

8U Coach Pitch

1) **RULES:** 8U Coach Pitch Baseball regular season games shall be played using the most recent set of rules listed below in order of precedence.

a) These standing rules for the 8U Coach Pitch Division (highest priority).

b) The official USSSA Baseball Rules

c) "OFFICIAL BASEBALL RULES" published by The Sporting News.

2) **PLAYERS:**

a) Any team may play with eight players without forfeit. A team with eight players will be assessed one out at the end of their lineup but a team fielding nine players will NOT be assessed an out.

b) If any team has fewer than 8 players, the coach may borrow a legal (registered in the current playing season) player from within the same division or a lower division to bring the roster up to 8 players enabling non-forfeiture. The borrowed player may not pitch or catch and must bat last in the batting order. NOTE – The opposing coach must be made aware of the borrowed player prior to the first pitch of the game. Please be aware that a team is not allowed to borrow a player if they have 8 players and must take the out.

c) Each team may field a maximum of ten (10) defensive players consisting of:

d) Pitcher

e) Catcher (optional if fewer than 10 players)

f) First Baseman

g) Second Baseman

h) Third Baseman

i) Shortstop

j) Four (4) Outfielders

3) **RUN LIMIT:**

a) Games will be played with a five (5) run limit per inning. The side is considered retired at the end of five runs or three outs whichever occurs first. Any half inning which ends because of the five runs, shall be counted as three consecutive outs when computing time played.

a) If a batter appears out of order, the official scorekeeper (home team) has the responsibility of making the correction.

4) **BATTING**

a) Continuous Batting Order

All players shall bat consecutively in the batting order regardless of whether they are playing a defensive position. The batting order shall remain the same throughout the game.

b) Defensive Participation

Every player must play at least one defensive inning within the first three innings and a minimum of two defensive innings in any game lasting four or more innings.

c) Batting Out of Order

If a batter appears out of order, the official scorekeeper (home team) shall notify the umpire. The umpire will enforce the appropriate penalty in accordance with Official Baseball Rules.

d) Free Defensive Substitutions

Free defensive substitutions are permitted at all positions during the regular season.

e) Coach Pitch Format

Each batter shall receive a maximum of **six (6) pitches** or **three (3) swinging strikes**, whichever occurs first.

- No called strikes shall be recorded.
- A strike shall only be charged when:
 - The batter swings and misses.
 - The batter attempts an illegal bunt.
- A pitch legally delivered by the coach counts as one of the batter's allotted pitches unless the umpire declares a **No Pitch**.

f) Sixth Pitch Rule

If the sixth pitch is fouled, the batter shall continue batting until:

- The ball is hit fair.
- The batter swings and misses.
- A foul ball is legally caught.

Unlimited foul balls are permitted after the sixth pitch.

g) No Pitch

The umpire may declare a **No Pitch** if:

- Time has been called.
- The batter was not reasonably set.
- The coach accidentally drops the ball.
- The pitch was clearly unintentional or unsafe.

A declared No Pitch shall not count toward the batter's allotted pitches.

h) Batter's Box

Batters should remain in the batter's box between pitches unless granted time by the umpire.

i) Hit By Coach Pitch

A coach-pitched ball striking the batter shall be ruled a dead ball and shall count as one of the batter's allotted pitches unless the batter swings.

j) Bunting

Bunting and slash bunting are prohibited.

- An attempted bunt shall be ruled a strike.
- A fair bunted ball shall result in the batter being declared out.

k) Bat Safety

A batter who carelessly throws the bat shall receive one team warning.

Any subsequent dangerous bat throw may result in the batter being declared out at the umpire's discretion.

l) Batter Interference

If a batter intentionally interferes with a defensive play, the batter shall be declared out and runners shall return to the last legally occupied base.

5) **RUNNERS:**

a) Courtesy runners will be allowed in the case of injury or illness or when the catcher on record gets on base. Any player in the game may be used as a courtesy runner, and in the event the courtesy runner is due to bat, another courtesy runner may take their place on the base.

b) At no time can a base runner "take out" a defensive player who is making a play or standing in the way. If defensive player is not making a play and in runner's way, interference will be called, otherwise the runner must:

- i) Slide.
- ii) Go back to the last base.
- iii) Give up.

If contact is made between the runner and defensive player, it will be the judgment of the umpire as to whether it was malicious or not.

c) The umpire will call time during the game when: First – lead runner is no longer advancing and second – ball must be in the infield and under control. Both must take place for the umpire to call time.

6) **EQUIPMENT:**

a) Bats may not exceed **34 inches** in length and **2 3/4 inches** in diameter; a batter will be called out before a pitch has been delivered. If a batter brings up an illegal bat after first occurrence (during the same game or rest of season) that batter is called out, the second batter will be called out and the head coach ejected for the remainder of the game and the next game. Please see the USSSA Rules for further clarification on bat regulations.

b) Catchers are required to wear proper protective equipment including a mask, chest protector, cup, shin guards and protective headgear which gives protection to the top of the head and both ears when catching behind the plate. The throat guard is optional but recommended. Any player warming up the Pitcher must wear a mask, whether the Pitcher is on the mound or elsewhere.

c) Fielding pitchers are required to wear a protective helmet or face guard and a heart guard protector before any pitch is thrown.

d) No jewelry shall be worn by any player, except for medical identification and should be in the form of a necklace.

e) No pitcher may wear a white sleeved shirt or a white batting glove on either hand while in the pitching circle.

f) Pitching distance will be 38 feet. Bases will be at 60 feet.

7) FIELDERS

a) Outfielders are required to be a minimum of 20ft behind the infield; infielders cannot get closer than 40ft to home plate, with exception of the pitcher who must have at least one foot in the pitcher's circle.

b) Pitching Circle / Dead Ball: Play becomes dead when an infielder has secure possession within or in contact with the pitching circle. Runners beyond halfway may advance; others return.

c) Coach Pitch Safety: The coach pitcher shall avoid interfering with a batted ball or defensive play. USSSA interference rules apply.

d) Coach Pitch Position: The coach pitcher must have at least one foot on or directly behind the pitching rubber until release.

e) Defensive Pitcher: The defensive pitcher must begin each pitch with at least one foot inside the pitching circle.

f) Overthrows: Runners may advance at their own risk until the ball becomes dead under the pitching circle rule.

8) LENGTH OF GAME:

a) 8U Coach Pitch Baseball shall play six (6) innings or 1 hour 15 minutes. If the game is tied after 6 innings or the time has expired, **Tie Breaker Rule** will be in effect: Teams will play a single inning and during each team's at-bat they will place the last 2 batters previous to the scheduled batter at the plate on 2nd and 3rd Base, and there will be 1 out in the inning. For example, if the game is tied 3-3 after the 5th inning is completed, the time limit has expired, and the collective books determine that the number 3 batter in the lineup is due up; the visiting team will place the number 1 batter on 3rd and the number 2 batter on 2nd.

At the end of the extra inning, If the game remains tied, the game will be recorded as a **tie for regular season play**.

For **playoff and tournament games only**, Both teams will play like this until a winner is determined.

b) Teams may complete both halves of an inning that start before the time limit expires. However, if the home team at bat during the second half of the inning is in the lead or takes the lead after time expires, the game is officially over. An inning is defined to begin immediately after the third put out of the team batting in the second half of the prior inning.

c) If a team is significantly ahead of another, the game will be over via the following run rule:

15 runs ahead after 3 innings.

11 runs ahead after 4 innings.

6 runs ahead after 5 innings.

9) **COACHES:**

a) Please be aware that many bring in their first baseman to cover home if there is going to be a play. If your catcher, first baseman and pitcher are standing at home, most likely interference will be called. PLEASE determine how you want to cover this and teach it at practice.

b) Pitching Coach may NOT signal with his hand for the batter to move closer or further away from the plate; No communication between the pitcher and batter is allowed. Pitchers must stay behind or remain in contact with the pitching rubber when pitching.

c) 1st and 3rd base coaches only, can give direction to batters and runners.

d) A **Defensive** coach is allowed to stand behind the catcher to retrieve passed balls, but they are NOT permitted to coach the players from that position

e) No Excessive screaming or yelling while on the field. Un-sportsman like conduct will not be tolerated. (See paragraph e)

f) Any gestures or verbal interaction/abuse by players, managers, coaches, or fans, causing disorderly conduct, as determined by the Umpire or League Commissioner shall at a minimum result in ejection from the field/park for the current game plus the next 2 games.

g) Be familiar with these Standing Rules, USSSA Rules, and Major League Baseball Rules.

h) The Head Coach must make any protest/question of a call made by the umpire. At no time may an assistant coach, fan, or parent question an Umpire about a call/decision made.

HASLET SPORTS ASSOCIATION

2026 FALL BASEBALL

OFFICIAL 8U COACH PITCH RULEBOOK

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Prepared by

Clinton Gatling

Baseball Commissioner

