

## **HABL Tadpole League Rules** **Updated 09/01/08**

### **Purpose of the League:**

The intent of the league is to let the players learn basic baseball rules and skills while having fun in a wholesome atmosphere. The biggest differences from Instructional League is that pitchers will be learning to pitch, batters learn to bat against a pitched ball and defensive players have to learn how to stop a base-runner from advancing. Player skills increase significantly at this age. We want to provide guidance and practice to improve those skills, but not lose sight that baseball, game and practice, must be fun. If it is not enjoyable, the child will not want to return. Our fields are available through age 15 and our hope is that most players will want to return each year and play with their friends through age 15.

### **What parents can do to help:**

1. Don't criticize your child at the end of a practice or game for having made a mistake. Emphasize any positive experiences and go on about life. Your child will have to decide for him or herself if they like baseball.
2. Pay attention to skills the coach is teaching and the form. If you have time at home, simply playing catch with your child is the best thing you can do, if you make it enjoyable.
3. Please notify the coach in advance of a game or practice if your child will not be present. Coaches must prepare lineups five minutes prior to the game.
4. Arrive at least 20 minutes before game time so that players may get warmed up and the coach can complete his lineup. A player who arrives after the lineup is submitted must bat at the bottom of the lineup.

### **Game Rules:**

1. In general, Cal Ripken Little League Baseball rules apply, unless otherwise specified.
2. **All players present must bat, and a batting order (name & number) MUST BE presented to the other team's coach prior to the game.** A player may leave the game only for illness or injury, with no penalty. Leaving for any other reason will result in an out when that player is due at bat.
3. A player who bats out of order will be out, if he hits the ball, and no runner can advance. If the error is caught before he hits a fair ball, the appropriate batter may take his place but he will assume the ball-strike count left by the erroneous batter.
4. Games will be six innings, however, no new inning will start after one hour and 50 minutes. Games tied at the conclusion will count as ties. If one team is ahead by 10 runs at the end of the fourth inning (or 3 ½ inning if the home team), the game will be over.

5. No pitcher may pitch more than two innings a game. However, even one pitch in an inning, will count as a full inning.
  - a. **On a coach's first visit to the mound in an inning, for each pitcher in an inning, the coach can replace a pitcher, who may then return later in the game if they have not reached their two-inning limit.**
  - b. **On a coach's second visit to a mound in an inning, for each pitcher in an inning, the pitcher MUST be replaced by another pitcher and CANNOT return to pitch during the game.**
6. A pitcher who hits three batters in an inning, even though not intentional, must be relieved from pitching duties that day.
7. A half inning will last until there are three outs.
8. When a ball is hit in fair territory, play continues until the ball is caught or the defensive team stops the all runners from advancing to another base. Although one of the goals of Tadpole ball is to start teaching base-running skills and the importance of fielders stopping runners, the umpire will have discretion to stop excessive jockeying by a runner who has been chased back to a base, in order to not unduly delay games.
9. Although pitching and catching starts becoming specialized in Tadpole, other positions should be available to all players. **Coaches are strongly encouraged to allow all players to play infield some of the time, if not each game, certainly within each of two consecutive games. A coach will not be forced to play a child in a fielding position where, in that coach's opinion, it is determined that child's safety is at risk.**
10. Only nine players play in the field each inning, but all players bat in the batting order. There is free substitution at all positions except pitcher. **No player shall sit on the bench two consecutive innings, nor shall any player sit on the bench twice in one game until all other players have sat on the bench at least once (unless there is a physical ailment or disciplinary problem). Along with the batting order, coaches will also indicate which inning is planned for each player to sit on the bench.**
11. Base runners may not lead off. They must keep one foot on the base until the ball crosses home plate (which is an umpire judgment call). They may then attempt steals and they may attempt delayed steals while the ball is thrown back to the pitcher. Teams with large leads should stop stealing.
12. Only three coaches per team in the dugout. No coaches are allowed in the field except the batting team may have first and third base coaches within the confines of marked boxes.
13. Bunting is allowed, and even encouraged to the extent all players should learn how to bunt.
14. **Once the season starts, each team shall practice only once on game weeks. That practice may last one-and-a-half hours. Coaches may also, space permitting, hold a 30 minute pitching prior to OR after the normal team practice. If a team's practice is rained out, a separate practice may be held if a field can be located. Practices, other than at HACAA, should be reported by the manager to the League Commissioner, preferably in advance.**

15. If a team needs a special practice for a specific reason, or event (such as a pizza party and going to a batting cage as a group), the coach must report it to the League Commissioner. The intent of these rules is two-fold:
  - a. Parents have indicated they want limits on practices, and
  - b. To avoid one team getting an unfair advantage over another.
16. No player shall be punished such as being benched for missing a practice; however, players are encouraged to attend all practices. Lack of practice may reduce skills needed to play certain positions.
17. Bat length must not exceed 32". Bat width must not exceed 2 ¼".
18. **Coaches must submit batting orders (name and number) to the scorekeepers five minutes before scheduled game time.** A player who arrives after that point may be added to the bottom of the lineup.