame, approximate speed 42 mph.
- Setting up 4 homerun cones and flags at 200 feet.
- Provide an official scorekeeper for recordkeeping purposes. Gamechanger will be used for the official score.

The visiting team is responsible for:

- Providing an adult scoreboard operator for the duration of the game.

Umpires will provide game balls.

Only the manager from each team will meet with the homeplate umpire when the plate meeting is called. Managers will exchange a paper lineup with all players last name and jersey numbers listed and a copy from each team must also be given to the umpire. The use of excel lineup helper is preferred: <https://www.wsbareruth.com/coaches>.

#### Game Time

To facilitate the consistent start and stop of games, and to provide equitable playing time for all players, the following time limits will be observed:

- The umpire will declare the official start time when the defensive team takes the field. The umpire shall notify the official scorekeeper of the official start time, and the official scorekeeper shall record the time in the scorebook. The umpire is responsible for keeping the official time.
- No new inning will start after 1 hour and 30 minutes has elapsed from the official start time.
- Games will be 6 innings, time permitting. The offensive side is retired after 3 outs or after 4 runs have been scored each ½ inning, during innings 1-5. During inning 6, teams may score an unlimited number of runs. Games called because of the time limit will be considered regulation games, regardless of the number of innings played.
- Mercy Rule: Game will end when the game is official and either team has a 10 run lead after 4 innings (3½ if the home team is ahead).
- Tie Games: If both teams have the same number of runs at the end of an official game, the game is declared a tie. Time Limits will define an official game regardless of the number of innings played. If a game is tied after 6 innings and there is still time left on the clock, then a Texas Tie Breaker will be started to finish the game.
  - Texas Tie Breaker: Last player out starts on 2<sup>nd</sup> base, next batter up starts with a fresh count, team has no outs. Both teams will play their half inning and there will be a 4-run limit.

#### Offense (Batting)

- All players are required to wear approved batting helmets while batting. All players shall be in the batting line-up. A team's "at bat" will end when that team scores four runs within the inning or three outs are recorded, except for the 6<sup>th</sup> inning, play will continue until 3 outs have been recorded or the game is over.
- A batted ball that hits the pitching machine, coach, or sandbags will be considered a dead ball. The batter is awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base and all runners are advanced one base, if forced. If a thrown ball hits the pitching machine, sandbag, or pitching coach, it is a live ball.
- Any player hit by a pitch will be awarded first base by Umpire's judgment. A ball that bounces in front of the plate will automatically be considered a "no pitch" unless swung at. It will be up to the discretion of the Home Plate umpire to determine if any other pitch should be declared a "no pitch". This option should only be exercised in extreme cases when the pitch is not hittable from any positions within the batter's box.
- Machine Adjustments should be made at the end of an inning, unless a ball or player hits the machine, or the umpire determines that the machine must be adjusted. Managers from each team will be consulted during machine adjustments. The umpire can make machine adjustments at any time due to a machine malfunction.

- The batting order is the entire roster. A player who leaves a game due to injury or illness is skipped over in the batting order and is NOT considered an out when his or her turn at bat arrives. If a player leaves a game for any reason other than injury or illness, that player must remain in the batting order and is considered an out when his or her turn at bat arrives.
- Speed-up Rule: A courtesy runner (last batted out) is allowed with two outs for the catcher. Catchers should be geared up and ready to catch with 2 outs or 3 runs scored.
- Bunting is allowed, but no fake bunting. If, at umpire's discretion, a batter fakes a bunt and swings, the ball is immediately dead and the batter is out. If a batter fouls off an attempted bunt with 2 strikes or on the 4<sup>th</sup> pitch, the batter is out.
- A batter is out after 3 swinging strikes or 4 hittable pitches. A "hittable" pitch is defined as a pitch that is in or around the strike zone (umpire judgment). A batter that swings at a non-hittable pitch will be charged with a strike. If a batter foul tips a 3<sup>rd</sup> strike and the ball is caught by the catcher, the batter is out. A foul ball on the 4<sup>th</sup> pitch shall entitle the batter to continue to bat until a strike is called or until a fair ball is hit.
  - A foul tip is a strike and in play if caught by the catcher. This means that a caught foul tip on the 4<sup>th</sup> pitch or any pitch thereafter is a strike and the batter is out. There are no walks. See definitions of 'foul tip' and 'strike' in section 2.0 of the Babe Ruth League, Inc. rulebook.
- No walks or intentional walks. No in-field fly rule.
- All bats in-use during play must be stamped with the USA bat symbol. Any bat without a USA stamp is an illegal bat.
  - If an illegal bat is found on the field, it will immediately be removed from play.
  - If a ball is hit with an illegal bat, the batter is out. The batter and manager will both receive a warning.
  - A bat challenge must be made before the next pitch. Umpires are not responsible to police bats. A manager or player that has a second incident in the same game will be suspended from that game.

### Base Runners

- No leading off or base stealing. Runners must stay in contact with the base until the ball has reached home plate. Penalty for leaving early is covered in the Babe Ruth rule book.
- The ball will be declared dead (time out) when the defensive team has possession of the ball in the infield. The base runner will get the base they are in the process of advancing to.
  - When a runner stands off a base and fakes back and forth, this is to be interpreted as not attempting to advance, time shall be called and the runner sent back to the base (will not advance).
- If a batted ball does not leave the infield, the batter and other base runners can only move a **maximum of two bases**.
  - Example: Ball hit to shortstop and he throws to 1<sup>st</sup> and overthrows. The runner may go to 2<sup>nd</sup> at his own risk, but can go no farther. If there is a throw to 2<sup>nd</sup> and the runner is tagged out, then he's out. If there's a throw to 2<sup>nd</sup> and it's overthrown, then he still stays at 2<sup>nd</sup>. If the runner tries to advance to 3<sup>rd</sup> and is tagged out, then he's out. Otherwise, the runner goes back to 2<sup>nd</sup> on his infield hit and overthrow at first being the primary play.
- If a batted ball is hit to the outfield, base runners may continue to run **until the lead runner is stopped**.
  - Example: Ball in outfield and runner is approaching 3<sup>rd</sup> when the 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman received the ball from the outfield. The runner can tag 3<sup>rd</sup> and go home. The defense must run him down or make a play at the plate.
- The advancing runner may be tagged out as he/she is approaching the base or if he/she overruns the base to which he/she is advancing. If a player advances to an additional base, time will be called and the player returned to the previous base.

### Defense (Fielding)

- No more than 10 players will be on the field defensively. The additional player will be in the outfield. Outfielders must remain in the outfield grass. There may be only normal infielder positions.
- Each team will have a fully equipped catcher. Catchers are required to wear a cup protector. For field position changes, the catcher is NOT considered an infield position.

- To develop and teach players, no player may play 1 position more than 2 innings. No player may play an infield position for more than 2 consecutive innings. Exception: catcher may play catcher position for 3 innings, but cannot catch for more than 3 consecutive innings.

### Pitchers/Pitching

- The pitcher must be located within arm's length of the pitching coach and must begin each pitch at that position. Pitchers may not leave that position until the ball is released from the machine. If the pitcher violates these requirements, then (1) the play will stand, even if the pitcher is involved in the play, and (2) the umpire will warn the violating pitcher's manager that if the same pitcher violates one of both requirements again, the player will be removed from the pitcher's position. The player can assume another position but cannot re-enter as a pitcher in the game.

### Coach Placement

- A maximum of 1 manager and 3 coaches/volunteers are allowed on the playing field/dugout. Any non-coach volunteers must complete Volunteer Registration to be on the field or in the dugout.
- Up to 2 coaches are allowed on the outfield grass for defensive player instruction.
- One offensive coach shall operate the pitching machine and may not coach base runners or wear a glove. The pitching coach will be allowed to assist his batter.
- Two offensive base coaches at 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Offensive coaches cannot stand behind homeplate.
- One coach or non-coach volunteer must be in or near the dugout when a player or players are in the dugout.
- Managers are the only team staff to ask for time and/or approach umpires for non-judgment calls (i.e. safe/out or fair/foul). Official scorekeeper for the home team can ask the umpire for clarification when time has been called for the purpose of scoring.
- **A defensive coach can be stationed behind the catcher with his back against the backstop fence. The role of this coach is to assist with past balls. Any coaching from this position will not be aggressive in nature.**
- **If the coach positioned behind the catcher is deemed to be acting aggressively, interferes with a play, or encroaches on the home plate area, that coach will be ejected**

### Playing Time

Each player must play a minimum of three innings and six consecutive outs. All players will bat in the lineup.

### Player Requirements to Start the Game & Players Arriving After the Start of the Game

#### Player Requirements to Start a Game

- Each team must have a minimum of 9 players at the "official start time" for a game to begin. In the event the minimum cannot be met, the game is considered a forfeit and the win goes to the team that has the required number of players. In the event both teams cannot field the minimum number of players, the game shall be declared a double forfeit.
- If a forfeit occurs, both managers may petition their respective league presidents, reverse the forfeit and reschedule the game. Upon unanimous consent of ALL parties the game may be rescheduled, played, and counted in the standings.
- Once the game is started, a team may continue to play if the number of players falls below 9 but the minimum to continue to play is 8. If a team cannot field at least 8 players, that team shall forfeit the game. A player who leaves a game due to injury or illness is skipped over in the batting order and is NOT considered an out when his or her turn at bat arrives.
- If a team cannot field the minimum number of players for a scheduled game because it was scheduled on a recognized religious or school function, the game may be canceled and re-scheduled without penalty, provided notification is submitted to the respective league presidents at least 48 hours prior to the game date. Games cannot be rescheduled for any other reason.

#### Players Arriving after the Start of the Game:

- If a player arrives after the start of the game, the player must be added to the bottom of the batting order.

- Defensively, a late player will be counted as playing a defensive inning for any inning that they missed. For example, if a player shows up after the second inning begins, the manager will have to play that player for one inning to comply with the minimum play rules.

### Scorebook/Gamechanger

The home team is responsible for keeping the official scorebook via Gamechanger. The scorebook is kept to document scores for standings, for insurance purposes, and to document players' participation for All Stars.

### Fall vs. Spring Rule Differences

N/A

### Playoff Rule Differences

- Game Time:
  - Game time is 1 hour and 30 minutes. **Championship game has no time limit.**
  - If the game is tied at the end of 1 hour and 30 minutes, game play moves to a Texas Tie Breaker at the conclusion of the currently in-process full inning. If the game is tied after 6 innings, game play moves to a Texas Tie Breaker. No playoff or championship game will end in a tie.
    - Texas Tie Breaker: Last player out starts on 2<sup>nd</sup> base, next batter up starts with a fresh count, team has no outs. Both teams will play their half inning and there will be a 4-run limit.
- Minimum Playing Time:
  - All players must play 6 consecutive outs and managers must bat the entire lineup. Games ending in less than 6 innings do not preclude minimum playing time rules. Failure to meet minimum playing time rules will result in a forfeit of the game.
  - Players do not have to play a certain number of innings in the infield or outfield. Players can play the same positions the entire game.
- Mercy Rule is in effect.
- All defensive coaches will remain in foul territory when the ball is in play.
- **2 defensive coaches can be stationed in foul territory at least 10 feet behind first and third base.**
- **A defensive coach can be stationed behind the catcher with his back against the backstop fence. The role of this coach is to assist with past balls. Any coaching from this position will not be aggressive in nature.**
- **If the coach positioned behind the catcher is deemed to be acting aggressively, interferes with a play, or encroaches on the home plate area, that coach will be ejected.** UPDATED 11/10 RJM

