

PALISADES AREA YOUTH BASEBALL

Rookies Level Playing Rules - 2019

(Last amended April 2019 – amendments in bold)

SECTION I: General Rules

1. **These rules do not take the place of any official Cal Ripken rules as published in the official baseball rule book. These rules pertain to local league play only. *(amended April 2019)***
2. **The pitching week runs from Sunday through Saturday. *(amended April 2019)***
3. Eligibility: The League Age of a player is their age as of May 1st of that year. Players on the Majors Level are to have a League Age of 11 or 12 years old. Players on the Minors Level are to have a League Age of 9 or 10 years old. Players on the Rookies Level are to have a League Age of 7 or 8 years old. *See also additional eligibility rule below.*
4. Additional Eligibility Based on Age: An 8 year old will be allowed to play on a Minor Level team as long as he/she is also on the Rookie Level roster for their organization without forfeiting their playing rights with the Rookie Level team (double rostering). In the event that a Minors and Rookies game are scheduled at the same time, the player's first responsibility will be to the Rookies team and must play for the Rookies team.
5. A team roster may not contain more than 18 boys/girls.
6. A Rookies Level game is six (6) innings or a maximum of 2-1/2 hours. No extra innings. A game may end in a tie.
7. **Protective Gear: Players must wear a face mask when warming up a pitcher, both on the sidelines and on the field between innings. Catchers must wear full catching gear (mask included) during the game. All offensive players must wear batting helmet while batting and at all times while running the bases. It is highly recommended that all players, regardless of position, wear a protective cup. It is highly recommended that all pitchers wear chest protectors. Coaches are responsible for ensuring players are wearing all protective gear. *(amended April 2019)***
8. **Uniforms: Rookies Level players must have full uniforms for all games unless permission is granted by the league. The uniform should include hat, shirt with player's number on back, and pants. An attempt should be made to keep shirts tucked in. No steel cleats are allowed – only rubber cleats and sneakers are allowed. *(amended April 2019)***
9. Balls: A Level 5 RIF baseball will be used in all Rookies games.
10. **All bats must be USA Baseball approved. Consult USA Baseball website. *(amended April 2019)***
11. No more than four (4) coaches including (1) scorekeeper are allowed in the bench area during the game. Only Head Coaches are allowed to discuss anything with the umpire. Any other coach or scorekeeper arguing with the umpire will be automatically ejected.
12. No one is to stand inside or outside of the backstop behind home plate during a game. The umpire is to remove any person doing so. The only persons permitted will be the catcher and the umpire.
13. Suspension of a Player: Any player serving a suspension of any kind must sit on the bench and be in uniform at the next game the player attends.

14. Ejection of a Coach: If an umpire ejects a coach for any reason, he or she must leave the game, field, and facility and will not participate in the next game in which the team plays. All ejections will be reviewed by the league. Penalty could be more severe depending on the review by league officers.

SECTION II: Required Substitution of Players (Rookies Level)

1. Free substitution throughout the entire game is permitted for defensive players. Any player may enter any position at any time (with the exception of the pitcher to which normal pitching rules apply).
2. Everyone must play a minimum of 6 defensive outs. This must be accomplished by the end of the fourth inning. Failure to comply will result in a forfeit of the game and the affected player /players must start the next game. If the affected player/players do not start the next game, that will result in that game being forfeited.

SECTION III: Pitching (Rookies Level)

1. **A coach will pitch the first two (2) innings of the game. Players will pitch the remaining four (4) innings. Any exception to this rule must be agree upon by both managers with umpire present. (amended April 2019)**
 - During innings of coach pitch, all batters will get four (4) strikes. Foul balls count as strikes, except for the fourth strike. The fourth strike requires the batter to swing and miss. There shall be no walks during the coach pitch portion of the game.
 - During the innings of player pitch, regular rules for balls and strikes will apply: four (4) balls is a walk, and three (3) strikes is a strikeout.
2. Warm up: All pitchers must warm up out of the playing area.
3. At least two (2) pitchers must pitch in a game, day light permitting.
4. A pitcher may pitch a maximum of two (2) innings per game and a maximum of four (4) innings per play week.
5. One pitch in an inning will count as one (1) inning pitched.
6. A pitcher who pitches on two (2) consecutive days must have one day's rest before pitching again.
7. An 8 year old may pitch on the Minors Level if only rostered to that team. An 8 year old may not pitch on the Minors Level is if the player is double-rostered with the Rookies Level.
8. Pitcher warm-up: A maximum of five (5) pitches between innings (includes coach, player, and catcher). A maximum of eight (8) pitches during a pitching change during an inning.
9. Guidelines for calling strikes – defining the strike zone: The strike zone shall be expanded so as to encourage batters to swing the bat. Vertically, the strike zone should be from a batter's upper chest area to his knees, and horizontally, the strike zone should be extended two (2) to three (3) inches off the outside corner of the plate.

10. Intentional Walk: Intentional walk is not allowed. You must pitch to every batter.
11. Hit Batters: If the pitcher hits three (3) batters in an inning, he/she must be replaced. The batters do not have to be consecutive for this rule to take effect.
12. Trips to the mound: Limit of two (2) trips to the mound per pitcher per half inning. On the second trip, pitcher must be removed. All in-fielders can be involved in time-outs held at the mound. Coach may visit the mound between innings as long as he/she isn't delaying the game. The umpire may charge the coach with a trip to the mound for that inning if a delay is evident.
13. Pitching mound distance: The distance from the pitcher's mound to home plate shall be either 36.0 feet or 36 feet 6 inches. Pitchers shall not be required to throw longer distances.

SECTION IV: Rookies Level Play

1. Game Balls: Two (2) new game balls must be used to start each game. Used balls must be in good condition and inspected by the umpire. Under wet conditions, a good supply of balls and towels must be available. It is the responsibility of the Home team to supply balls and towels for the game.
2. Players on the field: A maximum of ten (10) players will be used on the field for Rookies Level with not more than four (4) being outfielders. All outfielders will remain in the outfield (no short fielder or additional infielders).
3. A team must have a minimum of eight (8) players for the game to be official. The penalty for less than the required number of players is forfeiture of the game.
4. Coaches on the field: There shall be a maximum of two (2) coaches on the field. When batting, a team may have a first base coach and a third base coach. When in the field, a team may have two (2) coaches in the outfield.
5. Stealing: Stealing is not permitted in Rookies Level play.
6. Leaving base early: The ball must cross the plate before a runner can leave the bag. Penalty for leaving the bag before ball crosses the plate will result in runner being out, no pitch, and ball is dead.
7. Missed base: Umpire will call runner out automatically if a runner misses a base or leaves base on a tag-up too early. Play ends before doing so. No appeals can be made.
8. Sliding: Sliding is permitted in Rookies Level play, but players shall not slide headfirst. Headfirst sliding will be ruled an out.
9. Bunting: Bunting is not permitted in Rookies Level play.
10. Fake Bunt: No fake bunting will be allowed for safety reasons. If the batter squares to bunt, he/she is committed to either bunt or take the pitch. The penalty for fake bunt is no pitch, batter is out, and no advance by base runners.

11. Infield Fly Rule: The Infield Fly Rule does not apply to Rookies Level play.
12. Nine (9) Batter Rule: The Nine (9) Batter Rule will apply to Rookies Level play. Innings will be played either three (3) outs or nine (9) batters for the first five (5) innings. The sixth inning will be played until three (3) outs are made without regard to the number of batters. If the ninth (9) batter walks on four (4) consecutive pitches, that batter will lead off the next inning. If the ninth (9) batter hits the ball, play will end when an out is made any place on the field. If no out is made, play will end when the ball is returned to the home plate and the plate is tagged by a defensive player.
13. Base runner advancement on overthrows (throwing errors): Base runners shall not advance on any overthrow, no matter where the overthrow may occur. In addition, base runners shall not advance to any base by way of a steal, wild pitch, or passed ball.
14. Base runner advancement when ball is hit to the outfield: When the ball is hit into the outfield, base runners may advance from base to base until the ball has entered the infield. When the ball reaches the infield, base runners must stop at the nearest base. The ball does not need to be under control of a player for runners to stop advancing.
15. **Courtesy Runner: A courtesy runner for the catcher must be used only when there are two (2) outs. There will be no courtesy runner for the pitcher. The courtesy runner will be the player who made the last out. Catcher is to put on catching equipment upon return to dugout. (amended April 2019)**
16. Running Batting Order: Rookies Level play will have a Running Batting Order.
17. **If a player begins a game and leaves, is ejected or unable to play the remainder of that game for any reason other than injury, the position in which that player batted in the line-up becomes an automatic out for the remainder of the game. The player cannot return to the game. Any exception to this rule must be agreed upon by both managers with umpire present. (amended April 2019)**
18. **Fifteen (15) Run Rule (“Mercy Rule”): A Rookies Level game is over after four (4) innings (or 3 ½ innings with home team ahead by at least 15 runs) and will result in an end to the contest and the team in the lead will be declared the winner. Also, after four (4) innings or (or 3 ½ inning with the home team ahead by at least 15 runs), the manager of the trailing team may choose to end the contest immediately. Continued play following the declaration of a winner would be based on agreement between both managers and umpire. (amended April 2019)**

SECTION V: Miscellaneous

1. **A game called because of darkness, rain, etc., must be completely replayed, unless it is an official game (4 complete innings, or 3 ½ innings with the home team ahead). A game may end in a tie score. A game needing to be rescheduled, must be rescheduled (but not played) within two (2) days. All regular season games must be played before the stated end of the regular season. (amended April 2019)**

2. Field Condition: Fields and pitcher's mounds must be properly maintained. No holes on or around the pitcher's mound will be permitted.
3. Play-offs: Rookies Level does not participate in play-off games.
4. All Star Game: Rookies Level may participate in the All Star Game. The length of the game to be determined by the host team in consultation with the Board. Composition of the team determined by the same guidelines as for Minors and Majors.
5. **Final Score/Pitchers Stats: The winning team is responsible for contacting the PAYB statistician with the final score, names of pitchers and innings pitched within 24 hours of the contest. (*amended 2019*)**

Section VI: FIELD LAYOUT (ROOKIES LEVEL)

1. Baselines: 60 feet.
2. Pitching distance: 36 feet or 36 feet 6 inches.
3. Pitcher's Plate: 6 inches above Home Plate level.
4. Distance down the Foul Lines: 200 feet.
5. Outfield distance to pocket in center field: 250 feet.