



## Game Guidelines – T Ball

### Preliminaries

- Mouth guards and athletic supporters are recommended just to get the players used to these ...but are not required.

Any kind of footwear is OK. If cleats are worn these must be rubber cleats only, no metal cleats. No jewelry worn (watches, bracelets, rings, etc.).

- Managers and coaches should try to attend coaching seminars before and/or during season. This is not so much for T-ball as to begin the “coach development” process for future years and future levels of play.

Practice is a team-by-team decision. Some teams practice one day per week, some practice ½ hour before games, some don't practice at all ...each team's manager and parents decide for themselves.

The league has provided all managers with some materials for setting up and running practices ...use these to get organized. Practice time should be “active” times - develop practice plans in advance to keep all players busy.

Recruit coaches and parents for help with stations, to keep kids moving and avoid standing around. After playing a T-ball season, players should be able to throw and catch and have basic hitting techniques.

Consider practicing using the big fat plastic bats sold at Target or Fred Meyer. These can be used with tennis balls. Every kid can hit using these fat bats and this builds some confidence and enthusiasm for hitting.

- If you are short of players for the game you may borrow players from another team to fill out your lineup so long as the borrowed players are registered Little League players.
- This is an instructional level of baseball therefore the coaches should take the time to “explain” the game situations so the players begin to learn the rules ...especially field rules like foul balls, advancing on overthrows, etc.
- Reduced Injury Factor (“Level 5” soft) baseballs are used for practice and game play.

### Game Playing Rules

- We do not count outs in T-ball ...therefore innings are defined as one trip through the roster. This takes a while and we are lucky to get three “innings” per game.

T-ball games are scheduled for 60 minutes ...so no new inning begins after one hour.

### Offense:

- Bat through entire roster each inning (we do not count outs ...so we continue to hit after three outs). Late arrivals go to the end of the batting order. Last hitter of each inning gets a "Home Run" to clear the bases at the end of each inning. The kids love this and will beg you to hit last in an inning. You can rotate your first hitter each inning so more players get this experience each game.
- Batting is from a Tee thus the name T-Ball. Hitting from a Tee should be a primary focus of early season practice. This is the time when each player has "all eyes" on them and we want them to be successful. Coach pitch may be added if appropriate for the last few games of the season (see below).
- No on-deck batter. No player except the batter should hold a bat.
- Hit away. No walks or bunting. The batter eventually hits the ball ...but no walks are given.
- No leading off bases. No head first sliding. No stealing on passed balls by catcher, pitcher or infield overthrows.
- No run maximum per inning. We do not keep score.

### Defense:

- All players on the field each inning. Keep to the routine infield positions to reduce confusion ...which means lots of outfielders (on the outfield grass) at all times. As baseball play making is not always obvious to beginners, two or three coaches/parents should take positions in the field to help guide the play making as it occurs.
- Pitching: If agreed by both managers, Coach from team at bat pitches, gentle, overhand throws from a short distance. Take a knee to avoid difficult to hit "drop balls". Experiment with the speed of the pitches (some kids have more success with a faster, flatter pitch). Use the batting T after 4 or 5 strikes so as to keep the game moving ...avoid getting to 9 to 12 pitches.
- No walks are given. The batter must swing the bat to get on base. And the batter gets as many swings as it takes to put the ball in play.
- A T-baller plays the pitcher position for fielding.

### **Game Environment**

- Remember this is for the players and not for coaches' egos. Focus should be on player development and enjoyment- let them have fun! Learning the game and its fundamentals- not winning and losing- is the focus at this level.