

Cal Ripken Rookie Leagues for 7 & 8 Year Old Baseball

AVON JUNIOR ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

League Organization

Rookie League Baseball The AJAA baseball league for 7 and 8-year old boys shall be called the Rookie League. The purpose of this document is to detail the organization of the league and rules of play for Rookie League Baseball.

League Goals The goal of the AJAA Rookie League is:

- Involving everyone in a positive team experience,
- Developing fundamental baseball skills,
- Building player confidence, and
- Having fun!

League Overview The Rookie Leagues are instructional and recreational aimed to teach the game of baseball to 7 and 8-year-old players within the following framework:

- An instructional and recreational league,
- Keeping of score,
- Not keeping team records and league standings,
- Emphasizing player effort to play well,
- Practicing good sportsmanship,
- Coach pitch format with 5 strikes in 7 pitches, and
- Considering all players as WINNERS regardless of score!

Official Rules All situations will be governed by the “Official Babe Ruth Rule Book” with the following exceptions and clarifications.

These clarifications were drafted by previous Rookie League coaches and were approved by the AJAA executive committee to create the best environment for meeting the goals stated above.

Changes **ANY CHANGES TO THESE RULES MUST BE APPROVED BY THE AJAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS.**

Coaches Selection and Duties The board of directors shall conduct the approval of league coordinators and team coaches prior to team selection. Refer to the “AJAA Coaches and Coordinators: Selection and Responsibilities” policy.

Team Selection Teams will be determined per the approved **AJAA Team Selection Policy**. Every effort shall be made to keep the teams to a maximum of twelve (12) players. The Director of Baseball may authorize exceptions to this rule.

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Games Scheduled The number of games in the AJAA league may vary due to the number of teams organized in the league.

- The minimum number of games that may be scheduled is ten (10).
- The maximum number of games that may be scheduled is fourteen (14).
- This maximum limit does not include tournament games.

Tournament Rookie 8 will conclude with an end of season tournament. Tournament positions will be randomly determined prior to the season.

In tournament play, teams must have at least eight players or a forfeit is declared. No replacement players are allowed.

Umpires Rookie 7 Coaches will umpire all games except during the league tournament games. One umpire, preferably an assistant coach, will be supplied by each team and rotate each inning between home plate umpire and field umpire.

Coaches as Umpires Coaches who are umpires should communicate the reasoning for their decisions when necessary for those unfamiliar with the AJAA approved rules. The umpire should not “coach” the players. The umpire should relay “coaching” instructions to players through the team coach to avoid giving players mixed messages.

Umpires Rookie 8 Coaches will umpire all games except during the league tournament games. Umpires will be assigned by the Director of Baseball for the season ending tournament and once the player pitch portion of the schedule starts.

The Sportsmanship Code of Babe Ruth Baseball

Develop a strong, clean, healthy body, mind, and soul
Develop a strong urge for sportsman-like conduct
Develop understanding of and respect for the RULES
Develop courage in defeat, tolerance and modesty in victory
Develop control over emotions and speech
Develop spirit of cooperation and team play
Develop into mature, true CITIZENS

“Helping Avon Youth Achieve Baseball Excellence”

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Field Decorum

Code of Conduct Any abusive, obscene language or unsportsmanlike conduct by spectators, players, coaches or parents will not be tolerated and the umpire has the authority to handle such situations in the customary manner (i.e., a warning, removal from game, removal from AJAA property, or a forfeit of the game).

Sportsmanship Expectations Coaches are not only responsible for their own conduct, but also for the conduct of their players and fans as well. All coaches are expected to set a positive example for their teams.

Please take particular notice of the following sportsmanship expectations:

1. There shall be no jeering, distractions involving players, whether in the dugout or in the field.
 2. No abusive, profane, or obscene language will be tolerated on the part of anyone.
 3. Anyone ridiculing a player or volunteer will be asked to leave the field immediately.
 4. No smoking in the dugout or on the playing field by anyone.
 5. No foreign objects shall be thrown onto the field.
 6. All decisions of the umpire are final and shall be accepted with restraint and grace. Please, do not question judgment calls. The coaches umpiring the games are all volunteers.
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Contesting Calls Only the coach or acting coach can contest an umpire's call during a game. **Judgment calls cannot be contested.** Discussions over discrepancies in the application of these rules should be calmly discussed between the coaches and umpires with mutual respect.

Player Participation All players shall be encouraged to attend every game and must participate unless the player is injured or sick. Coaches are to make an effort to get all players involved as teammates.

Playing Field The infield shall be a 60-foot square. An enclosing fence shall surround the field of play and foul territory for the outfield boundary of the playing area.

Dugouts The Visiting Team shall use the 1st base dugout. The Home Team shall use the 3rd base dugout.

Game Ball For Rookie 7, the home team will supply one game ball for each game.
For Rookie 8, the home team or the umpire will provide one game ball for each game.

Scorebook The home team shall maintain the official scorebook. Each team shall provide a scorekeeper. The score shall be reconciled if a game is suspended to determine where play will resume.

Field Setup Home Team shall be responsible for pre-game and field maintenance. This includes lining the field, setting up and chalking an 8' safety circle around the pitching rubber, installing the bases, and raking the infield.

Start Time All games shall start at times designated by the league coordinator. Umpires are responsible for starting the game on time and having the start time recorded in the Home team scorebook.

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Forfeit	Less than 8 players on a team 15 minutes after the scheduled start of the game will constitute a forfeit. After a forfeit is declared, coaches may divide players and proceed with an unofficial game.
Postponed Games	If the playing field is not playable ½ hour after the time the game is scheduled to start, the game may be rescheduled. The coaches and/or the umpire will determine if the field is in a playable condition. The league coordinator is responsible for rescheduling any games if required.
Complete Game	Shall be over after 6 innings have been played or the time limit has been exceeded. No inning shall start after the time limit of 1 hour and 45 minutes. An official game shall be considered complete after four (4) innings (3½ innings if the home team is ahead) in case weather or darkness makes the field unplayable in the umpire's judgment. An incomplete game shall be postponed due to inclement weather or unfavorable field conditions. The league coordinator is responsible for rescheduling the game if required.
Lightning	Play will be suspended and the fields will be cleared immediately if lightning is detected. For further clarification, refer to AJAA Lightning Policy.
Makeup Games	For incomplete games, the game may be resumed from where it was suspended as determined by the official scorebook. Any team not willing to reschedule or complete suspended games is considered to have forfeited the game.
Tardy Players	There is no obligation to play any player that arrives after two complete innings of play. However, any player arriving after the start of the game and prior to the end of the 2nd inning, will be added to the end of the line-up.
Players Leaving Players Returning	If a player leaves prior to the end of a game, the coach will inform the other team's coach of the player that has left the game and will be skipped in the batting line-up. If the player intends to return later, an out must be recorded for each missed at bat to retain player eligibility for the duration of the game.
Jewelry	Players must not wear watches, rings, pins, jewelry, or other metallic items.
Dugout Conduct	All players must remain on player's bench or in the team's dugout when not engaged in the game. Only coaches, players, bat boys, and scorekeepers are permitted in the dugout. No more than two players are allowed out of the dugout with a bat. The first is the batter and the second is the next batter in the on deck circle practicing. For safety, this rule must be enforced.
Field Cleanup and Equipment	Both teams will be responsible for disposing of litter on and around the field and bleachers after each game. The home team is responsible for locking up league equipment in the storage containers after the game. Please, help keep the park clean of litter and the fields free of rocks, stones and gravel for everyone involved, as this is a volunteer organization.

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Offense

Batting Lineup

All players present shall be placed in a batting order given to the official scorekeeper at the beginning of the game and shall bat in that order.

Players arriving late will be placed at the end of the line-up. The coach will notify both scorekeepers of players added to the line-up.

Innings

For Rookie 7, an inning shall consist of 3 outs or a maximum of 10 batters per inning, whichever comes first.

For Rookie 8, an inning shall consist of 3 outs or a maximum of 6 runs per inning, whichever comes first.

Balls & Strikes

There are no balls. Only pitches swung at shall be called a strike.

Rookie 8 exception: when player pitch is instituted, the umpire will call balls and strikes.

Three strikes (swinging or called) will constitute an out. Four balls will constitute a pitching change. See Pitching below.

Batting Helmet

Batters and base runners must wear helmets at all times. Any runner who intentionally removes his helmet while running the bases or in the field of play will be automatically out.

Bunting

No bunting shall be allowed.

Thrown Bats

One warning will be given to a team if a batter throws a bat that strikes the catcher, hits the fence or backstop, or travels over 20 feet. Any player which throws the bat after that warning will be called out. **For safety, this rule must be enforced.**

Base Running

No leadoffs. No stealing bases. No passed balls.

Base Running on Outfield Hits Rookie 7

When a ball is hit to the outfield, as soon as the ball crosses back into the infield and a defensive player in the infield gains possession of the ball, the base runners are allowed to advance only to the base that they are running toward. If they advance further and are thrown out, the out stands. If they reach the next base safely, they are to return to the base that they were running toward when the ball crossed the infield.

Base Running on Outfield Hits Rookie 8

Once the batter hits the ball, play continues until the lead runner is forced back to a base. After the lead runner is stopped, the play is dead and time will be called. If the lead runner is stopped at third base and there is a runner on first base, the runner on first will be awarded second base if he is more than halfway once the runner on third is stopped and time is called.

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Base Running on Overthrows

Runners shall advance one base on all overthrows. An overthrow is when the ball is thrown past an infielder. There can only be one overthrow per hit ball.

Coach Interference

If a coach touches the base runner during a play, the runner shall be called out.

Sliding

A slide or attempting to avoid contact is required on **all close plays at home plate, 2nd base and 3rd base**. This is a judgment call by the umpire. No headfirst slides forward into a base are permitted. A headfirst slide returning to base is permitted.

If the fielder has the ball, the runner should slide when possible or make every attempt to avoid contact. The runner may be called out if he does not slide and a collision occurs. If the fielder does not have the ball but is blocking the base or home plate, he is guilty of obstruction.

Tenth Batter Rule Rookie 7 ONLY

Whenever the 10th batter comes to bat in an inning, all runners crossing home plate prior to an out being made shall count as runs, regardless of the number of outs. As soon as a defensive player who has possession of the ball tags a base in front of any runner(s) an out has occurred.

- An out occurs whenever a defensive player stops the forward progress of the hitter by forcing out the batter at first, tagging the hitter or runners, or forcing out a base runner by touching any base in front of any runner, including the hitter.
 - There are no overthrows on the 10th batter; all runners continue to run until an out is made.
 - In case of an overthrow over the fence, the batter shall be awarded three bases and all runs forced home shall count.
 - Whether a runner crossed home plate prior to an out being made is a judgment call.
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12 Run Rule

If either team is ahead by 12 or more runs at the end of five complete innings (or 4 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead), the game is considered complete. If the coaches agree to continue for additional practice, this shall be permissible.

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Defense

Fielders

All players will play defense each inning.

Infield

Each player must play a minimum of 1 inning at one of the six infield positions each game prior to the end of the 5th inning.

Rotation Positions

No player may play more than 4 innings at one position per game.

The six infield positions are catcher, pitcher's helper, first base, second base, shortstop, and third base. All other players are outfielders and remain on the outfield grass during play.

Exception

The only exception to playing infield is if it is agreed between the team coach and the child's parents that it is unsafe for the player to do so for all games. The league coordinator must be informed by the player's parents they will not be playing infield during the whole season.

Replacement Players

During regular season games when 8 team players are not available, coaches should attempt to determine a way to play games using replacement players. A replacement player must be a registered AJAA baseball player in the same league or the league (1) year below. Substitute players must bat at the end of the order and must play in the outfield.

Pitching

Rookie 7 will use Coach Pitchers. The coach must pitch overhand to their own batters from the Pitching Circle. The Pitching Circle is an 8ft diameter circle around the pitching rubber.

Rookie 8 will use Coach Pitchers for most of the season and player pitch during the latter part of the season. The specific date of the change will be determined by the coordinator with input from the Director of Baseball.

Coach Pitch

- Each batter will receive 7 pitches or 5 strikes.
- The pitcher's helper must stay within the Pitching Circle prior to the pitch. The pitcher's helper can be no closer to the batter than the pitcher/coach.
- The 7th pitch shall be considered the last pitch unless the batter fouls or foul-tips the pitch, in which case, the count shall remain at 6 pitches. If a batter foul tips a 5th strike and the catcher catches the ball, the batter shall be out. Any other foul ball, the ball must be over the batter's head.
- The pitching coach can give instructions to his offensive team.

Player Pitch

- The player pitcher will pitch to each batter until the batter hits the ball into fair territory, strikes out or four balls are thrown. If four balls are thrown, the offensive coach will relieve the pitcher for that batter and will assume the strike count the player pitcher has achieved. The coach will continue to pitch until:
 - 1) The player swings and misses on the third strike thereby making an out, or
 - 2) The umpire calls the third strike, thereby making an out, or
 - 3) Five pitches have been thrown by the coach, thereby making an out, or
 - 4) The player hits the ball.
 - 5) Foul balls on the 3rd strike will earn the batter one more pitch unless the foul ball is recorded as an out per the rules of baseball.
 - 6) Foul balls on the fifth (and subsequent) pitch will earn the batter one more pitch unless the foul ball is recorded as an out per the rules of baseball.

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- A pitcher must be replaced after pitching to 4 consecutive batters without recording a hit or an out.
- A pitcher must be replaced after hitting 2 batters during a game.
- No pitcher may pitch more than 25 pitches in any game. Regardless of the number of pitches thrown, a pitcher cannot pitch on consecutive days. He must rest one day before he can pitch again.

Dead Ball

- Any batted ball that comes in contact with the pitching coach is a dead ball and constitutes “NO PITCH”. No runner advances and the batter returns to the plate.

Pitcher’s Helper

For situations involving machine pitch, the pitcher’s helper may be positioned prior to the pitch on either side of the circle no closer to home plate than the pitching coach.

For situations involving a coach pitching, the pitcher has the right to position themselves first. The pitcher’s helper will take his position after the pitcher has taken his position. The pitcher’s helper must wear a helmet with a face guard.

Calling Time

The umpire will call time when the defense has stopped the advancement of the lead runner. All other plays will be stopped at the umpire’s discretion.

Runners Scoring on Third Out

If the third out in an inning is made on a force play, no run can score. If the third out in an inning is made in any other fashion, runners must have crossed home plate before the third out is made; otherwise, any runner not having crossed home plate does not score.

Coaching

A coach shall be permitted in the outfield area when his team is playing defense.

Defense

When in the outfield instructing defensive players, the “Defensive Coach” may call instructions from the outfield or may call a player over to him.

Any batted ball that comes in contact with a “defensive coach” shall be considered a dead ball. The batter shall be awarded three bases.

Infield Fly

The infield fly rule will not be in effect.

Catcher’s Equipment

Catchers must wear a mask, chest protector, and shin guards. It is further recommended that catchers wear cups for protection and maintain a “safe” distance behind the batter.
