

Hopedale Youth Baseball Association

Coaches Guide – T-Ball

Objectives:

- To have fun
- To make friends
- For everyone to participate
- To learn basic fundamentals and skills of baseball
- To learn good sportsmanship

Conduct:

- All adults, both coaches and parents, are expected to show good sportsmanship.
- Be as supportive as possible; Praise them for making a good effort as well as when they do well.
- Opponents should be treated respectfully. Do not allow players to use abusive or discriminating language. Correct children who laugh, make fun, or make negative comments towards other children.
- At the end of the game both teams line up and shake hands. “Good Game” or some other like phrase should be used. Instruct players not to use negative comments such as “Bad Game”.

Schedule:

- T-Ball games will begin at 6:00pm on weekdays which are scheduled Monday – Thursday and 1:00, 3:00 and 5:00pm on Sunday afternoons. Please refer to the schedule for specific dates and times.
- Generally, the first 30 minutes are devoted to practice with the remaining time for the actual game. There should be plenty of time for three full innings and possibly four. Please try and keep the games moving along.

Rainouts:

- Whenever field conditions are questionable, the League Coordinator will determine if the game is to be played. Coaches in turn, will notify parents if the games are cancelled. Games can be made up on Friday nights but must be scheduled through the League Coordinator.

Rosters:

- Team Rosters are determined as follows:
 - ⓪ Any player whose parent is coaching
 - ⓪ All requests for pairings are attempted to be honored
 - ⓪ Remaining players are assigned based on an attempt to balance teams

Participation:

- As stated above a primary objective is to provide the children with an opportunity to participate as much as possible. Therefore, every child who shows up will play the entire game. This will at times result in an unequal number of players on opposing teams but should not have an effect on the game.

On Field Coaching:

- All T-Ball coaches should be on the field with their team during games. This will provide for more hands-on instruction and immediate explanation. It is much easier to instruct from the field than from the sidelines. Take time to demonstrate correct techniques rather than just telling them how to do something.

General Rules:

- All players bat during an inning. Try and rotate your batting order each inning. The inning is over after the last batter hits and runs the bases. Keep players in the field until the last runner crosses home plate.
- This is T-Ball. There will be no pitching to batters. Emphasis should be on correct stance, hand position and swing. Repetition of these fundamentals and concentration on the ball on the tee teaches children how to hit not wild swings at even wilder pitches. This also keeps the games moving along, as well as all children interested and involved.

Skills and Fundamentals:

Baseball is a game of a few basic elements. You must be able to hit, throw, catch a baseball and run the bases. Toward this end, an emphasis should be on teaching these four skills starting with a solid foundation in the fundamentals of each skill. Break down the elements of each skill teaching a progression of the elements leading towards this foundation.

- **Hitting** – Skills needed to hit consist of hand/eye coordination, correct feet position (stance), hand position and good balance. Comfort in stance and consistency in swing are things to look for.
- **Throwing** – Teach proper form, bending elbow the elbow instead of a straight arm, use of opposite leg for direction and proper follow through. Start with short throws and when fundamentals are correct extend the length.
- **Catching** – Perhaps the most difficult skill for a beginner is learning to catch. Demonstrate correct hand and glove position for all throws (low, high, left and right). Use of free hand to close glove around the ball. Begin with very short tosses. For ground balls demonstrate feet position, knees bent not back, glove open and in front to the ground.

- **Running Bases** – Most newcomers have never played or been instructed in baseball. Begin by explaining and demonstrating how to run bases, which base is which and have the children run them. As the season progresses show techniques for rounding bases and being ready to run when the ball is hit.