



2025 Sampson County Parks and Recreation

Developmental Baseball/Softball Local Guidelines and Rules

1:00 DIVISIONS:

Coach Pitch T-Ball: Ages 4-6 years
Machine Pitch Baseball: Ages 7-8 years
Machine Pitch Softball: Ages 7-9 years

Age Determination Date for All Ages: 4/1/2025

2:00 FIELD SIZE and TEAM SIZE:

	Coach Pitch	MP Baseball	MP Softball
Pitching	25'	35'	35'
Bases	60'	60'	60'
Circle (Radius)	Pitching Rubber 25'	8'	8'
Machine Pitch Settings Blue Flame	N/A	3,3,3	2,3,4
Machine Pitch Settings Black Flame	N/A	3,3,2	2,3,3

3:00 PARTICIPATION RULES

3:01 All players shall be required to play at least **(3) defensive outs**.

3:02 **All Bat Policy** – Coaches may freely substitute on defense, but the batting order will not change in any league. (Every participant must bat each time through the order).

Coach Pitch/T-ball - the offensive side is retired when all players have batted one time in the half inning. * Note: when three offensive players are legally put out, then the bases are cleared, and the offensive teams continues to bat with the next offensive player in the lineup until all players on the roster have batted one time in the half inning.

Machine Pitch - the offensive side is retired when three offensive players are legally put out, or when 5 runs are scored.



3:03 **ALL PLAYERS PRESENT FOR THE GAME MUST PLAY** - All players in good standing will play the minimum time required for their league.

Coaches are not obligated to play an individual the minimum time under the following conditions.

1. Player late for start of game or a no-show.
2. Player with unexcused absence from practice in the week before the game. (Disciplinary meeting required).
3. Player who has been a discipline problem. (Disciplinary meeting required).

A coach who suspends a player according to rule must notify the opposing coach, field supervisor, prior to the start of the game (exception - player injured or ejected during the game).

***Coaches who use the exceptions to all play rule to gain an advantage over another team will be removed from the coaching staff.**

3:04 **GAME PLAY**

3:04 (A) Coach Pitch/T-Ball

- Teams will be required to field 7 players on defense.
- The offensive side is retired when all players have batted one time in the half inning. * Note: when three offensive players are legally put out, then the bases are cleared and the offensive team continues to bat with the next offensive player in the lineup until all players on the roster have batted one time in the half inning.
- One coach is allowed on the field during a team's defensive half of an inning to serve as the first baseman if needed.

3:04(B) Machine Pitch

- Teams will have the option to field ten (10) players on defense including catcher, pitcher, four (4) infielders and four (4) outfielders (Required to be in the grass until the ball is put into play).
- If a team has less than nine (9) players' teams shall fill all infield spots and play down in the outfield. (Teams with 10 players will be allowed to play (four) 4 kids in the outfield.)
- The player playing the pitcher position will be required to wear a batter's helmet with a full facemask during defense.

All Leagues - One coach is allowed on the field during a team's defensive half of an inning.

3:05 **All Leagues** - All games shall be (5) innings or 1 hour of play. No new innings will begin after the 50-minute mark. A designated official will keep the official time on the field.

3:06 A player who is bleeding, or has an open wound, or has an excessive amount of blood on his or her uniform, must leave the game and may not return prior to the first opportunity for such player to re-enter. If there is an excessive amount of blood on the uniform, it must be changed before the player can re-enter.

3:07 **Game Scores and League Standings**

- a) Home Team will be responsible for keeping the book.
- b) NO league standings will be kept.

3:08 **Hitting Rules**

Coach Pitch - Five (5) swings allowed per batter (batter will be out after the 5th swing). Coaches will be allowed to pitch 3 pitches to players. If the coach feels that a child cannot hit a pitched ball after the first at bat the player will be allowed to continue to hit off the tee. After three (3) pitches, the tee will be brought back out and the player will continue to attempt to put the ball in play with his/her two remaining swings.

Machine Pitch - Five (5) pitches or three (3) swinging strikes allowed per batter. However, if the 5th pitch is foul, the batter will continue to bat until the ball is put in play. Umpire's decisions are final. (Foul balls will count as strikes.) The umpire may deem a pitch unhittable, and the pitch shall be rethrown.

Machine Pitch - A batted ball, which hits the pitching machine, is ruled a single. All forcible runners advance one base.

Continuous batting order must be used the entire game. Each child will bat every time through the lineup.

3:09 **Base Running**

All Leagues - No Stealing allowed. Runners may not leave base until the bat has touched the ball.

Machine Pitch – Play becomes dead when a defensive player has **STOPPED THE LEAD RUNNER, or the base runners have elected to stop at their current base and the play naturally ends. (The Circle Does Not Stop Play).**

T-Ball/Coach Pitch ONLY - There will be no advancement on an overthrown ball to first base. If the ball is overthrown the play becomes dead. Players are encouraged to attempt to throw all runners out at first base.

4:00 **EQUIPMENT**

The Recreation Department will provide game/practice balls, catcher equipment and game uniforms for each team.

MPSB: The bat shall be no more than thirty-four inches (34") long and not more than two and one-fourth inches (2 1/4") in diameter at its largest part. A tolerance of one thirty-seconds inch (1/32") is permitted to allow for expansion. The bat, in its entirety, shall not exceed thirty eight ounces (38 oz.) in weight. The bat shall have a safety grip of cork, tape, or composition material. The safety grip shall not be less than ten inches (10") long and shall not extend more than fifteen inches (15") from the small end of the bat.

Machine Pitch Baseball: All bats must have a USA Baseball stamp to be approved for play.

- All batters are required to wear batting helmets.
- Faceguards **ARE** required for softball when batting & fielding in the infield

Each player will furnish their own pants, socks, and shoes. Shoes must be tennis shoes or rubber molded cleats. **Screw-in, metal, or steel cleats are not allowed.**

All equipment worn by players must conform NCHSAA rules.

All equipment will be purchased by the Recreation Department. No coach or parent has the authority to obligate the team, league, or Sampson County Parks and Recreation Department.

4:01 **Interference Rule**

Machine Pitch Baseball and Softball - any coach who intentionally interferes with a player-pitcher fielding a ball in play, will be penalized as follows. **Penalty:** If the umpire declares interference on the coach-pitcher, the batter is called out and all runners return to the base they occupied at the time the batter took position in the batter box.

5:00 **PRACTICE**

- 5:01 Coaches are expected to observe their players closely always to be certain that the players do not become overly fatigued.
- 5:02 Coaches shall refrain from using exercises that may be harmful to the player's physical welfare.
- 5:03 Practices will be limited to maximum 90 minutes in length **(when and where time permits)**.
- 5:04 **Teams cannot practice more than 3 times per week.**



5:05 If the League is notified that a coach is in violation of a league policy, the coach will be notified, and the violation will be investigated by the league board.

5:06 Penalty for violation: 1 game suspension of the head coach.

7:00 POSTPONED GAMES/INCLEMENT WEATHER

7:01 In case of inclement weather, coaches and parents should call the following number after 3:00pm for a decision as to whether the game will be played:

Sampson County Parks and Recreation 910-299-0924

If no cancellation is listed, teams must report to the field and wait for the officials or field supervisor's decision.

7:02 Prior to the start of the game, the field supervisor or Recreation Department staff on duty will have sole authority to postpone or play the game. After the game begins, the officiating crew chief will have the sole authority to postpone or play the game.

7:03 Make-up and unfinished games with less than 30 minutes may be rescheduled by the Recreation Department at the earliest convenient opportunity.

8:00 ROSTERS AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

8:01 No player will be allowed to participate in a game or practice without a signed registration form and a birth certificate submitted for review by the Recreation Department.

9:00 COACHES AND CONDUCT

9:01 **ALL COACHES, TRAINERS/MANAGERS MUST ANNUALLY COMPLETE A COACHES VOLUNTEER APPLICATION TO BE ELIGIBLE TO COACH. VOLUNTEERS ARE SUBJECT TO ANNUAL BACKGROUND CHECKS. THIS FORM IS TO BE TURNED IN BEFORE THE SEASON STARTS. INDIVIDUALS REFUSING TO COMPLETE THIS FORM OR TO BE CHECKED, AUTOMATICALLY FORFEIT THEIR COACHING ELIGIBILITY.**



- 9:02 All coaches must understand and agree to carry out the duties, responsibilities, and policies as established by Little League Inc. and the Sampson County Parks and Recreation Department.
- 9:03 Coaches, volunteers and spectators must set good examples of sportsmanship. Unsportsmanlike behavior such as but not limited to taunting, verbal abuse and/or arguing will not be tolerated.
- 9:04 Each coach will hand out the team rules (attached on the last page) and have a parent meeting prior to the start of the first practice.
- 9:05 No alcoholic beverages are allowed on school or recreation property. This includes athletic fields. This is a **STATE LAW**. If necessary, proper legal action will be taken to enforce this rule. **NO TOBACCO PRODUCTS - SMOKING, CHEWING, DIPPING, ETC... ARE ALLOWED ON THE PRACTICE OR PLAYING FIELD.**
- 9:06 A coach, player, or spectator with the presence of alcohol on their breath will be asked to leave the recreation area.
- 9:07 Any coach or player or spectator who is ejected from a game will be suspended **for the remainder of that game and the next scheduled game**. The suspension could be longer depending upon the severity of the infraction. Persons guilty of a second offense causing their ejection during the same calendar year shall be suspended for minimum of 365 days or longer depending on the infraction.
- 9:08 When a coach, player, volunteer, or spectator is ejected from a game, they shall leave the field immediately and take no further part in the game. Managers and coaches may not sit in the stands or remain in the dugout.

Sampson County Team Rules

1. **Practices/Games:** Players are expected to attend all practices and games. If you cannot attend, please let the coaching staff know as soon as possible. (Playing time may vary by attendance)
2. **Respect your opponent:** Good sportsmanship starts with respecting your opponents. Remember: without opponents, there would be no game at all! Players should always shake hands after each game and always respectful of their opponents.
3. **Respect your coach:** Parents and players should respect coaches. Please refrain from yelling questions or comments to your coaches and instead please speak to them calmly and at the appropriate times.
4. **Respect your teammates:** Regardless of their skill level, you cannot play the game without them.
5. **Respect the officials:** Remember they are human, and they are doing their best to make youth sports fair and fun. Coaches, parents, and players shall refrain from yelling at officials, please teach our children how to overcome miscalls that do not include yelling or arguing with the officials.
6. **Be a team player:** The game is not about how good you look or how much you score. A true team player knows how to put the team first and make sacrifices for their teammates.
7. **Safety, Sportsmanship, and Skill Building:** The priority for our team will be safety, sportsmanship, and skill-building. All coaches, parents, and players will prioritize this over winning.
8. **Have Fun:** Even with the hard work of practice, having fun and loving the game is a key to long term success.
9. **Parents/Spectators:** Should allow the coaches to coach the kids and refrain from “sideline coaching” it can be very confusing for children if multiple people are yelling instructions. Spectators are encouraged to cheer for both teams and ensure all the kids are having fun. No derogatory comments or foul language will be tolerated. Parents will be responsible for informing any guest of the team rules.
10. **Background Checks:** No one without a background check shall help in any capacity, enter a practice, or game area. If there are no boundaries spectators shall stay twenty yards away from all team activities. Please get the coaches or staff members attention if you need to speak to your child or a coach.

Any Violation of the Team Rules/Expectations will result in removal from the facility and a suspension.