

## **WINTERPARK OPTIMIST CLUB**

### **BASEBALL PROGRAM**

#### **Ground Rules for Tee Ball**

**Effective March 1<sup>st</sup> 2015**

#### **THE TEE**

Prior to the first scheduled practice, each team will receive a Tee along with the other equipment. The home team is responsible for supplying a league issued Tee for all league games.

#### **PRE-GAME**

Before each game the coaches will meet at home plate with the umpire for introductions and to review ground rules. No infield practice will be taken before the game. Both teams will warm up down the baselines adjacent to their dugout. Lineup sheets do not need to be filled out or exchanged.

#### **UMPIRES**

One umpire per game will be positioned behind the mound. The umpire's word is final in the Tee Ball League. If a coach or manager disagrees with a call, he can approach the umpire after the game and discuss the call. No call will be questioned during the game. Winter Park Baseball believes that respect for the umpires is an important lesson at this age. This should be especially easy to abide by since no score is being kept.

#### **REGULATION GAME**

Regulation games are 55 minutes or six innings, whichever occurs first. The game can end during the top or the bottom of an inning since there is no score kept. The umpire will keep the official game time. Managers and coaches are encouraged to get their players on and off the field quickly between each half inning.

#### **FIVE RUN OR THREE OUT RULE**

Each half inning will consist of three outs or five runs, whichever occurs first. If the fifth run is scored while a play is occurring then the play will continue until the play is over.

#### **NO OFFICIAL SCORE TO BE KEPT**

The Tee Ball League is designed to introduce children to baseball. It is the position of Winter Park Optimist Baseball that keeping score in the Tee Ball League is detrimental to the primary focus of teaching baseball fundamentals. While score must be kept each half inning to enforce the "Five Run or Three Out Rule", no official score is kept in the Tee Ball League games. There are no regular season standings in the Tee Ball League.

## **TEAM DEFENSE**

While on defense there can be two coaches on the field, at the edge of the outfield grass, to help instruct and teach their players. A third coach can stand in front of his own dugout to facilitate player instruction, but must stay off the field. No coaches will interfere with play by touching either their players or the ball. There is no restriction on the number of players each team can use in the field while on defense. Therefore, managers are encouraged to play all of their players in the field. A team must use a pitcher, catcher and four infielders with the remaining players placed in the outfield. If there are fewer than nine players present for a game, the catcher position can be optional. Prior to the ball being hit:

- A. The pitcher must have at least one foot on the center line of the pitching circle.
- B. The catcher must be wearing a protective mask and be positioned a minimum of 6' behind home plate
- C. The four infielders must be positioned behind the imaginary line that runs between the bases; and
- D. The outfielders must be positioned in the outfield grass.

Players must attempt to throw the baseball when making a play. Rolling the baseball or throwing the baseball underhand or throwing the baseball overhand so that it bounces several times is and /or rolls is prohibited. The umpire will warn managers and players once whenever the umpire believes this rule is being violated. Continued violation of this rule after the warning will result in the umpire calling the player safe who would have otherwise been out.

Managers are encouraged to teach their players to attempt to make a play. Teaching or allowing players to run long distances to tag a runner out is discouraged. For example, it is inappropriate for a pitcher to field a ground ball on the third base side of the pitching mound and then run to tag a batter out as they are running down the first base line. Any ball retrieved by the pitcher within a five foot radius circle around the mound area must be thrown to an appropriate base for the out. The pitcher cannot run the player down or carry the ball to the base. This includes home plate. The umpire will warn managers and players once whenever the umpire believes this rule is being violated. Continued violation of this rule after the warning will result in the umpire requiring the offending manager to move the offending player to a

different position on the defense and calling the player(s) safe that would have otherwise been out.

### **TEAM OFFENSE**

All teams in the Tee Ball League will use a continuous batting order. The line-up used for the first game of the season will remain the same throughout the entire Tee Ball League season. The next player to hit when a game ends will be the first player to hit in the next game. Any player (s) arriving after a game has begun will be inserted into the line-up at their usual spot and not at the bottom of the line-up. It is the intent of this rule to equalize the number at-bats each member of a team has throughout the Tee Ball League season.

Players cannot strike out. They can swing until they hit the ball. If after multiple attempts the ball does not travel out of the foul territory in front of home base, the opposing coach will allow any hit ball to be considered fair. The height of the Tee may be adjusted for each player. Batters must be positioned within the batter's box. Adjusting a batter's stance so that their feet and shoulders are more parallel to one of the base lines is discouraged as it is the position of Winter Park Optimist Baseball that players in the Tee Ball League will develop better hitting skills if they are taught to use a more normal relatively square stance. Directional hitting can be accomplished by placing the batter either up or back in the batter's box.

The hitter and base runners(s) may advance at their own risk one base after an infield error occurs when the ball is hit in the infield. The defensive team may attempt a play on the advancing base runner after the first infield error. However, the advancing base runner must stop at the next base even if a second infield error occurs. For example, if a hitter hits the ball to the pitcher who throws the ball over the first baseman's head, then the hitter can advance at their own risk no further than second base.

If a ball is hit to the outfield grass, the runner(s) can advance as many bases as they can at their own risk, until the ball is under control by player in the infield or time is called by the umpire.

### **THROWN BAT RULE**

If the batter throws the bat after swinging at the ball, both managers and the offending player will be warned. The next time any player(s) throws the bat, the umpire will call that player(s) out. This will be in effect for the remainder of the game.

### **PLAYER MINIMUM PLAY RULE**

As all player present are allowed to play in the field while on defense and each player is present is to be included in the continuous batting order, the "Player Minimum Play Rule"

## **PLAYER SUBSTITUTION RULE**

This rule is inapplicable in the Tee Ball League as all players are allowed to play defense and each team has a continuous batting order.

## **STEALING OR LEADING OFF BASE**

Stealing or leading off base is prohibited. Runners cannot leave the base until the batter hits the ball.

## **TEN RUN MERCY RULE**

As no official score is kept, the ten run mercy rule does not apply in the Tee Ball League.

## **TIE GAMES**

As no official score is kept there are no tie games in the Tee Ball League.

## **PROTESTS**

As no official score is kept, there are no protests in the Tee Ball League.

## **TRYOUTS**

There are no tryouts in the Tee Ball League.

## **PLAYER DRAFT**

Players in the Tee Ball League are assigned to teams by the league commissioner. Returning players are assigned back to their prior team unless they request otherwise. New players are assigned to teams based on player requests and the intent of making equally balanced teams within the leagues.

## **MAKE-UP GAMES**

Winter Park Optimist Baseball will attempt to reschedule all incomplete games and games cancelled as a result of unforeseen circumstances on the next available date. There may be occasions when games are either not rescheduled on the next available date or not rescheduled at all.

## **POST SEASON TOURNAMENT**

There is no post season tournament in the Tee Ball League.