



Florida Babe Ruth 8U Tournament Rules

Modified Jan 2026

1. Teams have 2 options:

- a. A spring-loaded Portable Pitching Machine (currently the UPM Black Flame or its equivalent) will be run by an Umpire
- b. **Coach Pitch option**
 - i **must be declared at the plate meeting and team must keep that option for the entire game.**
 - ii **Teams have the option of using anyone on their coaching staff to pitch, however it must not delay the game in any way.**
 - iii **The Coach will NOT be allowed to give the batter (or runners) instructions. Coaches who violate this will be ejected for the remainder of the game.**
- c. If both teams choose different options – the machine remains on the field during coach pitch. Field umpire will resume regular field umpire position.

2. Age: 8 & Under.

3. Please see Babe ruth 2026 rule book for age chart on page 5. Players born after 9/1/2016 are eligible and eligibility is earned in the division the player is rostered in during the regular season.

4. Player roster: Up to 15-player roster with 10 players batting in order. An Extra Player (EP) can be used as the 11th batter. If a team elects this option, it must start with the EP and end with the EP or forfeit the game. [Both teams in a game are not required to use this option.]

Teams that have 10 or more players must play the minimum 10 players.

- a. **Teams that have only 9, will be permitted to play with 9, however on offense, that 10th batter spot must take an out and shall be labeled on the lineup card as "Guest". At any point if a team goes below 9 players, the game will be forfeited.**
- b. **In the case of a 10th rostered player being available at any point during the game, that player will be allowed to assume the 10th spot in the batting order with no further penalty of an out for that spot.**
- c. There will be four outfielders. ALL outfielders must remain **a minimum of 10 feet behind the baseline.**(cannot be positioned to start in the infield at any time). Remaining infielders must

remain behind the pitching machine until the ball is released from the machine, unless the batter shows bunt.

- d. The player that assumes the pitcher's position (**Coach Pitch or Machine Pitch**) must keep 2 feet within the "mound" 8-ft. radius circle, behind the machine, and on one side or the other until the ball is **released**.
 - a. If the pitcher violates any of these requirements and the ball is hit, then the opposing coach has the option to take the result of the play, or have the play nullified and have the pitch count as 1 of the 4 and runners return to their original base. The umpire(s) will warn the violating pitcher's manager that if that same pitcher violates the rule again, the player will be removed from the pitcher's position.
 - b. The player can assume another position but cannot re-enter as a pitcher in that game. The player may not be ejected from the game for this infraction.
 - c. A "Courtesy Runner" is not allowed for the pitcher.
 - d. The catcher takes the catcher's normal position in full gear. Exceptions for Catchers helmet only allowed in the case of extreme heat and must be approved by the Tournament Director or their designee.
5. Game length: Time limit of 1 hour 30 minutes no new inning will begin or 6 innings whichever comes first.
6. BATTER (**Coach** or Machine Pitch)
 - a. Each batter receives 3 swinging strikes or a maximum of four pitches. If the batter strikes out, or if the ball has not been hit into play after four (4) pitches, the batter is out. Once the ball is "pitched" the catcher must return that ball to the home plate umpire.
 - b. If the batter fouls the 4th pitch, the batter will receive pitches as long as the batter continues to foul pitches. **[Note: Any fouled bunt after two strikes is an out.]**
 - c. The half inning is over when three outs are made.
 - d. The batter is out if the batter swings on a third strike and misses the ball.
 - e. If a batter gets hit with the ball, the ball is dead and no pitch will count. Batter is not awarded 1st base.
 - f. There are no intentional walks allowed (**Coach Pitch** OR Machine Pitch)
5. Field dimensions: Standard Babe Ruth Softball Division base length of 60 ft.
6. Pitching machine: The pitching machine is placed at 35 ft. with a speed of 35 mph plus or minus 3 mph (established when ball crosses home plate). The front two legs of the machine must be placed in front of the pitching rubber. Coaches are not allowed to check the machine before their team bats. Only umpires may decide if adjustments should be made.
 - i **The Coach pitcher must pitch from 32 feet.**
 - ii **The Coach pitcher must make an attempt to get out of the defensive player's way when fielding or throwing. If the Coach pitcher, by standing straight up or not**

moving out of the field of play, forces a player to throw over the coach or intentionally hinders the player fielding or throwing the ball, interference may be called, and a penalty applied. This is Umpire judgement and cannot be protested.

7. UMPIRE:

a) The umpire will feed the machine if Machine pitch option is chosen. Machine should be checked prior to the game start. If in the Umpire's judgement, the machine needs to be adjusted, Only the umpire may adjust during play. Adjustments will be made after the inning is complete. Coaches are not permitted to adjust the machine at any time (Penalty – ejection)

b) The umpire(s) is/are allowed to declare "no pitch" if the umpire(s) judges that it is not reasonably hittable. This is a judgment call and thus not subject to protest. **The "No pitch" option is not available for teams who use a coach pitcher.**

8. Dead ball:

A. The ball will be declared dead **when in the Umpire's judgement the defensive team stops the lead runner OR the lead runner abandons the effort to advance.** Once play has been stopped, no other runners may advance beyond the last base tagged.

B. The ball will be declared dead when a player is injured and in the umpire's judgment is unable to continue the play. Bases will be awarded based upon the umpire's judgement.

C. If a batted fair ball hits any part of the pitching machine without a fielding attempt by the pitcher, the ball is immediately dead. The batter will be awarded first base. All other runners return to the base that they occupied before the ball was hit unless forced to advance as a result of the batter being awarded first base. (Rule 5.09f and 7.04a)

D. If a batted fair ball is first touched by or an attempt is made to field the ball by a defensive player and then hits any part of the pitching machine, it is a live ball.

E. During Coach pitch If a Coach or machine gets hit by a batted ball, the ball is dead and runners advance only IF forced, when either team selects to coach pitch and the machine remains on the field.

F. If a batted fair ball touches an umpire on fair territory before it touches or passes an infielder, the ball is dead and the batter is awarded first base. All other runners return to the base that they occupied before the ball was hit unless forced to advance as a result of the batter being awarded first base (Rule 5.09f and 7.04a).

G. If a thrown ball hits any part of the pitching machine, it is a live ball.

7. Infield fly rule: There is NO INFIELD FLY RULE.

8. Bunting:

a. Bunting is allowed if Machine pitch option is chosen. However, NO FAKE BUNTING IS ALLOWED. If the batter offers to bunt, then the batter must bunt the ball or pull the bat back to take the pitch. If the batter offers to bunt, pulls the bat back, and then swings at the

pitch, the batter will automatically be declared out by the umpire and the manager will be ejected.

b. **Bunting is NOT allowed when Coach Pitch is selected.**

9. Courtesy Runner: The catcher may have a courtesy runner run for them every time that they are up to bat. Each courtesy runner used must be a player who is not in the game at the time. Each courtesy runner may only pinch run once per inning.
10. Base stealing: **Base stealing is not permitted.** Runners may not leave their base(s) **until the ball is released from the machine (Or the Coaches hand).** The penalty (Rule 7.12) is that the runner will be called out. The batter will remain at bat or return to bat with the count that existed before the runner was called out. **NOTE: Once the Ball is in possession of the catcher the ball is dead and runners must return. Catcher's have no ability to throw a base runner out that has taken a lead.**
11. Unintentional Bat Throwing: If in the Umpire's judgement there is an unintentional bat thrown, Umpire will warn the offending team on the first offense. Any further offenses will result in a dead ball and the batter will be declared out with no runners advancing.
12. Softballs: Must use approved Babe Ruth 11-inch softballs.
13. Run rule: The fifteen-run rule (3 complete innings or 2 ½ innings if home team is ahead) as well as the ten-run rule (4 complete innings, or 3-1/2 innings if home team is ahead) will be in effect for this tournament.
14. Umpires:
 - a. Two umpires will be on the field at all times
 - i Machine pitch – 1 Umpire will run the machine, the other will be behind home plate.
 - ii **Coach Pitch – 1 umpire will be positioned at home plate, the other in a normal umpire 2 man system position.**
15. Babe Ruth Softball patches must be displayed as specified in the current Rule Book.
16. All infielders are required to wear approved fielder facemask. Facemasks are strongly recommended for outfielders as well.