

WEST BROWNSVILLE LITTLE LEAGUE
2023 T-BALL MODIFIED RULES & GUIDELINES
RULES FOR MANAGERS/COACHES & UMPIRES

Updated 3/09/23

The following T-ball rules are a MODIFIED SET OF RULES placed by the league and shall be abided by all managers, coaches, and umpires for the 2023 T-ball Division. Uniformity needs to be established if umpires are going to be assigned for t-ball games. Please read the following rules so that you are aware of what is being enforced this year in the T-ball division. Good luck & have a great season!

The purpose of the T-Ball program is to teach the game of baseball to children who have only a beginner's knowledge of the game. The emphasis of the program is on learning, and not runs scored. As T-ball is considered a "non-competitive division" in the eyes of Little League, no official score or standings will be kept. Coaches SHALL NOT engage umpires angrily or aggressively over any calls.

- 1) **COACHING STAFF** A total of 4 adults will be permitted on the field/dugout (before/during games). One (1) manager, and their 3 assistant coaches in the dugout (all whom will adhere to having a background check--2023 Volunteer Application) No other parents or other children NOT on the team are allowed in the dugout***Only exception to this rule**** If a special needs child is participating on a team, ONE additional adult will be allowed to assist with the team (generally the parent of the special needs child).
- 2) **TIME LIMIT** All games will be one (1) hour in duration (once time has expired, the umpire shall announce **"Time has expired! This will be the last batter of the game."** The batter will be allowed to finish up their at bat and then the game will be over, regardless of which team is home or visitors). This will need to be strictly enforced. Coaches MUST hustle players in and out between innings. Games are ONLY 1 hour long; so please arrive on time with your teams so that all games can begin promptly.
- 3) **RUN RESTRICTION** 5 run rule will be in effect. Once 5 runs are scored while on offense, simply switch sides; other team bats.
- 4) **CONTINUOUS BATTING ORDER** A continuous batter order will be used for all T-ball games. This means that all players in the line-up will bat in the proper batting order set by their coaches; however, if 5 runs are scored in the half inning, then the teams will switch sides (5 Run Restriction). Upon returning to bat for the next inning, the team will continue where they left off & go a full batting order from that point in the line up. Basically, wherever you stop in the lineup, is where you will pick up the next time at bat.
- 5) **OUTS** Three (3) outs made by the defense WILL turn sides over and will end the half inning. Since T-ball is supposed to be instructional, players will start to learn that 3 outs change the side of offense and defense, therefore encouraging the defense to get those 3 outs before the other team scores their 5 runs. An "Out" will send the offensive player that was called out, back to the dugout. Once ALL 3 outs are made during that team's at-bat, then it will stop play there and the team will now go play defense (just like a normal game of baseball). For example, if a visiting team only gets to 6 batters in the first inning, and then 3 outs are made by the defense; then in the 2nd inning, that visiting team will continue at the 7th batter in the batting order and will resume from there.
- 6) **DEFENSIVE POSITIONS (Infielders & Outfielders)---ALL PLAYERS on a team PLAY DEFENSE EVERY INNING---**
While on defense, each infield player will play their infield position. The infielders will start in the "dirt area" near the actual position (to teach proper positions). One player per position (1 first baseman, 1 second baseman, 1 shortstop, 1 third baseman, 1 catcher, & 1 pitcher). All other players will play in the outfield & must play on the outfield grass. This is to teach positions & avoid having all defensive players in the infield at one time. For safety purposes, catchers will start along the backstop fence & may wear a helmet while back there. Catchers may move up to home plate once the batter hits ball. (Coaches please help with safety of catchers.)

NOTE REGARDING PITCHERS The pitcher shall start on top of the pitcher's plate for each new batter. When the pitcher fields the ball, they MUST THROW the ball to the base to try to get the runner out (applies ESPECIALLY at FIRST BASE). They can't just pick up the ball and go and touch all the bases and/or baserunners. This is to avoid the pitcher just running around the field with the ball the whole game and getting all the "easy" outs at first base or any other base. Important Exception: If there is a runner on 3rd base and the pitcher fields a batted ball, then the pitcher may tag out that runner that is coming home to score. They may touch the runner or they may touch home plate (if there is a "force out" at home plate). Coaches can assist by moving the tee out of the way.
- 7) **SWING ATTEMPTS ALLOWED WHILE BATTING** Each batter will have a maximum of 5 attempts (swings) at the ball on the tee while at bat. If the batter is unable to hit the ball in play (fair territory) after 5 swings, then the batter will be ruled out and will return to their dugout. Fair ball will be considered a ball that was hit 5-6 feet in front of home plate (otherwise if the ball only falls off or bounces off the tee in front of home plate, it would be considered a foul ball). This will be an umpire judgement.

Note: **NO “On-deck” batters allowed.** All players should be in the dugout UNTIL ITS THEIR turn to bat. Once the play is over, the next batter may exit the dugout. NO PLAYER should be SWINGING BATS INSIDE THE DUGOUT and all bats shall be stationed near the dugout entrance within the dugout which should be monitored by the coach for safety purposes. We want to avoid injuries!!!

- 8) **COACHING POSITIONS WHILE ON OFFENSE** **While on offense, only 3 coaches will be allowed on the field.** One positioned at home plate with the batter, one at the 3rd base box, and one at the first base box. The remaining coach MUST STAY in the dugout with all the players (this coach may not exit), THERE MUST BE **AT LEAST ONE ADULT IN THE DUGOUT AT ALL TIMES.** It’s a general Little League rule for all divisions of play. Safety is Little League’s #1 top priority. **Please supervise.**

- 9) **COACHING POSITIONS WHILE ON DEFENSE** **While on defense, all 4 coaches may be on the field, assisting players with positions and where to throw the ball.** However, coaches should not get on the way of any offensive players at any point in the game. The coaches are on the field to guide their players where to be positioned and where to throw the ball to get outs. **(No children in the dugout = No coaches needed in the dugout.)** **If at least one child in the dugout = then at least one coach shall also be in the dugout.**

- 10) **TIME CALLED BY UMPIRE (WHEN IT’S A DEAD BALL)** **“TIME” will be called by the umpire, once the ball is thrown toward the pitcher’s mound by another fielder.** The pitcher does not have to catch or hold the ball in their possession for the play to be called dead, this is an UMPIRE JUDGEMENT. The umpire will raise his hands in the air and call “Time”. The ball just needs to be thrown in the direction of the pitcher’s mound for it to be ruled a dead ball. This is solely the judgment of the umpire. If the runner is more than half way to the next base, then the umpire shall award them that base, if the runner has run less than half way, then the runner will be returned to the previous base. The key is “in the umpire’s judgement”. Do not argue w/ umpire’s base awards.

- 11) **“Hit Value” BASERUNNER & BATTER-RUNNER ADVANCEMENTS** **Base runners & Batter-runners are restricted to the number of bases they may obtain.** All Runners are allowed to ADVANCE ONE BASE when the batter-runner hits the ball WITHIN THE INFIELD (which is the entire infield grass and “dirt” areas). Those running the bases are subject to being out at 1st base or another base if the defense gets them out. Fielders may field the ball and TAG the runner or touch the base (for “force outs.”).

However, a baserunner may ADVANCE UP TO 2 BASES, if the batter hits the BALL INTO THE OUTFIELD. A ball hit to the outfield DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY mean the runners will be given two bases, it just means that 2 is the maximum amount of bases they are allowed to run on that play. A ball hit through the infield hard enough to reach the outfield (even rolling slowly) will count as a ball hit to the outfield, so in this case, the runner may advance up to 2 bases if he/she is fast enough to reach the two bases before the ball is thrown back in to the pitcher’s mound. Basically, if the ball is hit in the infield, all runners can only advance 1 base & if ball is batted into the outfield, then all runners may only advance a maximum of 2 bases (unless they only reach one base by the time the ball is thrown back to the pitcher). A ball that is over-thrown to a base to get a runner out, DOES NOT allow the runners to keep going. THE PLAY STOPS THERE!!! Coaches will need to help with making sure that the play STOPS there. PLEASE DO NOT send runners continuously advancing. No matter where ball is thrown, advances are limited by the set “hit value”.

- 12) **PROTESTS** **There will be NO PROTESTS in T-ball.** All judgement calls made by the umpire are final. Arguing with the umpire is NEVER ALLOWED, and may lead to the coach being restricted to the dugout or suspended from play. If a coach is removed from a game for unsportsmanlike conduct (deemed by the umpire) then the league board will be notified about the inappropriate actions/behavior of the coach and the WBLL board members will consider additional penalties for that offending manager/coach.

- 13) **T-BALL GAME BALLS:** **All teams shall use a standard “baseball” t-ball for all games played, so it’s the same for all kids.**

*****All other rules that are NOT outlined in these sets of rules & guidelines are to be decided/judged by the umpire*****

The umpires will be assigned to the priority divisions first, such as majors, minors, and even coach pitch, before T-ball umpires are assigned. Unfortunately, if there are no umpires or not enough umpires are available for that day, coaches will be expected to use the “Honor system” and officiate their own game, like it used to be done many years ago. As long as rules are followed, things will go well.

Remember, these rules are MODIFIED rules for T-Ball division. Since T-ball is supposed to be fun, instructional, and non-competitive, generally, coaches have always done their own officiating and were in charge of their own games. **However, now that an umpire may be used to “officiate” T-ball games (to help keep the game running smoothly) then rules needed to be established and enforced, hence these rules and guidelines were created.** Compared to the amount of regular Little League rules of baseball/softball which has well over 75 pages of rules, these 2 pages of rules is sufficient for the game of t-ball. As long as ALL the coaches understand and abide by these rules, then this year’s t-ball season should run smoothly for all teams, umpires, and spectators. Good luck and have a great season!!!