



SCR AAA Machine Pitch Rules 2017

The purpose of the AAA Machine Pitch division is to serve as a developmental step for baseball players transitioning from AA Coach Pitch. The age range of players in AAA Machine Pitch is six to seven years old in first or second grade.

Important Information

- Games will be played mainly at Thompson Peak Park fields.
- The bases will be at 60 feet and pitching machine (white wheel-Jugs machine) will be at 40 feet from the front of home plate with a speed setting at 38 mph. A tape measure is included in the red wagon so you can ensure the machine is placed accurately.
- Batters hit from pitches thrown by pitching machine (your own coach feeds the machine)
- All bats must be Cal Ripken / Babe Ruth certified and follow the new 2018 USA Bat requirements. To see if your bat is qualified, visit usabat.com; These bats can be no longer than 33" in length and 2 ⁵/₈ in barrel diameter. Most importantly, the USA Stamp will be permanently shown on the bat to avoid confusion. If your bat is older than November 2017, it's likely illegal and cannot be used. Wooden bats are permissible providing they adhere to the aforementioned requirements. All bats that do not conform are not permitted at any time during a Cal Ripken practice or game.
- 3 Strikes or 6 Pitches max, whichever comes first. No friendly modifications by teams. See rules below for further clarification.
- Game balls will be standard Cal Ripken baseballs.
- Each defensive player must wear a baseball glove and all male players must wear an athletic cup.
- All players must wear approved headgear (batting helmet) while batting, on-deck, on the base path or by the coaches box. Approved headgear shall be considered to cover both ears.
- Players may wear only non-metal cleats.
- **This is a non-umpired division.** The head coach (aka Managers) will ensure the game flows properly.
- No scores or standings will be kept

Game Preliminaries

- 6 game balls are provided by the home team.
- The home team takes the 3rd base dugout.
- Only SCR registered coaches and players are permitted in the dugout and on the field during the game.

- The manager must rotate all players allowing the players to rotate between infield and outfield positions. Every player must play a minimum of two (2) innings in an infield position.
- Teams with more than 9 players shall follow the SCR Fair Play Rule whereby no player sits out twice before every player sits out once.
- Players may substitute positions at any time during the game.
- All players bat regardless if they are playing a defensive position or sitting out.

Game Rules

- Game consists of 6 innings
- The game shall be limited to 1 hour and 45 minutes max. No new inning shall start after 1 hour and 30 minutes.
- Entire roster bats in order. An inning ends after 3 outs or 6 runs; the next batter in the order will lead off the next inning. Do not start each inning at the top of the order.
- First batter should be at bat at the scheduled starting time. Coaches should have their teams at the field at least 30 minutes prior to the game start time.
- The offensive team is permitted to have coaches at pitcher, first base, 3rd base and one with the catcher (or behind the catcher's position to retrieve the pitched balls).
- The defensive team is permitted to have coaches in the infield and outfield to help with positioning and guidance to players.

Putting the ball in play

- Three strikes is one out, there are no walks.
- Each batter will get a maximum of 6 pitches to hit; they will earn a 7th pitch (or more) if they have not already put the ball into play or haven't struck out after the 6th pitch. Foul balls count as strikes, except for the third strike it counts as a foul and the player gets another pitch. Player keeps batting on foul ball on 6th pitch or later, but they **MUST** swing on subsequent pitches as those are automatically called strike 3. If the batter continues to foul off the pitches, they will continue to get an additional pitch until resolution to the at bat.
- A foul tip caught by catcher on a 3rd strike is an out.
- Each player shall only advance one base when a ball is hit and doesn't get past the outfielders.
- Maximum base hit is a double. See scenarios below. A double requires the ball to go past the outfielder. If the ball goes past the outfielders, all base runners can advance a maximum of 2 bases. Do not stretch hits that do not go past the outfield--being too aggressive will cause conflict and will detract from the game.

Batting

- The batting order cannot be changed.
- If a player shows up after the game has started, that player is added to the bottom of the order.

- Bunting is not permitted.
- Three outs per half inning or maximum six runs per half inning.
- Base runners do not advance on an overthrown ball.
- If a player throws a helmet or bat in an unsportsmanlike manner, the offensive coach should provide a warning to the player for the first infraction and discipline the player for a 2nd or repeated infraction.
- Players are not allowed to be base coaches

The Runner

- Lead-offs and steals are not permitted.
- Base runners must wait until the ball is hit to leave the base.
- Feet first sliding is acceptable, head first sliding is not.
- Substitute runners are permitted in the event of an injury. The substitute runner will be the player who made the last batted out. Substitute runners for catchers is also allowable at any time as long as the catcher is playing that position the next time defensively (to save time dressing).

Game Defense

- Ten (10) defensive players are permitted on the field including catcher. All nine standard baseball positions are required to be filled with the additional player in the outfield. You should not have a wall of infielders at any point during the game. All outfielders must be placed on the outfield grass.
- Catchers are encouraged in AAA but must wear full catcher's gear. A fully dressed catcher shall include shin guards, chest protector, full helmet and mask with a throat protector. The proper headgear for a catcher must protect the top of the catcher's entire face and head. Instruct catches to keep their throwing hand behind their back.
- The catcher should be in proper position behind the plate not against the backstop, standing or on knees.
- Third strike that is tipped and held by the catcher is an out.
- All foul balls caught in the air are considered outs. Foul ball behind the plate caught by the catcher that is above the batter's head is an out.
- Any ball that hits the fence first is immediately dead and ruled a foul ball
- Any ball that hits the pitching machine or ball bucket results in a single for the batter and all runners advance one base only. Play is immediately ruled dead and batter/runner(s) should take their base(s).
- Any ball that first hits a runner or the coach feeding the machine results in an out. The runner is out if hit by a batted ball before a defender touches it. If the ball hits the coach feeding the machine first, the batter is out and runners return to their bases.
- If your team has more than 10 players, each player must sit once before a player
- sits twice. Violations of this policy will/could result in warnings and eventually suspension of Head Coach.
- Outfielder's should have their feet in the grass, not on the dirt

- Outs can be made at any base
- Pitcher must stand within 6 feet of the pitching machine legs
- Free defensive substitutions
- Coaches can be in the outfield during play while their team is on defense to assist their team.

Game Scenarios

Maximum Base Hit is a Double: Typically, a double will result in a ball put in play in the outfield. However, if a scenario where the ball is hit in play and the shortstop (for example) misplays the ball and the batter reaches first safely, the runner should not try for second unless the ball is not picked up by a fielder (for example it's still rolling towards the outfield). Once any throw is made, the runners cannot advance another base. If a runner has already rounded a base before the first throw, the runner may proceed. One caveat is a runner on second can only proceed home when the ball reaches the outfield grass.

Overthrows: No runner or batter can advance on any overthrow (including one to first base). Once a fielder attempts a throw, runners are prohibited from advancing beyond the base they are running towards. One exception is a runner on second, he/she does not have to stop at 3rd if the ball reaches the outfield. However, any hesitation by the runner then starting again is not allowed. It should be a continuous play by the runner. If there is a runner on 2nd and nobody out, a ball is put in play to the shortstop who throws to first but the ball gets by the first baseman, the runner on 2nd cannot go to 3rd unless he/she was already attempting to go to 3rd when the ball was hit.

Officiating

1. No umpires
2. First base coach is responsible for safe/out calls at first base along with fair/foul
3. Coach feeding the machine is responsible for all calls at 2nd base
4. Third base coach is responsible for safe/out calls at third base along with fair/foul
5. Batter/Runner should be called out under normal baseball rules
6. Runners standing off a base and tagged by a fielder are out
7. There should be no expectation of safe advancement of runners (such as in Coach Pitch)
8. Team batting is responsible for indicating that 6 runs have scored in ½ inning
9. Expectation for each coach is to be fair and objective with all calls.
10. No arguing calls (zero tolerance)
11. Manager is responsible for the conduct of their players, coaches, and parents.

Postgame Handshakes

- Youth sports should be as much about teaching sportsmanship as teaching athletic skills. Shaking hands after the game is a valuable lesson. “The point is, the handshake is a simple, traditional show of goodwill and respect, and respect for your opponent is an integral part of any definition of sportsmanship.” (Swift 1994)
- At the end of each game, before your team meeting and before you vacate your dugout, both teams should line up single file down the foul line in front of their dugout. The teams will meet approximately at home plate and will shake hands or give a hi-five, and say good game. This includes all Managers and Coaches for both teams.
- It is imperative that all players and coaches handle this ritual with class and a calm attitude and set an example for the kids.
- Anyone showing poor sportsmanship at any point before, during or after the game could be suspended and/or asked not to be a part of this league.
- See this Sports Illustrated Article:
<http://www.si.com/vault/1994/05/02/130987/give-young-athletes-a-fair-shake-when-we-eliminate-postgame-handshakes-we-fail-to-teach-the-main-lesson-of-sports>

Field Setup / Cleanup

- Coaches use the field drag to smooth the field prior to each game if possible.
- First game of the day teams should chalk the field and put out the bases.
- All equipment is stored in the cage by the 3b dugouts or the storage container between fields 2 and 3 at TPP.
- If your game is the last of the day, please put away all the equipment and lock the cage and container.
- Proper setup of the field includes:
 - Rake and smooth field if needed
 - Install bases
 - Setup and test the pitching machine (use the 3rd base dugout to plug in the machine); ensure no slack from the extension cord is visible (tripping hazard)
 - Chalk Field including batter's box (use metal stencil), foul lines, coaches box and on-deck circles (very close to 3rd base coach and fence)
- Each manager should assist in the following duties when your teams are the last game of the day:
 - Put bases back onto base caddy and lock them in the correct cage or container
 - Insert base plugs back into the inserts to ensure next team easy base installation
 - Roll up extension cord neatly and move pitching machine back into corresponding red wagon with net; roll to container and lock.
 - Notify commissioner of any issues or problems with the field or area
 - Each manager should assist to ensure there is no trash/garbage left in the dugout after the game and that your team vacates the dugout quickly.

Game Day General Reminders/Best Practices

1. Anyone on the field of play or in the dugout should have completed a background check, concussion training and registered as a coach with league before being allowed on the

field. If you think you will need extra parents on the field or in the dugout, please have them complete the appropriate steps to be approved as an Assistant Coach.

2. The league does allow parents to briefly step on the field in foul territory to take pictures. However, this should be brief and not be allowed the entire game
3. Keep the game moving as quickly as possible. Having kids “standing around” creates boredom and frustration for both the players and parents.
4. The objective of AAA is to teach basic baseball skills and knowledge. Teaching batters to run the bases, fielders to make basic plays etc. is best practice. Most important objective at this age is having fun!
5. Inspect dugout and stands for any trash and dispose of it properly. Do not leave a dugout full of trash and make sure trash is removed from the stands after each game
6. Please be mindful of the next game on your field. Please promptly leave the dugout after your game is completed. Have you snack and/or team meeting outside the dugout. We want to keep the games on time and the biggest factor delaying the start of the next game is team snacks in the dugout

More AAA Best Practices

- Please teach 1B to have feet on side of the bag and not on top of the bag.
- Please teach position players where to stand when covering a base.
- Runners should slide to avoid contact with the fielder
- Please instruct defensive players to avoid contact with runners when the fielder is out of the current play.
- Best practice is to have a bucket of leather baseballs (no synthetic covers) by the pitching machine and an empty bucket behind the catcher. If the catcher catches the ball, he/she should roll it behind them so the coach can place it in the bucket.
- The bucket should be placed under the machine and should protect you from getting hit. Try and stand behind the bucket if at all possible.
- Keep the game moving as quickly as possible. Having kids “standing around” creates boredom and frustration for both the players and parents.