**Machine Pitch (League Ages 7 & 8) Rules**

**Blaine Area Little League – 2025**

This league is the next step in player development and learning how to play the game. Our goal continues to be to have fun, develop each player for success, promote sportsmanship, and keep the players coming back year after year. Standings will be kept for the end of season tournament seeding.

Coaches must post their scores on the team pages within 24 hours of each game. **Playing Field**

1. Infield: The distance between the bases is 60 feet. On Blaine fields, the bases are either on the field or in bins attached to the backstop. **Note**: Please return the bases to the bins when the game or practice is completed.

2. For defensive positioning, there is an imaginary arc with a radius of 40 feet, center on home plate and extending between the 1st and 3rd baselines. Its purpose is to ensure that no defensive player, except the catcher and pitcher, is closer than 40 feet to the batter until the ball is hit.

3. Imaginary hash marks are located at the halfway point between 1st and 2nd base, 2nd base and 3rd base & 3rd base and home. These are used by the home plate umpire to determine where the base runner is entitled to if/when a Dead Ball is called,

4. The 1st base coach will call outs at 1st, the outfield defensive coach will call the outs at 2nd base, the 3rd base coach will call the outs at 3rd base and the coach behind the plate will call outs at home and fair/foul batted balls.

a. The 1st and 3rd base coaches are provided by the team that is batting while the outfield coach and home plate coach are provided by the defense.

b. Reminder, a coach must always be in the dugout.

5. The home team is responsible for setting up the pitching machine. Settings should be 3/3/3 at 40- 45ft away from home plate based on pitch quality.

**Special Playing Rules**

1. Teams must have at least eight (8) players for an official game to be played. If a team does not have 8 players by five minutes after the scheduled game time, the game will be considered a forfeit and should be recorded as a 6-0 game.

a. This rule is in place for all regular season and end-of-season tournament games. b. It is encouraged that, in the event of a forfeit, the teams should split up, and make even teams and play a scrimmage.

2. For safety reasons, **on deck batters are not allowed**. No player shall be allowed in front of the dugout/bench fence until it is their turn to bat. All players, except the batter, should be inside the dugout area behind the fence during play when not in the field on defense. One warning will be given and on the 2nd warning, the offending player will be called out.

a. While it is the responsibility of all coaches to enforce this rule, ultimately the bench coach should ensure no players exit the dugout area prior to their turn at bat.

3. A defensive team shall consist of 10 players (if enough players are available). There are four (4) outfielders playing in an arc across the outfield and all players must be on the grass in the outfield when the ball is pitched. No ‘short fielder’ is allowed. The outfielders must also be at least 10 feet beyond the baseline when the ball is attempted to be hit.

4. A team may score no more than five (5) runs in an inning. Scoring of the 5th run has the same effect as the 3rd out.

5. Games are six (6) innings with no new inning beginning after 1 hour and 45 minutes of play. The visiting and home teams must have an equal number of times at bat to make it a complete game. Games can end in a tie.

6. **Each player will play at least 2 innings in the infield per game**. The position of catcher does not count for this rule. In addition, no player will play the same defensive position more than twice per game or two innings in a row. All players must sit once before any player sits a second time.

a. The easiest way to do this is to rotate the players in order (example, Left Center goes to Right Center, Right Center goes to Right, Right goes to 1st base, 1st base goes to 2nd base, etc).

7. If it is known that a team will not have enough players, substitutions are allowed. It is up to the team coach(es) to contact the Player Agent to find players at least 1 day in advance of the game.

8. Each batter is allowed six (6) machine pitches to hit the ball fair. If the player fails to hit the ball into play after six (6) machine pitches, the player is out. If a foul ball is hit on the sixth (6th) pitch, the player is allowed continued pitches until an at bat-outcome (playable hit or final strike/out) is determined.

a. A player cannot strike out on a foul ball, however if a foul ball is caught by the opposing team the player is out.

b. If the player does not swing at subsequent pitches from the sixth (6th), it is considered a strike and the player is out.

c. Coaches are asked to follow this rule at all times, to ensure the game keeps moving in the interest of all participants.

9. Throwing of the bat while batting is not allowed. The home player coach/umpire (defensive team) will give the player a warning after the first thrown bat – both head coaches must be notified and acknowledge. On the second thrown bat by the same player, the offending player is called out and no base runners are allowed to advance.

10. The defensive team’s player pitcher will have one foot next to the pitching rubber, if one exists. If there is not a rubber available, they shall play on an imaginary line between 1st/3rd and 2nd/home plate.

a. The player pitcher will line up to the left or right of the coach pitcher. 11. The adult coach/pitcher must make every attempt to get out of the way of the batted ball or defensive play. If, despite all best intentions, the coach pitcher interferes in anyway, it is considered a dead ball/no pitch and the play is redone.

a. If the batted ball hits the pitching machine or the bucket of balls, it’s considered a redo and the batter gets an additional pitch.

12. The coach pitcher is not allowed to coach base runners in any way.

13. The coach pitcher should not make any motion to receive a ball from a fellow teammate/defensive player until “Dead Ball” has been called by the home plate umpire/coach.

14. Leading off is not allowed. The home plate umpire will give on warning per team per game for leading off. Thereafter, it is called an out on that team.

15. Stealing bases is not allowed.

16. On a ball that is put in play and does not leave the infield, runners can only advance one base. No advancement is allowed on any overthrows to any base in the infield. 17. On a ball that is put in play that goes beyond the infielders, the runners may advance until the ball is **in possession** by an infielder including the player pitcher in the infield area (the infield area is where the normal infielder would play and/or receive a relay throw from the outfielder).

a. When this is true and no attempt is being made on a base runner, the home plate umpire coach will call “Dead Ball” and at this point, runners will be awarded or returned to the base they are closest to as determined by the imaginary hash marks.

b. Note: By definition, the infield is in no relation to the size of the dirt infield as dirt infields can be different sizes. This rule in annually the most complicated for teams to understand. When in doubt, use baseball logic to ensure both coaches understand and are clear prior to the start of the game.

18. The catcher shall wear normal catcher’s equipment including a helmet/facemask, chest protector, and shin guards.

19. A coach must always be present in the dugout if there are players in the dugout. 20. One (1) coach is allowed in the outfield with the defensive team if a coach is also located in the dugout and behind home plate as the coach/umpire. This coach is allowed to provide in-between pitch instruction and player alignment but on the ball is live, outfield coaches are encouraged to not provide additional instruction.

21. Only Little League approved bats with a USA Bat Stamp are allowed.

a. For questions on this, contact the Board of Directors and/or the Little League rule book.

Situations not covered by these rules shall be governed by the 2023 Little League Official Regulations and Playing Rules book.

03/20/2025