



2026 COACH PITCH LOCAL LEAGUE RULES (Updated March 24, 2026)

GOVERNING AUTHORITY

The Burke County Recreation Department's Coach Pitch League will be governed by the current rules and regulations of Diamond Youth Baseball and MLB Baseball, with the exceptions found in this manual.

AGE REQUIREMENTS

- A. The Age Control Date is prior to April 30th of the current year.
- B. The age division for Coach Pitch is six (6) years old to eight (8) years old.
- C. A participant is allowed to compete in one age division only. All participants are required to play in their correct age division.

FIELD SPECIFICATIONS

- A. Distance between bases shall be **sixty feet (60')**.
- B. Pitching Rubber is at forty six feet (46') from home plate with twelve feet (12') diameter circle around the rubber.
- C. There will be ten foot (10') arch from home plate that the ball will need to cross, or it will be a foul ball.

GAMES AND AWARDS

- A. The head coach finishing first in the league will have the first opportunity to be the coach for the all-star team. He may choose a total of three (3) assistant coaches from any coach that has coached in the Recreation Department leagues. At least one (1) coach is required to be certified in order to participate in District play. The Recreation Department prefers that all coaches be certified.
- B. The all-star team will be chosen by all of the coaches in the league. A form will be filled out by each team nominating the top twelve children in the league that they feel should be chosen for the all-star team. (One form per team, with all coaches signing it.) The Recreation Department will then take the top ten children receiving the most votes and they will automatically be placed on the all-star team. Two (2) spots will be left open for the all-star coach to fill at his/her discretion. There will be no alternates selected.

- C. The Recreation Department will pay all tournament entry fees, uniforms, and individual trophies for the all-star team(s). Parents are responsible for all-star pictures, meals, hotels, and travel for their children.

COACH'S APPLICATION, BACKGROUND CHECK AND CERTIFICATION

- A. All coaches must complete a coach's application form and submit it to the Recreation Department for approval.
- B. In order to ensure the safety of our participants, all coaches are subjected to a background check. Each coach must complete a consent to background check form. The Burke County Sheriff's Department will conduct a background check on each coach. If the background check is approved (see Background Check policy of the BCRD for further details), a coach will then be considered in the coach's application process.
- C. The Recreation Department will provide at least one certification opportunity for all coaches and assistant coaches. The certification fee will be paid by the Recreation Department for all coaches and assistant coaches in attendance. Coaches not attending will be responsible for attending a certification program elsewhere, prior to the beginning of the season. The Recreation Department will not reimburse the fee. It is mandatory that all coaches be certified.
- D. No one is allowed on the field or in the dugout with the children until they have been approved through the above mentioned process.
- E. Coaches and any approved personnel must be attired in the Recreation Department issued uniform for all games.

PLAYER EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS

- A. Shoes are mandatory for play in youth baseball games. Rubber-molded, cleated shoes are approved for use. Smooth and soft-soled athletic shoes, including tennis or basketball shoes are acceptable. Steel spikes are prohibited.
- B. Team uniforms will be issued by the Recreation Department. Players must be in uniform to play (uniform consists of jersey, pants, socks, belt, and hat/visor).
 - a. Managers, coaches, team moms and/or team scorers who are in the dugout or on the field, must be attired in the designated Recreation Department coach's shirts (Provided the coach uniforms have arrived) and must pass a background check and be approved.
 - b. Team caps will be issued by the Recreation Department and are the only hats that may be worn by the players; however, it is not mandatory that the hats be worn.
 - c. Illegal uniforms and shoes will be treated as illegal equipment.

- C. Helmets must be worn by batters, baserunners and on deck participants. The helmet shall be so designed as to give protection to the temples and the base of the skull as well as to the top of the head.
- D. The child playing in the pitching position is required to wear a protective mask.
- E. The official bat shall be round, and made of wood, metal, or other material acceptable for batting as approved by rules governing play in Diamond Youth Baseball. Regulation aluminum bats which meet USA Baseball standards are permitted in all divisions. Look for the USA Baseball logo on the taper of a bat to know if it is approved. Approved youth bats are 27" – 32" in length, with barrel diameters up to 2 5/8". Approved tee ball bats are 26" and shorter. BCRD will follow the approved bat list found at USA Bat web site (www.usabat.com).
- F. Gloves and mitts are governed by the DYB rule. Pitcher's gloves must be of one color.
- G. Catchers must wear full protective equipment including a mask with throat protector, protective cap (must cover ears), body protector, shin guards, and protective cup in an athletic supporter. The umpire shall inspect each catcher's full protective equipment prior to the game to determine its safety. The helmet must be approved by NOCSAE (National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment).

LENGTH OF GAMES

- A. A game is complete when the following conditions have been met.
 1. Time Limit expires or Six (6) full innings.
 2. Four (4) complete innings due to rain or bad weather.
 3. Fifteen (15) runs after three (3) innings (all players must bat on both sides).
Ten (10) runs after four (4) innings.
- B. The score of a forfeited game shall be recorded as 7 – 0.
- C. There is a one hour and fifteen minutes (1:15) time limit per game. No New inning after an hour and fifteen minutes (1:15) The next inning starts as soon as the third out is made in the bottom of the last inning. If there is a batter batting when the time limit expires, The teams will finish the inning (unless the home team is batting and is winning). The scorekeeper will announce the starting game time so that all parties know the time of expiration. The time is left on the scoreboard, but if the scoreboard malfunctions, the scorekeeper will periodically announce the time left in the game.
- D. In the sixth (6th) inning only, a team may bat through their entire lineup so long as they do not reach three outs before this. In this inning only, the team may exceed the single-inning run limit. Once all players on the team have batted in

the inning, the inning will end if the team has scored five (5) or more runs. If the team does not score more than five runs by the time they have batted through their entire lineup, the most they can score in that inning is 5 runs.

- E. **With ten (10) minutes or less remaining in the game:** When the visiting team is 10 runs ahead after three (3) complete innings, or if the home team would be mathematically unable to tie or win the game in the fourth (4th) inning due to the run limit, the game may be called at the end of the third inning. This same rule can apply in subsequent innings, but only comes into effect at the end of the third inning.

Ex) At the end of the third (3rd) inning, the visitors are up 11-4 and there are eight (8) minutes left on the clock. The home team would not be able to win the game by the end of the next inning (because of the five run per inning rule), so the game may be called at the end of the third (3rd) inning.

GAME RULES AND REGULATIONS

- A. A minimum of seven (7) players must be fielded in order for the game to be official. If a team does not field enough players, the game will be declared a forfeit. A team may pick up extra players to let their team play (those players must be enrolled in our program); however, the game will still remain a forfeit. When a team is playing with less than nine (9) players, the position that is vacant will be declared out each time they come to bat. The coach may place the automatic out any place in his lineup. A team may continue a game with one less player than they started with, in the event a player must leave the game; however, an out will be declared each time that player's position comes to bat.
- B. Game time is forfeit time.
- C. The choice of first or last at bat (home-visitors designation) shall be determined by the game schedule unless during tournament play then it will be the higher seed (1 being the highest seed) will be home team.
- D. All players present at the game will bat in a continuous batting order as listed in the book. This means that every child on the team will be in the lineup.
1. If a player is late, they will be added to the bottom of the batting order.
 2. Injured player – If it is an injured player's time at bat, the coach may take the out (allowing the player to reenter). If the coach determines that the injured player is not able to play, there will be no out in the batting order (and the player may not reenter the game).
 3. Ejected player – out in batting order.

- E. There will be three outs or five runs per inning, whichever comes first. In the sixth (6th) inning only, a team may bat through their entire lineup so long as they do not reach three outs before this. In this inning only, the team may exceed the single-inning run limit. Once all players on the team have batted in the inning, the inning will end if the team has scored five (5) or more runs.
- F. Every child is required to play in two innings per game in the field. If a coach fails to obey this rule, the game will be forfeited. With the free substitution rule in effect, because of the continuous batting order, this should not be a problem. A coach may bring a child in and out of the game as many times as he would like. (Please let scorekeeper know when bring in sub for the first time).

BATTING

1. Each batter gets 5 pitches or 3 strikes. If the last pitch/swing is fouled, additional pitches will be granted. There is no limit on fouled balls. (Teach your batters to always swing at the last pitch!)
2. The umpire will advise both teams of the last pitch. The umpire will not call any balls or strikes. There will be no walks or free bases.
3. The batter will be called out if there is no contact with the ball on the 5th or last pitch.
4. Bunting is not permitted. No fake bunts allowed. A player (showing bunt) may not fake bunt and swing in an effort to hit the ball. PENALTY: Batter is out, and the ball is dead.
5. If a batter slings his or her bat, **he receives one warning**. After the one warning he will be called out if he continues to sling his bat.
6. If the ball does not go past the ten-foot (10') arch from home plate, the ball will be declared a foul ball.

BASERUNNING:

1. A batted ball, unless called a foul by the umpire, is live and in play until the defense stops the progress of the lead runner and the umpire calls time. This will be at the umpire's judgment and cannot be appealed. Note: There are no "half way" marks on the field. A player cannot call time. (We do not want the kids to hold the ball in the air and call time.) We want the kids to learn how to use the baseball to stop the runners. Once time has been called by the official, the ball remains dead until the next batter.

2. If a ball is thrown away at any base, runners may advance at their own risk. The fielders must control the runners by stopping the play with the ball.
 3. All runners must be in contact with their bases and must not leave their bases until the batter has made contact with the ball. If a runner leaves the base early, the umpire shall address the violation at the time it occurs. The team will receive one team warning. At the second and each additional violation, the runner will leave the field but no out will be assessed. The ball becomes dead immediately. There is no appeal from the coach.
 4. The base runner is allowed to "tag up" if a fly ball is caught.
 5. Runners must slide feet first at home plate if the catcher is making a tag on the runner. Coaches are encouraged to have their catcher move off the plate if there is not a play to be made at home plate. No head first sliding is allowed at any base. PENALTY: Runner is out. A dive back is not considered a head first slide.
 6. Runners must avoid "hard" contact with any defensive player making a tag on that runner. If this occurs, the runner will be called out. This is at the umpire's judgment.
- G. There is NO infield fly rule in Coach Pitch League.

FIELDING:

1. In order to develop good fielding habits, if the ball is hit to a player covering a base that a runner is advancing to, they can tag the base or the runner. Other than that, the player needs to throw the ball to the person covering the base. The only time the pitcher can make a tag is if the ball is picked up next to the foul line and the runner has not passed them. If the runner has passed them, they must throw the ball to the person covering the base for the out to count. PENALTY: Runners will be called safe.
 - a. Reasoning for the above rule: To prevent teams and coaches from putting their faster players at the "pitching" position and let them run down kids that are advancing to a base – usually first and home. While this strategy can help coaches win games, it will do little to prepare kids for older leagues. The kids need to learn the correct defensive play.
 - b. As a result of this rule, the kids are going to learn the right play (which is what we want them to do). Having to teach them (when they advance to older leagues) to throw the ball instead of running them down is much harder.

2. A line shall be drawn in the infield at the same distance as the pitching distance. No infielder is allowed in front of the restrictive line until after the ball has been pitched by the coach, outfielders remain in outfield grass area (behind a 60' radius from the front edge of the pitcher's rubber), and the pitcher must remain in the box. The penalty for crossing the line too early will result in a "dead ball option". The offensive team will be given the option to replay the last at bat or to leave the play as it stands.
3. Players will be used on defense at the following positions: Catcher, Pitcher, first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, short stop, and four outfielders. Outfielders must start the play at least 20 feet behind the base path.

PITCHING:

1. There will be a pitching rubber 46 feet from home plate and will have a 12ft diameter circle around it. The coach-pitcher must be in the circle when pitching and must pitch overhanded. In this case, the twelve-foot (12') diameter circle will be moved up to match the forty-foot rubber. The coach does not have to pitch from the rubber. The coach pitcher's feet must both start in the circle but as long as one foot is within the circle and any part of the other foot is in contact with the outline of the circle when the pitch is released, the coach will be considered in the circle. PENALTY: Ball is dead and No pitch. (Page 62 of the DYB rulebook)
2. The player-pitcher must remain until the pitch is delivered in the Pitching Circle. Defensive player must have at least one foot inside the circle at the time of the pitch for safety reasons. PENALTY: Result is a "dead ball option". The offensive team will be given the option to replay the last at bat or to leave the play as it stands.
3. The player-pitcher must wear a protective helmet with face mask.
4. A total of 5 pitches can be thrown (more if the 5th ball is fouled; less if 3 strikes occur before the 5th pitch). If a batter swings and misses 3 times, the batter is out. The fifth pitch may be fouled or tipped indefinitely. There are no bases on balls or hit by pitcher advancements to first base.
 - a. The coach-pitcher is not allowed to instruct base runners. We want the base runners to learn to listen to the base coaches. PENALTY: Each team will get two warnings. On the 3rd offense, the coach-pitch will be changed out for remaining of the game.

COACHES POSITIONS

1. Offensively, only base coaches and the coach pitcher will take positions on the playing field during a game. The base coaches only may instruct the base runners. The base coaches can not touch the runners when the ball is in play. PENALTY: The base runner will be called out. Once the umpire has called time, the runners may be congratulated.
 2. Defensively, two coaches may be in the outfield to help instruct their team. They must stay 10 feet behind the base line during play. One additional defensive coach should be with the catcher to keep him/her safe and help get the catcher into position once the ball is in play. To speed up play, this coach may also toss the ball back to the adult pitcher.
- H. At any time, the team at bat may use a courtesy runner for the catcher. The courtesy runner will be the last recorded out.
- I. The umpires will make appeal calls (missing bases, etc.) after all action has ceased (as per DYB rules).

PRACTICES

- A. Coaches may not hold their first practice until after the specific date assigned by the Recreation Department. Any team found in violation of this policy will be subject to game forfeiture(s) determined by the number of practices held before the said date.
- B. It is preferred that practices be limited to one (1) hour and fifteen (15) minutes, but a maximum of two (2) hours is allowed. All practices **must be completed by 9:00 pm**. Remember that the children have homework and other school requirements.
- C. It is the policy of the Burke County Recreation Department to avoid hosting youth activities on Wednesday nights whenever possible, due to church activities. Coaches may conduct practices on Wednesday nights; however, the practice cannot be considered mandatory, and a child cannot be penalized for not attending. This same policy applies to weekend and spring break practices.
- D. If you are the last one to use the field, please make sure that you clean up any trash left on the field or in the dugouts.
- E. Before leaving the Recreation Department Complex, please make sure that all of the children on your team are with a **Responsible Adult** or that a **Recreation Department Staff Member has been notified**.
- F. Anytime that our office cancels practice or games, coaches are not allowed to practice their teams on our complex. We usually do this because of the conditions of the fields or weather and **ONLY** as a last resort. If you choose to

disregard our notice, you will be suspended from coaching the next scheduled game. The only exception is if games are canceled due to a conflicting activity.

INCLEMENT WEATHER CONDITIONS

- A. The fields and facilities at Jonathan Broxton Park are monitored by the Thor Guard Lightning Prediction and Warning System. This system is designed to predict a lightning strike within a defined geographical region.
- B. When the conditions for a lightning strike exist, the Thor Guard system will give a 15-second blast on the horn cluster that can be heard approximately 700 yards away. At the same time, a yellow strobe visible from most areas of the park will activate and stay on until the danger has passed or at least 10 minutes after the last detection of lightning. Once the potential for a lightning strike has passed, the system will activate the horns giving the all-clear signal – three, five second blasts -- and the strobe light will go off.
- C. Anytime that the strobe light is on, participants should take cover inside a building or their vehicle and are not allowed on the playing fields, playground, basketball court or outdoor areas.
- D. Anyone not following these guidelines when the Thor Guard warning is activated and remains outdoors or in an inappropriate area or shelter will do so at their own risk.
- E. If the alarm is activated during a game, officials will clear the area and ask all participants and spectators to go to their vehicles. If the system has not given an all clear within 30 minutes, the games will be called for the evening. (Refer to policies regarding completed games to determine if the game in session will be complete, rescheduled, etc.) Prior to leaving, check our Facebook Page (Burke County Recreation Department) or look for an email from our department confirming that all activities are suspended for the evening.
- F. Check the Burke County Recreation Department's Inclement Weather Policy for more detailed information.

COACH'S RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. After team selection, it is your responsibility to inform the players of your team that you are their coach and when you will be scheduling practices.
- B. Conduct a parent's meeting. Get the parents involved. Let them set up refreshment schedules. Make sure they know that good sportsmanship is **MANDATORY**.
- C. Make sure that you fill out a coach's application as well as a consent form for a background check. The Recreation Commission has implemented policy of

requiring a background check on all volunteers as a means of protecting the children who participate in our programs.

- D. No tobacco is allowed on the playing field (smoking, vaping, or chewing).
- E. To help cut down on confusion, it is requested that all coaches stay in the dugout area while your team is on defense, unless a defensive time-out is called.
- F. Coaches, only, should turn their line-up in to the scorekeeper. Once a line-up is recorded in the book, it is official. Coaches are expected to turn in first and last names and the number of each player.
- G. Only the head coach may confer with the umpire, then only for one (1) minute during a charged conference granted by the umpire.
- H. Coaches must notify the Recreation Department in case of injury to any player, whether the accident occurred at a game or at practice. An injured player must be cleared by the Recreation Department before he/she can play or practice. (Accident/Injury forms are supplied in your coach's manual.)
- I. A coach must stay in the coach's box while his/her team is on offense. They may not interfere with a defensive play.
- J. There will be no stopping the game to get a Recreation Department Official. If there is a problem, the game may be played under protest.
- K. A coach is the only person that may file a protest. A protest may not be filed on a judgment call. It may be filed **only** if there is a rule violation. In the event of a protest, the coach must present the protest **in writing** within twenty-four (24) hours and the protest must be accompanied by a \$25.00 filing fee. If the protest is **upheld**, the \$25.00 will be refunded.
- L. Anytime that our office notifies you of a change in schedule, it is your responsibility to contact all your players on your team.
- M. In the event of rain, the Recreation Department will inform **you** if the games or practices have been canceled. **You must then get in touch with your team.** Please make sure that we have all telephone/cell numbers and current contact information so that we can locate you. Check internet site (www.burkerec.com) or our Facebook page (Burke County Recreation Department) for up to the minute notices regarding inclement weather and cancelled games.
- N. Any coach that is unable to consistently reach a child (for practices, etc.) should notify the Recreation Department immediately so that we can see if we can reach them.
- O. If you have a problem with your team equipment, need additional equipment, etc., **please contact our office before 3:30 p.m.** so staff can have your equipment ready for you by time of practice. Do not wait until practice time to let us know. If you do, it may be the next day before your request can be filled.

- P. If you are the last one to leave the field for the evening, please make sure that you clean up all trash on the field and in the dugouts.
- Q. Before leaving the Recreation Department complex, please make sure that all of the children on your team are with a responsible adult or that a Recreation Department official has been notified.
- R. Remember, you set the mood for the team. **Your attitude is the most important one on the field.** If you are pleasant and have a positive attitude and show good sportsmanship, so will your parents and players.
- S. Sign an inventory sheet of equipment issued to you at the beginning of the season. Make sure that all equipment is in the bag when returned at the end of the season. Equipment is to be returned immediately following your last scheduled game.
- T. See practice section about field schedule for practices. If you would like to add a practice, please call the Recreation Department for additional practice times.

SPORTSMANSHIP

- A. Good sportsmanship is expected and demanded of all participants, coaches and team followers.
- B. Players, coaches, and spectators are to refrain from making derogatory comments or using inflammatory actions to opposing players, coaches or teams calculated to make a misplay.
- C. Anyone who touches or threatens an official or employee affiliated with the operation of an organized activity will be suspended for at least a year from all organized recreation activities and will be required to pay a \$100 reinstatement fee before they will be eligible to compete again or attend any recreation department activities. They could also face criminal charges!
- D. Any individual directly involved in an activity that is ejected from a game for any reason other than violence, must pay a \$25 reinstatement fee for the first offense. If a second ejection occurs, the individual is suspended from any organized recreation activity for at least one year and must pay a \$100 reinstatement fee before they will be eligible to participate in any organized recreation activity.

PLAYERS AND SPECTATORS CONDUCT

- A. Any player, coach, or spectator acting in an unsportsmanlike manner or in any way that could prove detrimental to the league, will be subject to disciplinary action by the Recreation Department. If the coach cannot control the situation, the game will be awarded to the opposing team. The person or persons violating

this rule shall be suspended for the following game. (Judgment shall be made by either the umpires or the Recreation staff.)

- B. Any player, coach, or spectator disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct, including abusive language, is ineligible for further participation in the game in progress, plus the next game played and may be dismissed from the league.
- C. It is the parent's responsibility to make sure their child attends all practices and games. Any child who misses two (2) consecutive practices or games can be benched by the coach for one game, with the approval of the Recreation Department. Any child who continuously misses practices or games will be dismissed from the team. It is the coach's responsibility to notify the Recreation Department of any child's missed games or practices.
- D. No alcoholic products should be consumed before or during activities involving your team.
- E. No Smoking, vaping, or tobacco use allowed in our parks.
- F. No Animals allowed on the playing fields and must have a leash on while at the park.