

# ROYAL YORK BASEBALL LEAGUE - 2014

## Boys Rookie House League Rules

Revised April 15, 2014

*Though the general rules as set out by the OBA apply to house league baseball, there are some exceptions designed and adapted for the Royal York Baseball League which need to be noted by all the coaches and umpires. Special Rules set out for RYBL are outlined in italics.*

### **General Principles**

*Our goal at Royal York is to provide children with an opportunity to enjoy the game of baseball and at the same time to develop their social and interpersonal skills.*

*For us as parents who volunteer to coach, it should be our goal to be fair to all children and to promote respect for all players, other coaches, umpires and other parents. We should forever be good role models by promoting sportsmanship and fair play at all times.*

### **1 NUMBER OF PLAYERS, FIELD POSITIONS and BATTING ORDER**

1.01 A team must have at least 7 players to start a game. The game may be continued by a team having fewer than 7 players but no less than 6 players, due to illness or injury sustained by a player(s) during the course of the game.

1.02 If a team has less than 7 players at the regular time for starting the game, there shall be a 15 minute delay. If the team is still short of the required 7 players after the expiry of the 15 minutes, that team shall forfeit the game. (Optionally, the coach of the other team can elect to place any extra players he or she may have on the other team and play the game as a regular game.) Opposing coaches agreeing to an extension of the 15 minute grace period shall waive their right to claim forfeit of the game after the game has started.

1.03 The fielding team can play all players on the field during the inning, however the infield will be made up of a maximum of 6 players (including pitcher and catcher who shall be considered infielders in these Rules). If a team has 9 or more players, they must play a catcher. A team with fewer than 9 players has an option of not playing a catcher until the last batter at which point the pitcher shall be appointed to cover home plate as the catcher. (Where a pitcher is appointed to cover home plate as the catcher, the pitcher may position himself as a pitcher until ball is struck; on striking of the ball, pitcher may participate in any aspects of fielding (catch ball, block ball, deflect ball), but the defending team must ensure that Rule 5.05 is fully observed in order to record the last out of the inning (i.e., there are no "hand offs" permitted, and the pitcher/catcher must cover home plate, and be thrown the ball from another player, from a minimum distance of 6 feet / 2 metres away).

1.04 The buffer zone is that area which shall be approximately a semi circle having a radius of 7 to 8 metres (approx. 25 feet) within the foul lines and with the home plate being the centre from where the measurement shall be taken. No player in the field can be placed in the buffer zone while a player is batting. The buffer zone shall be set down by the home team coach and confirmed by the umpire prior to the commencement of the game.

1.05 Players are assigned their fielding positions for the entire inning and cannot be moved from one fielding position to another during the course of an inning, unless they are substituted on account of an injury. This does not prohibit the shifting of players in the field for purposes of defensive strategy.

1.06 All team players shall be listed on the score card for purposes of establishing a batting order.

1.07 All players on the list must bat in sequential order. No pinch hitting is permitted.

1.08 The line-up cannot be altered during the course of the game, except to add late arriving players, as described hereunder, or to delete players leaving the game permanently. Any player who arrives late for the game but before completion of the second inning can be added to the line-up by placing his name to the end of that team's list. No player shall be added to the list after two innings have been completed. No player may be removed from the line-up, unless removed temporarily on account of injury (see Rule \*), or unless removed permanently.

1.9 A batter who puts the ball into play while batting out of order is automatically out and all runners must return to the base that they occupied before the batter went to the plate, provided the opposing coach protests the matter to the umpire before the first pitch is thrown to the next batter. If it is discovered, while the batter is still at the plate, that the batter is batting out of order, the correct batter shall be required to hit, and shall assume the number of pitches already thrown to the incorrect batter as part of his 5 pitch count.

1.10 When the final batter ("last batter") for a team comes to bat in the inning, the coach of the hitting team shall announce to the umpire and the coach of the opposing team that the last batter is now hitting.

## **2 PITCHING**

2.01 The ball shall be pitched by a pitching machine which will be set up by the home team coach. A coach from the team batting will put the ball into the pitching machine as soon as the umpire confirms "play ball".

2.02 Batters shall receive 5 hittable pitches from a pitching machine. A hittable pitch shall be in the ultimate discretion of the umpire. A pitch that is over the batter's head or bounces in the dirt may not be considered by the umpire to be a hittable pitch unless the batter swings. A foul ball on the fifth pitch entitles the batter to one more pitch. A foul ball on the sixth pitch, however, the batter is out.

2.03 In the unusual occurrence where the pitched ball hits the batter, the batter is not entitled to first base, but shall be entitled to a repeat pitch. If the batter cannot continue with his “at bat” after being hit by the pitched ball, he shall be considered as having been put out and the next batter in the line up shall hit. Note: The offensive team does not get to substitute another batter for the batter who was removed from the plate due to being hit. The plate appearance of the batter who was unable to continue with his “at bat” counts as one of that team’s at bats for the inning.

### 3 HITTING

3.01 Players on the team shall bat in the order as recorded on the score card, except as required by the “Fair Play Rule” provided for in Rule 3.02.

3.02 Fair Play Rule: For a game starting with teams that have an even number of players, play in the first inning is governed by Rule 3.01. In each successive inning, however, the batting order starts with the second player whose name follows the last batter from the preceding inning. For example:

First Inning Order	Second Inning Order	Third Inning Order
1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9	2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-1	3-4-5-6-7-8-9-1-2

For a game starting with one team that has fewer players than the other team:

(1) Batting Rules for Team with Fewer Players – In every offensive inning, the team with the fewer players shall bat the same number of players as the team with the greater number of players, in the order required by Rule 3.01. This will result in one or more players at the top of the order, batting twice in the particular inning. In each successive inning the first batter for the team with the fewer players shall be the first player whose name follows the last batter from the preceding inning, whomever that may be. For example, Team A has 9 players, Team B as 10 Players. Team A bats as follows:

First Inning Order	Second Inning Order	Third Inning Order
1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-1	2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-1-2	3-4-5-6-7-8-9-1-2-3

(2) Batting Rules for Team with Greater Players - The team with the greater number of players follows the same format as if the teams were even.

Additional Notes: No player shall be entitled to bat twice in one inning, more than one time in one game, unless every other player on the team has batted twice in one inning in the same game. No player shall be entitled to be the “last batter” more than one time in one game

3.03 If the ball hits the batter’s hands when the batter is swinging at a pitch and goes into fair territory it is a fair ball and the batter must run towards first base.

3.04 If the ball is hit and lands within the buffer zone any infielder can play the ball. However, no bunting is allowed. Any attempt at bunting shall count as a foul ball.

3.05 If the ball is hit and strikes the pitching machine, pitching coach or stops within the 8 foot circle surrounding the pitching machine, it is an automatic single and each base runner advances one base, with the exception of the last batter, in which case the ball is dead and the batter takes the pitch over again (this pitch does not count as part of the 5 pitch count).

3.06 If the ball is hit in the air and it appears that it will land very close to or on the pitching machine, the umpire shall call “dead ball, no play” out loud. There shall be no play on the ball. The base runners return to their base and the batter will take the pitch over again ( NOTE: Different for Girls Rookie )

3.07 If the ball is hit and it strikes the umpire who is in fair territory, and remains in fair territory, it is a fair ball and must be played by the fielding team.

3.08 If the ball is hit and it strikes the umpire who is in fair territory, but the ball continues and goes into foul territory and out of play, the umpire shall award the batter first base and each base runner shall advance one base, with the exception of the last batter, in which case the ball is dead, base runners return to the bases previously occupied, and the batter gets to take the pitch over again.

3.9 If the ball is hit and it strikes a base runner who is on the base when struck by the ball and the ball remains in fair territory, the ball is in play and must be fielded by the opposing team. All runners can advance until the play is brought to a stop by the fielding team.

3.10 If the ball is hit and strikes a base runner who is on base when struck by the ball, and the ball goes into foul territory and out of play, the ball is dead and the batter gets first base while the other base runners advance one base.

3.11 If the ball is hit and strikes a base runner who is not on base, the base runner is out and the batter gets first base. The base runner, however, is not out, if the hit ball passes by or touches a fielding player before striking the base runner. In this case the ball remains in play and all runners advance on the bases until the fielding team brings the play to a stop.

3.12 If the ball is hit and the base runner runs into the fielding player who in the opinion of the umpire had a chance to make a play on the ball, the base runner is out and the ball is dead. The batter gets first base and the other base runners either go back to the same base or move up one base to allow the batter to take first base. No base runner is allowed to score.

3.13 If the ball is hit and the base runner stops in front of the fielding player and in the opinion of the umpire is intentionally screening the fielder, the umpire shall call the base runner out and the play dead. The batter gets first base and the other base runners go back to the same base or advance one base to allow the batter to take first base. No base runner is allowed to score.

#### **4 BASE RUNNING**

4.01 The bases must be touched in their correct order, namely, first to second to third to home. Any base runner who runs the bases out of order is out.

4.02 A base runner can overrun first base and home plate. A base runner who overruns second or third base can be tagged out.

4.03 If the base runner misses one base but touches the next base, the base runner can only return to the missed base while the ball is in play by touching any base in between in the reverse order, otherwise the base runner is out, provided the opposing coach appeals the matter to the umpire before the next pitch to the batter.

4.04 No base runner can return to touch a missed base if the following base runner has scored. The base runner who missed the base is out and his run does not count.

4.05 If a base runner passes another base runner while running the bases, he is automatically out for illegally passing in front of the other base runner.

4.06 No base runner shall leave the base before the ball is hit. There are no leadoffs. A base runner who leaves the base before the ball is hit is out and the ball becomes dead. All base runners return to their base and the batter gets to take the pitch over again.

4.07 A base runner must tag up on a caught fly ball before advancing to the next base. In other words, the base runner must retouch the base after a fly ball is caught if he left the base initially when the ball was hit.

4.08 On the last at bat of the inning, a base runner may continue to run all the way home before the catcher steps on the plate while in possession of the ball. If the last batter hits a fly ball that is caught by a fielder in the air (whether in fair or foul territory), the batter is out and the base runners may properly tag up and attempt to reach home plate before the ball is returned to home plate. If reaching home plate before the ball, their run will count. Note: If the runner does not tag up after the catch of the ball in the air, and touches home plate before the ball is returned to home plate, the run shall not count. Subject to Rules 4.01 to 4.06 a runner proceeding without tagging up, may return to tag up, and if still reaching home plate before the ball is returned, his run will count. (Note: The “out of play” aspect of this Rule is dealt with in Rule 4.15 below).

4.9 All base runners can continue to run if the ball, after being hit into fair territory, is overthrown by the fielding team and is in play.

4.10 Calling Time – An infielder in possession of the ball, on or within the base lines, may raise his arms and call “time”, in which case the Umpire shall permit all base runners to take the bases that they were in the process of running to. Decisions on which base the runner achieves are at the discretion of the Umpire, and that Umpire shall be permitted but not required to use the half-way point between the bases as an arbitrary mark signifying whether the base runner gets the next base..

4.11 A base runner is out if he runs more than 3 feet (one metre) off the baseline in order to avoid a tag. However, the base runner is not out if the base runner runs 3 feet (one metre) off the baseline only in order to avoid interfering with a fielder’s attempt at catching a ball.

4.12 On a “force out”, the base runner is out if the fielder while in possession of the ball touches the bag before that base runner arrives at the base to which the base runner is forced to run. There is no need to touch the base runner on a “force out” and even if the fielder drops the ball after touching the base, an out is still recorded.

4.13 On the last batter of the inning, if a ball is fielded but is thrown out of play at any point thereafter all base runners are allowed to score, providing properly tagging up, as required, and touching all the bases in the proper sequence, without violation of Rules 4.01 to 4.06 (i.e., proper base running is required)

## **5 FIELDING**

5.01 All infield players must remain outside the buffer zone until the ball is hit, after which time any infielder can play the ball. All outfielders must remain in the outfield until the ball is struck, after which time any outfielder can play the ball at any place in the field. For the purposes of this rule “Outfield” shall mean either on the outfield grass, or a minimum distance of 30 feet / 10 yards backward from the first-to-second / second-to-third baselines, whichever is further.

5.02 The pitcher shall be placed to either side of the pitching machine and behind the release point of the pitching machine.

5.03 No fielder shall obstruct a base runner. If obstruction is called by the umpire, the umpire shall be entitled to determine how far the base runners would have been able to run but for the obstruction, and place the runners at that base.

5.04 If intentional fielder obstruction is called by the umpire after the last batter puts the ball into play, all base runners automatically score.

5.05 In order to record the last out in the inning, the ball must be thrown to the catcher who must either be on the play or step on home plate while holding the ball. The player throwing the baseball to the catcher must be at least 6 feet / 2 meters away on the throw.

5.06 A ball thrown out of the playing area shall be deemed to be thrown out of play by the umpire. On diamonds where a fence is behind first and third base, it will be deemed an overthrow if the thrown ball hits the fence. On this overthrow, the runner does not get an extra base. This rule is in place to encourage fielders to attempt to throw the ball to get a runner out at first or third base, without penalty.

5.07 If the ball is thrown out of play by a fielder on the last hit, all base runners are allowed to score. Also refer to 4.08.

5.08 No player can play at the same infield position more than once in the game. The only exception is when it is necessary to substitute for an injured catcher, in which case the coach can put in a player to catch the rest of the inning although he has already completed an inning at catcher during the course of the game.

5.09 During the course of the game, best efforts should be used to rotate all players through all the positions and especially to ensure equal time for all players in the infield. Accordingly, coaches should attempt to ensure that no player plays infield in two consecutive innings. Where a Team has 10 or more players, all players playing infield in a particular inning must play either Catcher, or in the outfield in the next succeeding inning.

## **6 THE GAME**

6.01 All games will be maximum 5 innings or 1 hour and 45 minutes in duration, unless called due to darkness or foul weather in which case the game will be considered completed if a minimum of three innings have been played (i.e., if the home team is winning after 2 ½ innings and the game is called, it is a complete game). If the game is called in the middle of an inning, the score will be recorded as of the last completed inning. All games that are suspended may be rescheduled and played as a new game, or may be resumed from the point of suspension, all at the discretion of the Convener.

6.02 All Playoff Games shall be fixed at 3 full innings in length, with the exception of the Consolation and Championship Finals, and the Championship Super Finals, which shall each be fixed at 4 innings in length. Playoff Games resulting in a tie after the fixed number of innings, shall be determined by a series of extra innings which shall be played until the tie is broken.

6.03 If the home team is winning going into the bottom half of the last inning may waive its right to bat. In a Playoff Game, the home team that is winning going into the bottom half of the last inning shall waive its right to bat.

6.04 If foul weather or field conditions appear to threaten the scheduled game with cancellation well prior to the game starting time, it is the responsibility of the Home team coach to decide if the game should be postponed. The decision, whenever possible, should be made at least 60 minutes before game time and in consultation with the visiting team coach. Once the decision has been made to postpone the game, the home team coach is required to contact the visiting team coach and contact the umpires. If umpires have not been advised of a cancellation prior to 60 minutes prior to game time, it is the Home Team's Coach's responsibility to ensure that the umpires are paid in full for the said game, which may include showing up at the field at the scheduled game time, and paying the umpires that attend.

6.05 It is the responsibility of the home team coach to contact the Convener for rescheduling of any postponed game(s). The Convener will provide a new date and location. It will thereafter be the responsibility of the home team coach to advise the visiting team's coach. The Convener shall arrange for umpires.

6.06 If only one umpire presides at the start of the game he or she only receives the regular one umpire fee and a responsible parent from one of the teams can act as the second umpire. Parents are not to be remunerated for umpiring. If no umpire attends to conduct the game, the coaches have the option of using two parents as umpires for the game or postponing the game and arranging for rescheduling of the game. The coaches also have the option of designating two

coaches to act as umpires during the game. If a disagreement occurs between co-umpires, the call of the designated home team umpire shall prevail.

6.07 The Official scorer for the game shall be agreed upon by the coaches, and in the event they cannot agree, it shall be the choice of the home team coach that prevails. The line up on the official score sheet must be completed by both coaches.

6.08 All players must wear long pants or baseball pants during all games and practices. No shorts are allowed. Metal spikes are not allowed. Plastic cleats or rubber cleats are permissible. All players should wear a protective cup.

6.09 All players who bat or who are runners on the bases must wear a helmet with a retaining chin strap.

6.10 Field Dimensions: Bases – 65 feet (from the back of home plate), Pitching Machine release point – 44 feet.