

SPRINGFIELD ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

3rd & 4th GRADE BASEBALL PROGRAM

**BABE RUTH BASEBALL
CAL RIPKEN- MINORS DIVISION**

2015 Cal Ripken Minors LEAGUE GUIDELINES

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ARTICLE I. LEAGUE COMMISSIONER

- A. The Commissioner of the third and fourth grade Cal Ripken Minors Baseball program as appointed by the Springfield Athletic Association shall establish the rules and regulations for the league.

ARTICLE II. TEAMS, PLAYERS & MANAGERS

- A. The purpose of the league is to teach teamwork and sportsmanship by providing each player with the opportunity to enjoy baseball through regular participation.
- B. All players must be members of the Springfield Athletic Association.
- C. All players must be in third or fourth grade. On a case by case basis, exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Cal Minors Commissioner.
- D. All rosters of players shall be determined and assigned under the direction of the League Commissioner and, as possible, manifest equal distribution of athletic abilities.
- E. Managers have automatic rights to their children. Brothers will be assigned to the same team unless requested otherwise.
- F. The Director of Umpires will be responsible for assigning umpires to games. If no umpire reports to the game, the home team manager shall be responsible to get a parent volunteer.
- G. All game equipment will be located in the storage box at each field. The home team shall furnish 2 new baseballs. Home team shall be located on 1st base side of field for all games.
- H. The uniform supplied by the League must be worn at all times by all participating players.
- I. There is no "on deck" circle. Only the batter at the plate may have and swing a bat. For safety coaches are prohibited from using hitting sticks or soft toss at or near the dugout.
- J. All catchers must wear a catcher's mask and protective cup during practice and pitcher warm-ups including the game.
- K. No player shall wear metal-cleats. Molded cleats only.
- L. Request for additional equipment or replacements must be submitted to the League Commissioner.

- M. The value of awards and material gifts shall be determined and sanctioned by the League Commissioner only. No awards shall be made on the basis of individuality, comparable skills or accomplishments. The SAA provides no awards.

ARTICLE III. GENERAL RULES OF PLAY

- A. League games shall be played on a diamond with a 46 foot pitching distance, 60 foot baselines, and 85 feet from the tip of home plate to second base.
- B. League games shall be ***six (6) innings***. No extra innings during the regular season. When a game is called because of inclement weather or for any other reason before a regulation game has been completed, it will be considered an official game if four (4) innings (complete) have been played. If the home team is ahead at the end of three and one half (3 1/2) completed innings, the game will be declared an official game.
1. Playoff pool-play games tied after 6 innings will end in a tie. Playoff elimination games will continue until a winner is determined with all innings pitched counting against the player limits. A playoff game that cannot be finished due to weather, darkness or other will be suspended and possibly continued on a later date as determined by and at the discretion of the League Commissioner.
 2. The Championship game will be a maximum of eight (8) innings. If the game is tied after eight (8) innings, both teams will be declared co-champions.
- C. The umpire shall determine if a game is official after a sufficient rain delay or darkness. Coaches and umpires need to ensure that the safety of all players is the sole criterion.
- D. All postponement decisions (due to the weather or an unplayable field) up to game time shall be made by both managers. Once the game is placed in the hands of the umpire, the umpire shall make all decisions regarding play.
- E. A ball that is hit fair and while bouncing in fair territory is touched by a spectator will be declared dead and any runner or runners will be permitted to go to the base to which he was advancing when the ball was touched.
- F. If a ball is overthrown and remains in play, all runners may advance without limit to bases they can take at their own risk.
- G. Teams shall bat there entire lineup and use free substitution to ensure that all players receive equal playing time. Coaches should vary the batting order every game.

- H. A thrown or hit ball that goes into the area on the field designated as out-of-play (discussed before the game starts by both team managers and umpire) will be declared a dead ball. Base runners will be awarded the base to which they were running.
- I. "Catch and Carry". A ball that is fielded in play and subsequently carried out-of-play while in control of the fielder is still a live ball in Minors. The fielder must return within the field of play before making a play with the ball. A ball played from out-of-play will be considered a dead ball and runners are awarded the bases that the umpire rules they are entitled to per the above.
- J. Swinging or called third strikes whether held by the catcher or not constitutes an out - no "dropped third strike" rule.
- K. Runners may advance, **at their own risk**, to any base when an overthrow occurs at the base to which they are going during the continuation of the offensive play and the ball stays in play, home plate included. When the ball is thrown out of play, players are awarded the bases that the umpire rules that they are entitled to, home plate included.
- L. Upon receiving a walk, the batter-turned baserunner may not immediately take 2nd base.
- M. Base runners must remain in contact with the base when a pitcher is in the area of the pitcher's plate and in possession of the ball and the catcher is in the catcher's box ready to receive delivery of the ball. This action of a pitcher and catcher shall in no way nullify a continuous play on the part of the offensive team, which must reach its natural conclusion.
- N. A runner on first or second base and in contact with the base may advance at his own risk to the next base (one base only) if the catcher overthrows the ball to the pitcher.
- O. Runners may steal second and third base at their own risk.

A runner may NOT advance on an overthrow from the catcher to either 2nd or 3rd base on a steal or pick-off attempt. Runners may only advance to home as the result of the continuation of an offensive play. That is, runners may not: steal home; take home on a wild pitch; advance home on a play made at another base by the catcher or pitcher; advance home on an overthrow from the catcher to the pitcher.

- P. If a base runner leaves too soon, the umpire will call no pitch, the runner is returned to base and no out is recorded. Each team shall get one warning per game for leaving early. Subsequent violations will result in a dead ball and the runner called out.

- Q. A courtesy runner may be inserted for the catcher with two outs to help speed up play. This is strongly encouraged but not mandatory. A courtesy runner may be inserted for an injured player. The injured player may return to the game.
- R. No fake tags allowed. No hidden ball or deception plays are allowed. First offense will result in a warning. The second offense will result in player ejection.
- S. Except for first base, baserunners should slide into all bases and home on all close plays. Head-First slides are not permitted except when returning to a base.
- T. A close play is when the defensive player is in possession of the ball and is in a position where he can make a play/tag on the baserunner. The runner must avoid contact. The runner may avoid a tag by evading the defender, however if he leaves the basepath (3ft from direct line) he will be called out. Malicious contact will result in immediate ejection.
- U. NO CRASHING will be permitted. In the opinion of the umpire, if a player attempts to jar the ball loose or crash into a player at a base or home plate, he is automatically out and will be immediately ejected from the game.
- V. Two runners may not occupy a base. If runners are at the same base and tagged, the “trailing” runner shall be out as the “preceding” runner is entitled to the base.
- W. A batter shall be called out, on appeal, when failing to bat in proper turn and another batter completes the at-bat. The proper batter may take position in the batter's box at any time before the improper batter becomes a runner or is put out, and any balls and strikes shall be counted in the proper batter's time at bat.
- X. When an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out and the defensive team appeals to the umpire before the first pitch to the next batter of either team, the umpire shall declare the batter out and nullify any advance or score made as a result of the play.
- Y. When an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out, and a pitch is made to the next batter of either team before an appeal is made, the improper batter becomes the proper batter, and the results of the at bat become legal. When the proper batter is called out for failing to bat in turn, the next batter shall be the batter whose name follows that of the proper batter.
- Z. For all rules not covered in this book, the latest official Babe Ruth League rules will apply.

ARTICLE IV. GAME PRELIMINARIES

- A. No one shall question the umpire's decision. Managers/coaches shall not argue with either the umpire or any other team's coaches/parents. Violation of this rule shall lead to an inquiry by the League Commissioner and forfeiture of managing/coaching privileges.
- B. The umpire has the sole authority over the game. He now determines when a game shall be called, halted or resumed on account of weather or the condition of the playing field.
- C. Each team shall place only (9) players on the field for defensive positions.
- D. The umpire(s) shall keep the official time during the game. If the umpire does not have a timepiece, he will appoint the official timekeeper for the game.
- E. The strike zone is as called by the umpire, normally from the armpits to the knees (or taller) and slightly wider (at least on ball) than the plate on each side of the plate.
- F. The infield fly rule is in effect as called by the umpire.
- G. The area around the backstop will be kept clear at all times of all players, coaches, managers and spectators.
- H. Coaching boxes may be manned by **coaches only**. Only a first and third base coach is permitted in or around the coaching box during play. No child base-coaches permitted.
- I. When time allows for warmups, the visiting team shall take the field first for 5 mins, followed by the home team for 5 mins.
- J. No new inning shall be started within fifteen (15) minutes of the start of the next scheduled game. An inning started prior to fifteen minutes of the next game shall be played in full. Games with no "next" game will be held to a 2 hour time limit.
- K. No new inning shall start past 7:45pm during evening games prior to May 1 (or 8pm after May 1). If an inning has started prior to 7:45pm (8pm), that inning shall be completed.
- L. All games will begin promptly. There shall be a permissible delay of fifteen minutes until either team can field at least eight (8) players. This shall be the only permissible reason to delay a game. The availability of eight (8) players shall compel the start of the game.
- M. **Please advise the League Commissioner of any serious injury to a player that occurred during a game or practice.**

- N. If a game cannot be played because of the inability of one of the teams to place at least eight (8) players on the field, this shall be grounds for automatic forfeiture by a score of 6-0 in a playoff game. During regular season games coaches should collaborate and share or borrow players to ensure that a game is played.
- O. **Call Up** players are allowed. A **Call Up** player is any **rostered & registered** player from the Minors league. Coaches must notify the other coach that a Call Up player is being used before the game begins. Call Up players must bat last and are not permitted to pitch. This option is only available during the regular season and cannot be used in the playoffs. A team with more than 10 or more players is not permitted to use a Call Up player.

ARTICLE V. PLAYER PARTICIPATION RULES

- A. **There shall be equal distribution of field playing time among all players present. In addition, players shall share equally in infield and outfield defensive assignments. All coaches are expected to rotate players between infield, outfield and bench assignments equally. All coaches shall vary the batting order from game to game and refrain from repeating orders.** Scorebooks are subject to audit upon request. Violators of these rules will be warned and run the risk of losing their coaching privileges.
- B. All players present shall be in the batting order. The players will bat in this exact order with no exceptions. Players arriving after a game has started will be placed at the end of the batting order. If a player arrives late, they must be played even if they do not meet the normal requirements.
- C. Free substitution is permitted with exception of the pitcher position.
- D. Managers may not arbitrarily suspend a player for any reason. A suspension in this context means the player will not be permitted to play in a subsequent game. However, a manager has the right to remove a player from the game for misconduct and to remove him from bench. A player suspension requires a meeting with the Commissioner, Manager and Parents.
- E. The maximum number of runs a team may score in any inning is 5, regardless of the number of batters. **The sole exception to the 5-run rule is if the run cap is exceeded as the result of a batted ball that clears the fence in the air for a homerun – in this one situation, all runs will count.** During the regular season, this applies to all innings. In the playoffs, the final inning will not be limited. A team ahead significantly and batting in an unlimited run inning is expected to exercise sportsmanship.

ARTICLE VI. PITCHING RULES

- A. No pitcher shall pitch more than **three (3) innings** in one (1) game. These innings must be consecutive. Any part of an inning pitched shall be considered a full inning; that is, one pitch thrown in an inning constitutes an inning pitched.
- B. No pitcher shall pitch more than six (6) innings **per calendar week**. Monday through Sunday is the calendar week.
- C. Prior to the start of a game, a coach may ask the opposition for a brief summary of the eligibility of their pitchers, including who is eligible to pitch and the number of innings for which they are available.
- D. Once removed from the mound, a player may not return as a pitcher in that game.
- E. The "balk rule" is not in effect. If in the judgment of the umpire a balk interferes with the play of the game, he shall call "no pitch" and instruct the pitcher of his mistake.
- F. A pitcher who has hit three (3) batters with a pitch in a game shall be removed.
- G. Two (2) time outs or abnormal delays in an inning by a manager or coach for the purpose of conferring with a defensive player shall cause the pitcher's removal from the game. That is, a manager may visit the mound once. On the second visit, the pitcher is removed.
- H. Manager or coaches crossing the foul line will have a time out called and a visit charged.
- I. Pitching eligibility in effect for re-scheduled and make-up games are in accordance to the calendar week in which the games are played.
- J. If a pitcher pitches more than two (2) innings in a game, he must have at least 36 hours of rest before his next pitching assignment. For example, if he pitches 3 innings on Saturday, he is not eligible to pitch again until Monday; 3 on Tuesday, not eligible until Thursday.
- K. Violation of any section of this Article shall result in forfeiture of the game in which it occurs, subject to the rules of protesting games. The withdrawal of an ineligible pitcher after he is announced but before he has thrown an official pitch in the inning shall not be considered a violation. Managers violating these rules are subject to suspension.

ARTICLE VII. FIELD DECORUM

- A. The action of players, managers, coaches, umpires and league officials must be above reproach.
- B. **Managers and coaches are expected to act as role models for all players. Un-sportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated. Complaints about chirping/complaining/whining and generally un-sportsmanlike behavior will be dealt with swiftly, leading to game suspension(s). While on suspension, they will not be permitted any closer than the outfield fence. Extent and duration of any suspension is at the discretion of the League Commissioner.**
- C. Derisive remarks directed at the opposing team or the umpires will not be tolerated. Should anyone (players, coaches, parents, fans etc.) continue after a warning by the umpire to make insults at anyone, the game will be stopped and the person will be asked to leave. Upon exit from the park area by the offending person, the game will commence. If the offending person does not immediately leave, the game will be called.
- D. **Managers shall be responsible for the conduct of his coaches, players, parents and fans.**
- E. A manager or coach may not question a call made by the umpire. A manager or coach who questions an umpire's call is subject to removal from the game.
- F. Uniformed players, managers, coaches and umpires only, shall be permitted within the confines of the playing field prior to and during games. No player shall circulate among the spectators while the game is in progress. No spectators shall circulate amongst players during the game.
- G. **Unsportsmanlike conduct from spectators will not be tolerated and the umpire may, at his discretion, remove a player or players, or declare a forfeited game.**
- H. Misuse of equipment by the players (whether in disgust or not) shall not be tolerated by the managers, coaches, or umpire (s). The misuse/throwing of helmets, bats, balls and catcher's equipment by a player shall warrant the removal of that player. The umpire shall be responsible for seeing that the team managers carry out this rule.
- I. Managers and coaches shall be immediately ejected from the game without warning by the umpire for misusing/throwing equipment.

ARTICLE VIII. OFFICIAL SCORING

- A. It is the responsibility of the home team to have an Official game scorekeeper at each game who shall confirm the score between innings with the visiting team's scorekeeper.
- B. If a game is protested or play suspended, the official Game scorekeeper shall make note of the exact situation at the time the protest or suspension - including the score, number of outs, the position of any runners, and the balls and strikes on the batter.
- C. The scorer shall not make any decision concerning the official playing rules, an umpire's call or a game under protest.

ARTICLE IX. PROTESTS (Only applies to playoffs)

- A. Protest shall be considered only if based upon the violation of a playing rule or the use of ineligible players. No protest will be allowed if based upon a decision involving an umpire's judgment. Equipment that does not meet League specifications must be removed from the game and shall not be the basis of a protest.
- B. The managers of a participating team solely have the right to protest a game.
- C. Protests shall be made as follows:
 - a. The protesting manager shall immediately and before any succeeding play begins, notify the plate umpire that he is now playing the game under protest.
 - b. Following such notice, the umpire shall consult with both managers. If he is convinced that his decision is in conflict with the rules he shall reverse his decision. If he decides that his decision is correct, he shall announce that the game is being played under protest.
 - c. If it is discovered that an ineligible player is being used, such player shall be removed from the game and the game shall be resumed under protest or not depending at discretion of the offended manager. If the ineligible player is recognized at the conclusion of the game, the manager may still submit his protest.
 - d. The protesting manager shall have no more than 48 hours after the completion of the game to submit his reported protest in writing to the League Commissioner.
- D. The Commissioner of the League shall receive all protests.
- E. Protests will be judged on merit by the League Commissioner, and the Commissioner's decision shall be final.

ARTICLE X. PLAYOFFS

- A. Playoff format will be decided and announced prior to the conclusion of the regular season.
- B. All teams will participate in the playoffs.
- C. All player participation rules remain in effect in the playoffs.
- D. All player pitching eligibility rules remain in effect.

ARTICLE XI. EQUIPMENT BOX CONTENTS

- A. 2 Catcher's Mitts. 2 Chest Protectors. 2 Sets of Shin Guards. 2 Catcher's Helmets with Mask & Throat Guard.
- B. 3 Bases.
- C. 6 Batting Helmets.
- D. 1 Umpire's Counter.
- E. 4 Batting Vests (vests are not mandatory)
- F. 1 First Aid Kit
- G. The coach of the HOME team for each game is responsible for bringing the game balls for that game.

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