

First Baptist Church Machine Pitch League Rules

Regulation Little League Rules will be used unless stated otherwise below.

Home Team

- Teams will lead their own pre-game devotion and prayer, 3-5 minutes.

Length of Game

- Games will be limited to **5 innings** or **1 hour 15 minutes**. A new inning shall not start with less than five minutes left. 35 minutes played or 3 innings (2 1/2 if home team is ahead) will constitute a legal game in the case of rain or other emergency condition.

Eligible Players

- Each team must have a minimum of seven players to begin the game. If seven players cannot be fielded, a forfeit shall be declared.

Run Rules

- There will be a limit of 5 runs the first 3 innings, with unlimited scoring thereafter. The game will be called if a team is ahead by 15 runs after 3 innings, or 10 or more runs after 4 innings

Base Distance

- Base distances will be 65 feet.

Number of Players and Substitutions

- 9 players will play in the field. Each player must play in the field at least every other inning. In other words, **no player shall remain on the bench for consecutive innings**. It is recommended that the coach prepare a player substitution schedule prior to the game to ensure that each player plays his allotted time. Within these guidelines, the coach may substitute and change player's position in the field freely. There is no re-entry limitation.
- In order to avoid unnecessary delays, a courtesy runner may be used for the catcher if there are two outs. The courtesy runner **must** be the last player to have made an out.

Batting Order

- The batting order shall include every player present, and will not change at any time, unless a player becomes sick or injured. For example, if 12 players are present, the batting order will be 1-12, and will not change regardless of where individuals are playing in the field. Players arriving after the beginning of the game shall be added to the bottom of the batting order.
- If a player is forced to leave the game due to sickness or injury, and his turn at bat comes up, he will be skipped over with no out penalty.
- Should a player become injured while on base, a courtesy runner may be used for him, subject to the same rules as the courtesy runner for the catcher. However, if there is a second occurrence of an injury to the same player, that player must be permanently removed from the game.

Rules of the Pitching Machine

- A pitching machine will be used with a catcher. The machine will be set up at regulation distance (48 feet) from home plate. Each batter may receive a maximum of 5 pitches, with exceptions for unusually wild throws (at the umpire's discretion) and foul balls on third strikes. **Coaches will man the pitching machine (having use of them during practice will help games to move according to time if machine adjustments need to be made).**
- There will be no called strikes or balls by the umpire, and no bases on balls (including those hit by pitches) will be awarded.
- The pitch speed will be set to 38MPH, with the ball being placed in the machine consistently throughout the game.
- 3 swinging strikes or five pitches total without putting the ball into fair play will result in the batter being called "out". However, if the batter fouls off the last pitch, he will get additional pitches until he swings and misses, puts the ball into play, or does not swing at the pitch. The batter will be declared out and may not advance on a strike-out (or when failing to hit the 5th pitch) even if the catcher drops or misses the ball.

Awarding Bases to Players

- Any batted ball which hits the machine without first touching a player will be declared a dead ball, with a single being awarded to the batters. All base runners will be awarded one base.
- Similarly, in the event that the ball becomes lodged in the machine by any means, the ball will be declared dead, with all runners advancing to the next base.
- Otherwise the machine will be considered as part of the playing field.

Balls

- After the ball is hit fairly by the batter, the play will be ruled dead when any player has control of the ball in the pitching mound area, or when the play has reasonably concluded in the judgment of the umpire.
- Runners will advance or return to the closest base, as determined by the umpire.

Stealing

- There is no stealing. Runners may not leave the base until the ball is hit.

Collisions

- Any base runner that intentionally collides with a defensive player in an attempt to dislodge the ball will be called out and ejected from the game. It is the runner's responsibility to slide or attempt to avoid contact. This is a judgment call by the umpire. Additionally, defensive players may not block bases including home plate, with or without the ball. Contact initiated by defensive players also result in ejection. All unsportsmanlike conduct ejections are subject to the umpire.

