

## **PITCHING MACHINE**

**PHILOSOPHY:** Pitching Machine will be an instructional league for boys & girls. Emphasis is to be on participation and instruction in throwing, hitting from a pitching machine, catching, base running, & defensive strategy. Managers, coaches, & parents must be patient with players. Remember: you are out there for the children; they are not out there for you.

**COVID-19:** There are small differences in league play this season to combat the spread of the Coronavirus. Patience, understanding and realizing everyone has their “own” comfort level regarding COVID-19 is essential. We need to be empathetic to everyone’s feelings towards it. It is up to the participant, coach, spectator, umpire to participate at their own risk and to take the proper precautionary measures that will keep themselves and others safe. These procedures/protocols are suggested in addition to those set forth in the traditional rules for league play.

~ **Face Masks:** No longer required but may be worn at the individual’s discretion.

~ **Symptom Checks (self-evaluation):** Anyone experiencing fever or symptoms of illness should stay home.

~ **Reduce Person-to-Person Contact:** Players and coaches should refrain from high-fives, handshake lines, and other physical contact with teammates, opposing players, other coaches, umpires and fans.

~ **Further Reduction of Germs:** No sunflower seeds, gum or spitting. Individual water bottles encouraged.

~ **Sanitizer:** Parents are encouraged to supply their player with antibacterial wipes and hand sanitizer for disinfecting shared playing equipment and hands.

### **LEAGUE RULES: NO HITTING BALLS INTO FENCE**

1. A team on the field can be as many as 11 players (seven players minimum to start and/or end the game). The 10<sup>th</sup> player is to be used as an outfielder. The 11<sup>th</sup> player is the second pitcher. A catcher is required.
2. Games will be six innings. No new inning can start after 1 hour and 10 minutes from the start of the game.
3. Games will start at the scheduled time or fifteen minutes after the conclusion of the previous game to allow adequate time to clean and/or sanitize the bench. For the first scheduled game, a 5-minute grace period will be allowed before a forfeit is called due to lack of players.
4. An inning will be three outs or 10 batters whichever comes first. If for a game you have less than 10 players, both teams will play to their lesser number (If one team has 9, both teams play 9).
5. MERCY RULE: Games shall be terminated and the team in the lead declared the winner when there is a 15 run difference after 3 innings or a 10-run difference after 5 innings.
6. First Base slides: are not allowed. The base-runner should be taught to run through first base, turn right and return to the base. If a player slides into first base, the player will be called out and a verbal warning will be given to the entire team. If a second offense occurs during the same game, the offending player will be dismissed from the game.

Head First slides: are not allowed into any base when a base runner is trying to advance to the next base. If a player commits a head first slide while advancing to the next base the player will be called out and a verbal warning will be given to the entire team. If a second offense occurs during the same game, the offending player will be dismissed from the game.

7. The two pitchers must be positioned on the two-foot mark outside the six-foot diameter circle. Each pitcher must have both feet on the two-foot mark until the ball is hit. Each pitcher must wear a masked batting helmet.
8. A batted ball that hits the machine (cord or plug included) is considered a dead ball. Umpire decision on contact with the pitching machine is final. Dead balls are considered a no pitch. Balls hit through the circle will not be dead balls; the ball will be in play. Coaches must instruct the two pitchers not to play the ball inside the circle. Remember, safety first. Avoid having pitchers reaching towards the pitching machine.
9. When a ball bounces off a fielder in fair territory and goes into the pitching circle, the play will be called dead. The batter earns first base and the other runners advance one base only.
10. There will be three strikes and no balls. On the third strike if the player does not swing he is called out. If he hits a foul ball he gets another pitch until he is out, or the ball is put into play.
11. The first player on the team to throw a bat will be assessed a team warning. After this warning any player on that team that throws a bat will be called out by the umpire. If the batter throws the bat more than five feet or hits the catcher, the batter will be called out.
12. Bunting will be allowed. Batter must bunt once the batter squares off to bunt (no full swings).
13. An overthrow into the dead ball territory allows the base runners one base, which they must take (this is from when the ball was thrown, not when it entered the dead ball territory). The dead ball territory is defined as outside the fence line or dugouts.
14. The “infield fly” rule will not be used.
15. Each team can use free substitution. Each player must play at least two innings defensively (one in the infield, one in the outfield). The catcher position may change only once per inning except for injury. A player cannot sit out two consecutive innings. A continuous batting order will be used.
16. A player batting out of order will be replaced by the correct batter. The correct batter will assume the count of the out of order batter.
17. A player that leaves the game early is not called out when their turn at bat comes up, batting order shall continue in the same continuous order. The manager must notify the other team when the player has left.
18. On an outfield throw to the infield player play stops when the ball reaches a reasonable area near the base path unless an attempt is made. Chalk lines halfway between 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & home will determine which base the runner earns after play is stopped on the throw. Only one base is allowed on overthrows. Outfielders must be positioned on the grass.
19. A runner on second base will not be allowed to score when a routine out is made at first base.
20. All players must wear complete safety equipment including a cup for boys.
21. The umpire will not call a player out missing a base unless the call was appealed by the opposing manager after time is called and before time resumes.

22. The distance between bases will be 60 feet. The mound is set at 40'.

### BAT SPECIFICATIONS:

1. All bats must be approved by Parks & Recreation baseball program staff.
2. **Bat Standards Boys League (Major division & under):** All bats must be a USA Bat Standard bat. A list of approved bats can be found at [usabat.com](http://usabat.com)
3. **Bat Standards Girls League:** The bat must be a softball bat which meets Little League specifications and standards as noted in this rule. It shall be a smooth, rounded stick and made of wood or a material tested and proved acceptable to Little League standards. The bat shall be no more than 33 inches in length, not more than two and one-quarter (2¼) inches in diameter. Non-wood bats shall be printed with a BPF (bat performance factor) of 1.20. Bats may be taped or fitted with a sleeve for a distance not exceeding 16 inches from the small end. Colored bats are acceptable. A non-wood bat must have a grip of cork, tape or composition material, and must extend a minimum of 10 inches from the small end. Slippery tape or similar material is prohibited.
4. Non-wood bats shall be labeled with a BPF (bat performance factor) of 1.15 or less.
5. If an illegal bat is used during a game, that team will be warned once, and that bat will be ejected from further use. If a second violation occurs, then that team will be forced to forfeit the game. If the issue continues throughout the season further actions could be taken against either the coach of the players who are in violation of the regulation.

### REGULATION GAME RULING:

A regulation game consists of six innings, unless shortened due to game time limits or shortened because the home team needs none of its half of the sixth inning or only a fraction of it after taking the lead with less than three outs or because the umpire calls the game. If the game is called, it is considered a regulation game:

- a. If three innings have been completed
- b. If the home team has scored more runs in two and a half innings than the visiting team has scored in three
- c. If the home team scores one or more runs in its half of the third inning to tie the score

If a game is called before it has become a regulation game, but after one or more innings have been played, it shall be resumed where it left off. Note All Records, including pitching shall be counted.

NOTE: When a TIE game is halted, the pitcher of record may continue pitching in the same game on any subsequent date provided said pitcher has observed the required days of rest and has pitching eligibility in the calendar week in which the game is resumed. For scorekeeping purposes, it shall be considered the same game, and all batting, fielding and pitching records will count.

EXAMPLE:

Rule 4.11

	1	2	3	4	5	6
VISITORS	0	0	0	4	1	
HOME	0	0	0	5		

Game called in top of 5<sup>th</sup> inning on account of rain. Scores reverts to last completed inning (4<sup>th</sup>) and the home team is the winner 5 to 4.

All games reverting back to a tie will go on record as a tie. The tied game will not be considered suspended and will not be continued at a later date and time.

#### **PROCEDURES:**

1. Prior to the start of the game, the managers will agree on the pitching machine setting to be used. If an adjustment becomes necessary, both will agree to the adjustment. Any adjustment to the speed must be made at the end of an inning. During the game, coaches need their catcher suited up and ready to go for the next inning. It's a good idea to enlist the team help of a parent volunteer to assist the team in the dugout. It helps kids to play as many innings as possible before the time limit!
2. Teams should arrive at their scheduled time and practice time limits must be enforced. Coaches need to return the equipment to the Pole Barn (on time) for it to be available for the teams with late practices.
3. Batting practice is not allowed prior to game time and practicing on the field after a game is not allowed.
4. Coaches are encouraged to hold a wrap-up meeting after the game, but should clear the dugouts and hold the team meeting in another area of the park. This will allow players for the next game to get into the dugouts and be ready to go at game time.
5. It is recommended that a runner be used for the catcher. When selecting a catcher, do not put a kid who fears the ball behind the plate.
6. Umpires will check bats and helmets before each game.
7. Defensive team coaches cannot be on the field of play.
8. For safety purposes, bats need to be kept in the dugouts.
9. Home team manager will be responsible for providing an umpire, if necessary.
10. The manager of a team batting will operate the pitching machine. If the pitching machine breaks down, the manager or coach may pitch over or underhand to their team. Once the ball is in play, the coach may not advise the base runners. Coaches in the coach's box are the only ones to instruct runners. There is to be no touching or shoving players
11. The Home Team (listed on the game schedule) manager or coach will take the pitching machine to the field. The visiting team manager or coach will return the pitching machine to the equipment barn after the game. To preserve the life of the pitching machines, please keep them upright when moving them and use the ground wheels to transport them to and from locations.
12. The manager must maintain defensive player sheets and provide them to the P & R Dept. upon request.
13. Additional practices can be secured by permit (pending field availability).
14. All managers & coaches will return all equipment after the last game to a department representative inside the Pollard Park Pole Barn.

## **LEAGUE POLICIES:**

1. Positive Cheering only. No comments are to be directed to opposing team or game officials.
2. Parents are never to approach an official; not before, during or after a game. Questions directed to the umpire must come from the team manager only. Some umpires will be approachable and others will not. Coaches and players must adapt to an umpire's style, because the umpire makes the decision on the field and their decision is final. Questions regarding rule interpretation and overall general conduct can be directed to the Parks and Recreation Department the next business day.
3. Scores are kept in Pitching Machine. Standings are not kept.
4. Players are not to wear jewelry or wrist bracelets of any kind. No metal spikes.
5. No smoking, tobacco products, or alcohol allowed within 200 feet of any playing field.
6. No dogs are allowed on Township property. Only exception is at the park behind the Township Offices.
7. All "official" practices and games are scheduled through the Parks & Recreation Department and are held at Township facilities unless otherwise noted on the official schedules.
8. Coaches are not to encourage or condone unnecessary roughness. Any player using unnecessary roughness will be called out and warned once per game. On a second occurrence, a player will be removed from the game. A second occurrence must be reported to the Parks & Recreation Department by the next business day. Additional penalties may be assessed.
9. A coach or manager who is ejected from a game will include a minimum suspension of 2 games with further review from department staff depending on infraction.
10. Coaches must return all equipment after the last game to a departmental representative.
11. At times, there may be questions on rules that are not specifically covered in our house rules. While we are not a Little League affiliate program, we feel their guidelines are best suited to utilize as supplementary to our rules provided. If there is a rule that is a discrepancy between our house rules provided and the Official Little League Rules. The rule in question will automatically default to our house rules.

## **ADVANCE WEATHER CANCELLATIONS:**

1. In the case of severe weather, cancellations will be posted by 4:30PM on our weather hotline at 586-949-0400, press 4, then 1. Cancellations will also be posted on our Department Facebook and Twitter pages.

## **ON-SITE CANCELLATIONS:**

1. Cancellations after 4:30PM will be determined by park supervisors and umpires on the field at practice/game time. All players and coaches should report to the practice/game site.
2. **UNPLAYABLE FIELDS / RAIN:**

- Together park employees and umpires will make the decision to cancel games based on weather and field conditions.
  - Cancellations can be made on a field by field basis. If one field is unplayable, but the rest are playable, only games scheduled on the unplayable field need to be cancelled.
  - If the first game is cancelled (6PM), the second game does not necessarily have to be cancelled. The decision to cancel the second game will be made based on weather predictions and field readiness.
3. **LIGHTNING:** Lightning can travel up to 10 miles from the storm's edge, so if it is seen or heard, the fields should be cleared and the game paused to wait for lightning to pass. If lightning is not seen for a reasonable time (usually 30 minutes), the game can continue ([www.littleleague.org](http://www.littleleague.org)).
- Anybody who sees lightning should report it to the official on the field or to a park employee.
  - The fields should be cleared, and the game paused to wait for lightning to pass (30 minutes).
  - If an umpire sees lightning, the umpire should report the sighting to the park employees who will notify the official on every field of the decision to delay the game.
  - The umpires and park employees should remain in contact with each other during the game delay. Together the park employees and umpires will make the decision to resume play or cancel based on weather and field conditions.
  - If play resumes, the game should continue with the inning/time limit requirements outlined in the league rules. The delay of game does not count against the time limit.
  - If the coaches decide not to wait out a delay of game, the game will be considered a forfeit and will not be made up.