



Mecklenburg County  
Park and Recreation  
*The Natural Place  
To Be...*



## 2019 Youth Spring Baseball Rules

<b>I.</b>	<b>LEAGUE INFORMATION:</b> _____	<b>2</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>RULES:</b> _____	<b>2</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>TEAMS REQUIREMENTS:</b> _____	<b>9</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>PLAYER ELIGIBILITY:</b> _____	<b>11</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>AGE CLASSIFICATION:</b> _____	<b>11</b>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>MUST PLAY RULE:</b> _____	<b>12</b>
<b>VII.</b>	<b>TOURNAMENT PLAY:</b> _____	<b>12</b>
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>PROTESTS:</b> _____	<b>13</b>
<b>IX.</b>	<b>CODE OF CONDUCT:</b> _____	<b>13</b>
<b>X.</b>	<b>SUSPENSIONS:</b> _____	<b>14</b>



## 2019 Youth Spring Baseball Rules

**Mecklenburg County Youth Sports Philosophy:** *To provide an environment for children to learn the fundamentals of sport while emphasizing the importance of teamwork, sportsmanship, physical fitness and fair play.*

### I. LEAGUE INFORMATION

- A. GENERAL INFORMATION:** The program shall be known as the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department's Youth Spring Baseball and Softball Leagues. The following age groups will be offered: **(AGE AS OF APR 1, 2019)**
1. Coed Baseball – (ages 5-6 Tee Ball, ages 7-8 Machine Pitch **(NEW in 2018)**, ages 9-10 Player Pitch and ages 11-12 Player Pitch)  
Leagues will be geographically divided as North, Central or South within the County.
- B. REGISTRATION:** Registration will be held in February and will run for a minimum of 4 weeks. Participants may register at any recreation center, online at [www.parkandrec.com](http://www.parkandrec.com) by clicking the Eparks logo. Questions may be directed to the Revolution Park Sports Academy at (980) 314-1116 or emailed to the Youth Sports Development team at [YouthSports@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov](mailto:YouthSports@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov).
- C. LENGTH OF SEASON:** The regular season will run for 8 weeks to encompass 8 regular season games. A single-elimination post-season tournament will immediately follow the regular season for ages 9 and over only (*see section VII. Tournament Play*)

### II. RULES

- A. NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS (NFHS)**  
All games will be governed by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Rules and the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department's local rule modifications, as mentioned below. These rules must be strictly adhered to by all staff, officials, coaches, teams, participants, parents and spectators. The Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department reserves the right to modify league play rules to accommodate and or enhance the overall experience and/or service being provided. For more information about or to view the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Baseball Rules please visit their website at <http://www.nfhs.org>.
- B. 5-6 AGE GROUP MODIFICATIONS (TEE BALL)**  
**\*Score will not be kept.**
- 1. FIELD DIMENSIONS/MARKINGS:**
    - a) Base Distances – 45' (a marked line at the halfway point between bases will dictate runner advancement situations)
    - b) Pitching Distance – 36' (8' circle around the mound area)
    - c) Outfield Distance – 8' behind each base extending to foul lines
    - d) "In Play" Arch – 3' arch in front of the plate designating foul balls and balls in play (measured 3' from the rear point of home plate down each base line).
  - 2. BALLS/BATS:**
    - a) The official ball shall be a RIF #1 SAFETY BALL. Approved brand and model number information can be found in section 3, Team Requirements.
    - b) Bats may not exceed 2 ¼ inches in diameter
  - 3. ROSTER/FORFEITS:** Each roster should contain a minimum of 10 and maximum of 12 players to ensure quality instruction opportunity and playing time. There are no forfeits or grace period. The games begin with those players present at scheduled game time. Late arriving players enter the game on offense at the end of the batting order and on defense when their team has finished batting **(NEW in 2018)**.
  - 4. LENGTH OF GAME:**

## 2019 Youth Spring Baseball Rules

- a) Each game shall consist of a minimum of three (3) complete innings.
- b) Each game will carry a 1-hour maximum time limit. Staff officials' discretion will determine game ending time as the time limit approaches.

### 5. OFFENSE / BATTING:

- a) Each player must wear a protective helmet while on the field of play.
- b) Each player present will be given the opportunity to bat in each inning.
- c) Batters must remain in the batter's box while batting.
- d) Each batter will be given five (5) attempts to hit the ball before making an out (coaches must assist players on the fifth swing) **(NEW in 2018)**
- e) Any ball hit must travel beyond the three foot "In Play" arch to be considered fair.
- f) It is permissible to pull the tee from home plate so runners may touch home when running the bases. **(NEW in 2018)**
- g) Play begins when the umpire or coach shows the ball to the defense and places it on the tee for the batter.

**Play will be stopped** by the umpire at the point when a ball hit in the infield is possessed by a defensive player or when a ball hit into the outfield is possessed by a defensive player in the infield (umpire's discretion) **(NEW in 2018)**. Defensive players in possession of the ball must signal to the umpire a "call for time" by holding the ball above their head with arm extended.

**THROWING/SLINGING THE BAT:** any batter throwing or slinging a bat whether intentional or unintentional will receive a verbal warning. The umpire will stop play and issue a warning to both teams. An automatic out will be assessed for every infraction following the verbal warnings.

6. **OFFENSE / BASE RUNNING:** Stealing is prohibited. Once on base, runners may not take leads and must maintain contact with the base until the ball has been hit. Runners leaving early will be returned to their original position. Base runners may advance until time is called by the umpire. Balls inadvertently thrown out of the field of play will result in a one base advancement awarded by the umpire. Only one overthrow allowed per play **(NEW in 2018)**. Halfway markers between base paths will determine runner advancement during stoppages in play (umpire's discretion).

7. **DEFENSE / REQUIRED POSITIONING:** Each team must defensively occupy the following positions with players before filling additional positions:

- a) INFIELD - Pitcher, First Base, Second Base, Shortstop and Third Base (Catchers position will remain vacant for safety reasons). A maximum of two (2) players may occupy the pitchers circle at any one time, one (1) being the preferred number **(NEW in 2018)**.
- b) OUTFIELD - Left Field, Right Field and Center Field. All remaining extra players must be positioned in the outfield grass (as evenly spaced as possible). Outfielders must remain in the grass until the ball is hit. Infielders must hold their position until the ball is hit.
- c) Coaches are strongly encouraged to rotate defensive players to different positions to promote opportunity for skill development.
- d) Defensive players must play one inning in the infield and one inning in the outfield.

**Exception: Not enough players present to fill infield positions.**

8. **COACHES:** Coaches may be utilized at the following positions. It is strongly recommended that each team have the maximum three (3) official team coaches. All volunteers must be approved through Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation's Volunteer Services. This includes Team Parents, helpers, etc.

- a) **OFFENSE** - 1st Base Coach, 3rd Base Coach (must remain in the coach's box located in foul territory at each base), Hitting Coach (each team must have a hitting coach to assist their players. He/she must remain off the field of play once the ball is put into play.
- b) **DEFENSE** – Coaches are permitted on the field for defensive instruction. Coaches may choose to position themselves anywhere on the field; however, they must remain out of the base path and may not interfere with play.
- c) **TEAM PARENT** – each team should have a Team Parent (could be a third official coach) to

## 2019 Youth Spring Baseball Rules

assist preparing players to bat in the proper batting order to keep the game flowing and on time.

### C. 7-8 AGE GROUP MODIFICATIONS (MACHINE PITCH - NEW in 2018)

**\*Score will not be kept.** Outs are recorded and game length will consist of a full six (6) innings or until the 90-minute time limit is reached. See section 3.b. for more information.

#### 1. FIELD DIMENSIONS/MARKINGS

- a) Base Distances – 60'
- b) Machine Pitching Distance – 38' (8' circle around the mound area) (NEW in 2018)
- c) Umpire will monitor the game from the machine pitch area

#### 2. BALLS / BATS:

- a) The official baseball shall be a RIF #5 SAFETY BALL. Approved brand and model number information can be found in section 3, Team Requirements.
- b) Bats cannot exceed 2 ¼ inches in diameter.

#### 3. ROSTER/FORFEITS: Each roster should contain a minimum of 10 and maximum of 15 players.

- a) **FORFEITS** - There are no forfeits or grace period. The games begin with those players present at the scheduled game time. Late arriving players enter the game on offense at the end of the batting order and on defense when their team has finished batting (NEW in 2018).
- b) **LENGTH OF GAME** - Complete games will consist of 6 innings of play or 90-minute time limit, whichever comes first. No new inning can begin once the 90-minute time limit has been reached. If the inning has already started and the 90-minute time limit has been reached, the full inning will be allowed to be played (NEW in 2018).

#### 4. OFFENSE / BATTING:

- a) The batting order will consist of the entire team roster of players present for the game, and remain consistent throughout the game. (Example: If 12 players from a roster of 15 are present, the line up or batting order will be players 1 through 12).
- b) Each offensive half inning ends: 1) after 10 batters and progress on the base paths has been stopped and time has been called or 2) three (3) outs have been recorded.
- c) Once 10 players (or more) are present for the batting order, a maximum of 10 –players only will bat each half inning (NEW). No more than 10 batters can hit in a half inning. Any late arriving players may be added to the end of the batting order (NEW in 2018). (Ex. If there are 12 batters, a half inning ends with the 10<sup>th</sup> batter and the next inning batters will hit in the following order: 11, 12, 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.).
- d) If less than 10 players are present at game time, all players present will bat until the 10<sup>th</sup> man has batted (some players will bat twice) or 3 outs have been recorded to end the ½ inning. (NEW in 2018). For example, If there are only 8 players present, the line up or batting order will be 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 1, 2. The next inning will begin with batter number 3.
- e) In the event that a player is injured during the game and is unable to continue, the batter may be skipped over without an "out" being recorded.
- f) Each batter will receive a maximum of six (6) pitches. In the event six (6) pitches are thrown or three (3) strikes are called, the batter is out (**WALKS ARE NOT ALLOWED**).

**THROWING/SLINGING THE BAT:** any batter throwing or slinging a bat whether intentional or unintentional will receive a verbal warning. The umpire will stop play and issue a warning to both teams. An automatic out will be assessed for every infraction following the verbal warning.

#### 5. OFFENSE / PITCHING COACH: The pitching coach will operate the machine pitch to his/her own players (NEW in 2018). He/she must remain in the pitching circle at all times and instructions to hitters must be minimal as not to disrupt the flow of the game. Pitching coaches may not instruct base runners. Only base coaches may direct base runners. The pitching coach is considered part of

## 2019 Youth Spring Baseball Rules

the field. He or she must make a reasonable attempt to avoid being hit by a batted ball. If the pitching coach is struck by a line drive or sharply hit ball, the ball is live and is playable.

Penalty: Delaying the game excessively will result in a warning from the umpire. Any additional offenses will result in the batter being called out (runners may not advance).

- 6. PITCHING MACHINE:** The front of the pitching machine will be located 38 feet from home plate. **Settings on the machine – to be determined by M CPRD staff.** If the machine settings need to be altered due to it not throwing consistent strikes during the course of the game, M CPRD staff and the umpire are the only people authorized to make the necessary adjustments.

- a) The pitching coach/operator must stand behind the pitching machine.
- b) The defensive player must stay behind the front of the pitching machine (on either side) until the ball has been hit.
- c) If the pitching coach/operator intentionally touches a hit ball, or a fielder, the batter will be called out and all runners on base will return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. (*\*If the pitching coach/operator touches the ball to protect the child in the pitcher's position, the batter will be awarded 1st base and if any base runners on base, they will advance one base*).
- d) If the pitching coach/operator did not intentionally interfere, the ball will become dead at the time of the interference and the batter will be awarded 1st base. All runners already on base will be awarded one base.
- e) A batted ball that hits the pitching machine before touching a fielder will be a dead ball and the batter and any base runners will be awarded one base.
- f) If a batted ball touches a player before touching the machine or the operator, the ball will remain live.
- g) A thrown ball that hits the pitching machine will result in a dead ball and the base runners will be awarded one base.

- 7. OFFENSE / BASE RUNNING:** No Stealing. Once on base, runners may not take leads and must maintain contact with the base until the ball has been hit.

- a) If a runner leaves the base early, the ball will be declared "dead", time is called, a warning will be given to the offending team and the batter will receive a substitute pitch. There will be one warning per offending team; any further "leaving early" violations per team will result in the same scenario above with the exception being the player leaving early will be declared "out" (NEW in 2018)

Base runners may not advance on a passed ball by the catcher or a wild pitch by the machine. Base runners may advance on overthrown balls in play until possession is established and/or time is called. Only 1 overthrow allowed per play (NEW in 2018). After one overthrow, the ball is "dead" and the base runners advance one base per the umpire's judgment based on where the runners were when the overthrow occurred (NEW in 2018).

- 8. DEFENSE / POSITIONING:**

- a) There will be a maximum of 10 defensive players (4th outfielder may be used).
- b) The pitcher must be positioned a minimum of 42' (beside or behind the front of the pitching machine) from home plate and have both feet inside the pitching circle prior to the ball being hit.
- c) Play stops when: 1) infield ball is possessed by a defensive player and they hold the ball above their head with arm extended (umpire's judgment on base runners advancement or not) or 2) defensive team prevents the lead base runners forward progress (NEW in 2018).
- d) Coaches are strongly encouraged to rotate defensive players as needed to promote opportunity for skill development.
- e) All players present must play at least two (2) innings defensively by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning (unless injured) (NEW in 2018).

- 9. CATCHERS:** All catchers must wear helmet and face mask, throat protector, chest protector and

## 2019 Youth Spring Baseball Rules

shin guards and groin protector (cup). Hockey style masks with built-on neck protector are acceptable.

Penalty: The game will be declared a forfeit if no player on the team has the necessary safety equipment for their catcher.

- 10. COACHES:** Each team is allowed a maximum of 3 coaches. All volunteers must be approved through Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation's Volunteer Services. This includes Team Parents, helpers, etc. whose role is to help ensure the flow of the game. Other than the pitching coach/machine operator, no additional coaches are permitted on the field except for base coaches located at the 1st and 3rd base coaches boxes in foul territory.

### D. 9-10 YEAR OLD / 11-12 YEAR OLD MODIFICATIONS (PLAYER PITCH)

#### 1. FIELD DIMENSIONS/MARKINGS:

- a) Base Distances – 60'
- b) Pitching Distance – 44' for 9-10 year olds; 46' for 11-12 year olds (pitching mounds will not be used)

#### 2. BALLS/BATS:

- a) The official baseball shall be LITTLE LEAGUE APPROVED. Approved brand and model number information can be found in section 3, Team Requirements.
- b) Bats cannot exceed 2 ¼ inches in diameter.

- 3. ROSTER/FORFEITS:** Each roster should contain a minimum of 10 and maximum of 15 players. There will be a 10-minute "grace period" prior to each scheduled game; however, once each team has a minimum of 7 players on site at the scheduled game time, the game will officially start. Each team must have an 8<sup>th</sup> player on site ready to play by the start of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning or a forfeit will result (could apply to both teams, if applicable) **(NEW in 2018)**.

- 4. LENGTH OF GAME:** Complete games will consist of six (6) innings of play or 90-minute time limit, whichever comes first. No new inning may begin once the 90-minute time limit has been reached. If the inning has already started and the 90-minute time limit is reached, the inning will be allowed to be played with the home team getting its last at bats if behind in the score. The game will be stopped if the 90-minute time limit is reached and the home team is leading and at bat **(NEW in 2018)**.

Mercy rules – game stops when:

- a) The home team is leading by 10 runs after 3 ½ innings
- b) The visiting team is ahead by 10 runs after 4 complete innings
- c) TIE GAMES – regular season games may end in a tie. Tournament playoff games may NOT end in a tie (see Countywide Tournament section for details).

#### OFFENSE / BATTING:

- a) The batting order will consist of all players who show up for the game and will remain consistent throughout the entire game. Late arriving players will be added to the end of the line-up and must also remain consistent throughout the game **(NEW in 2018)**.
- b) A team having 7 or 8 players will bat their roster and "outs" will NOT be recorded in the vacant position(s) of the batting order **(NEW in 2018)**.
- c) Each offensive half inning ends: 1) after five (5) runs maximum have been scored (10U) or seven (7) runs maximum have been scored (12U); 2) Three (3) outs have been recorded **(NEW in 2018)**.

**THROWING/SLINGING THE BAT:** any batter throwing or slinging a bat whether intentional or unintentional will receive a verbal warning. The umpire will stop play and issue a warning to both teams. An automatic out will be assessed for every infraction following the verbal warning.

- 5. OFFENSE / PITCHING LIMITATIONS:** *Pitch limits will be enforced during the season.* Pitchers will be allowed a maximum of 5 warm-up pitches per inning. Warm-up pitches do NOT count

## 2019 Youth Spring Baseball Rules

towards a pitcher's individual pitch count totals.

- a) **9 & 10 YEAR OLDS**- A pitcher may not pitch more than 75 pitches per day. If a pitcher reaches their limit while facing a batter, the pitcher can finish the batter's at bat until the batter reaches base, the batter is out, or the third out is made in the inning.
- b) **11 & 12 YEAR OLDS**- A pitcher may not pitch more than 85 pitches per day. If a pitcher reaches their limit while facing a batter, the pitcher can finish the batter's at bat until the batter reaches base, the batter is out, or the third out is made in the inning.
- c) Pitchers must adhere to the following rest requirements from USA Baseball and MLB Pitch Smart- <http://m.mlb.com/pitchsmart/pitching-guidelines/>

Age	Daily Max (Pitches in Game)	Required Rest (Pitches)				
		0 Days	1 Days	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days
9-10	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
11-12	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
13-14	95	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+

### 6. OFFENSE / BASE RUNNING:

- a) **RUNNERS ADVANCING AFTER A WALK OR HIT BY PITCH** - Batters and runners advancing to base after a batter's walk or hit-by-pitch may NOT continue to advance to their next base(s) until the first pitch has been thrown to the next scheduled batter. "Time out" is automatically called at the end of each walk or hit-by-pitch batters' at bat, regardless of if the umpires have actually called "time out" or not. The play is "dead" until the pitcher throws their first pitch to the next scheduled batter **(NEW in 2018)**.
- b) **RUNNER ON THIRD BASE (Ages 9-10 ONLY)**- A runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> base may advance home on a wild pitch or passed ball; however, once that runner's momentum towards home plate is stopped, he/she MUST return to 3<sup>rd</sup> base. A runner retreating back to 3<sup>rd</sup> base may be thrown out by the defensive team, but he/she CANNOT advance home on a wild throw. A runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> base may NOT steal home or engage the catcher/pitcher in "back and forth" play **(NEW in 2018)**.
- c) **STEALING A BASE** - Base stealing is allowed (except for home plate in 10U); however, runners may not "lead off" or attempt to steal until the pitched ball has reached home plate. Each team will receive one warning for base runners leaving early, subsequent occurrences will result in the runners being called out **(NEW in 2018)**.
- d) **AVOIDING CONTACT WITH DEFENSIVE PLAYER** - During close plays at a base, a base runner must make a reasonable attempt (umpire's judgment) to avoid contact with the defensive player.
- e) **MUST SLIDE** - On any close play at home plate (umpire's judgment), the runner MUST SLIDE into home plate to avoid running into the catcher or pitcher/fielder. If not, the runners will be called out. The catcher or pitcher/fielder covering home CANNOT BLOCK home plate to prevent the runner(s) from scoring or to "fake out" the runner(s). If this results, the run(s) will count for the offensive team.
- f) **OVERTHROWN BALL** - Base runners may advance on overthrown balls in play until possession is established and/or time is called.
- g) **DROPPED THIRD STRIKE** - Batters cannot advance on catcher's dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike.
- h) **ON DECK BATTER** - No "on deck" batter permitted near the team dugouts for player safety concerns.

7. **DEFENSE / POSITIONING:** There will be a maximum of 9 defensive players. Players may re-enter the game in any fielding position, but their spot in the batting order remains consistent and cannot be changed during the game **(NEW in 2018)**. A pitcher may be moved back to the pitcher's

## 2019 Youth Spring Baseball Rules

position provided they have not exceeded their maximum pitch count for their respective age groups. However, once a pitcher leaves their pitcher position for a second time during the game, he/she may not return to it for the game.

- a. All players present must play at least two (2) innings defensively by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning (unless injured) **(NEW in 2018)**.

**8. CATCHERS:** All catchers must wear helmet and face mask, throat protector, chest protector, shin guards and groin protector (cup).

Penalty: The game will be declared a forfeit if no player on the team has the necessary safety equipment for their catcher.

**9. SPEED UP RULES:**

- a) Intentional Walks - Batter may be waived to first on intentional walks.
- b) Pinch Runner for Catcher – This is optional with less than two outs and is mandatory with two outs. The pinch runner must be the player who made the last out.
- c) Pitchers' Mound Visits – any coach may go to the pitcher's mound to visit with his/her pitchers and/or infielders; however, a pitcher must be removed from the game the second time any coach visits the pitcher's mound during a half inning or the third time any coach visits the pitcher's mound during the game, PER PITCHER **(NEW in 2018)**.

**10. COACHES: Each team is allowed a maximum of 3 coaches.** All volunteers must be approved through Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation's Volunteer Services. This includes Team Parents, helpers, etc. Each team encouraged to have a Team Parent whose role should be to work as the 'unofficial scorekeeper' for their respective teams. The official score is kept by Park & Recreation staff.

### E. GENERAL RULES & MODIFICATIONS

**1. LEAGUE RULES:** All teams and participants in the League must abide by all rules and regulations of Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department governing participation in the Leagues organized under its jurisdiction.

**2. SCORING & SCORE KEEPING:**

- a) Scoring will be kept in all divisions except the Instructional Tee Ball and the Recreational Machine Pitch division.
- b) The official score book for 10U and 12U games will be kept by park and recreation staff. It is recommended that each team have a team parent to maintain a neat and accurate score sheet for their respective team. The score keepers should compare scoring each inning to check for inconsistencies.
- c) Pitch counts will be kept by each head coach and park and recreation staff and enforced by officials, umpires, and coaches. The head coach of the pitcher is ultimately responsible to remove the pitcher when they are no longer eligible to pitch, regardless if they are not informed by the umpire or park and recreation staff.

- a. **Failure to remove a pitcher will result in an official warning with subsequent violations resulting in a minimum one (1) game suspension of the head coach.**

**3. COACHES:** Each team will be allowed a maximum of three (3) coaches. It is required that all Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department volunteers complete a volunteer packet which includes an enrollment form, volunteer agreement form and a criminal history report or background screening. It is required by the Youth Sports Development Staff that all head coaches receive certification as Youth Sports Coaches through the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS). For more information contact [YouthSports@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov](mailto:YouthSports@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov)

**4. BENCH PERSONNEL:** Coaches ID Badges will be required for all approved volunteer bench personnel, including a team parent. A maximum of three (3) personnel will be permitted in the



## 2019 Youth Spring Baseball Rules

team bench/dugout area.

5. **GRACE PERIODS:** There will a 10-minute grace period that will be allowed for the scheduled 10U and 12U games; however, once each team has a minimum of 7 players on site at the scheduled game time, the game will officially start. Each team must have an 8<sup>th</sup> player on site ready to play by the start of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning or a forfeit game will result (may apply to both teams) **(NEW in 2018)**.
6. **WARM UP:** On field warm up time will not be granted unless the previous game has ended early and the field is vacant. Games will begin promptly at the scheduled game time.
7. **OFFICIAL TIME/CLOCK:** Park and Recreation Staff will have the official game time. All officials should check with staff to verify time before decisions are made in regard to forfeits or grace periods. Park and Recreation staff have the final authority on any matters involving the official time.
8. **NO CONTACT RULE:** During close plays at a base; a base runner must make a reasonable attempt, at the umpire's discretion, to avoid contact with a defensive player. On any close play at home plate (umpire's judgment), the runner must slide into home plate to avoid running into the catcher or pitcher/fielder or the runner will be called out. The catcher or pitcher/fielder covering home cannot block home plate to prevent the runner from scoring or to "fake out" the runner. If this occurs the run(s) will count for the offensive team.
9. **RE-ENTRY RULE:**
  - a) All ages – players may re-enter the game in any fielding position, but their position in the batting order must remain consistent and cannot be changed during the game **(NEW in 2018)**.
    - a. A pitcher may be moved back to the pitcher position provided they do not exceed their maximum pitch count for their respective age group.
      - i. Once the pitcher leaves the pitcher position for the second time, he/she may not return to it.
10. **GAME DAYS/TIMES:** Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department reserves the right to schedule games when needed as a result of cancellations due to inclement weather or to accommodate playoff games/tournament play. Teams should be aware that playing games on weekday evenings or weekend mornings and/or evenings is always a possibility.
11. **INCLEMENT WEATHER HOTLINE:** In case of INCLEMENT WEATHER, please call (704) 432-3834 after 4pm on weekdays & after 8am on weekends for an update on game conditions and status. Secondly, for additional information, you may call the Recreation Center or site where your games are to be played (if applicable).
12. **ADA COMPLIANCE:** In order to comply with the American Disabilities Act, League rules may be adapted in order for participation. An "ADA Exception Form" will be submitted prior to beginning of play, and approved by Karla Gray, Therapeutics Division Director, and Bill Bredin and Barry Schumer, Recreation Supervisors Youth Sports & Fitness and kept on file to verify changes of rules.

### III. TEAM REQUIREMENTS

- A. **EQUIPMENT:** Each team will furnish a minimum one game ball per game. It is encouraged that teams share equipment if needed, however it is not required. Recreation Centers will distribute helmets, bats and balls to teams as needed.
  - a. **Approved Balls:** RIF #1, RIF #5 and Little League Approved baseballs are offered by many brands. The list below will assist in identifying balls approved for each baseball age group.

## 2019 Youth Spring Baseball Rules

Company Name	Tee Ball (age: 4-6) RIF #1	Coach Pitch (age: 7-8) RIF #5	Player Pitch (age: 9-14) Little League Approved*
Worth®	RIF® Level 1 RIF-1L	RIF® Level 5 RIF-5L	N/A
Wilson®	Soft Compression Level 1 - A1217B	Soft Compression Level 5 - A1228B	A1074SST, A1074LL1, A1252
Riddell®	Flex Core Level 1 BB-FL1	Flex Core Level 5 BB-FL5	BB-LL1, BB-LL2, BB-OLB
Rawlings®	TVB (Tee Ball)  SCOR1	SCOR5	CRLLB, LLB, LLB1, LLB2, RLLB, RLLB1, RLLB2, RLLB2-AS, RLLBC, RLLTDS, RLLB2FG, NBS2LL, RLLB2FG, ADA2LL, S12LL, RLLBC, RLLTDS, RLLTDS1, SLL, SLL1, RIF5L, RIF10L, R14ULL
MacGregor® (Sport Supply Group/BSN)	Safe/Soft Level 1	Safe/Soft Level 5	76C, 76CD, 76C1, 76SP
Easton®	IncrediBall® SofTouch® A122 311	IncrediBall® SofTouch® A122 311	N/A
Diamond®	DFX-L1 or  FlexiBall®	DFX-L5or  FlexiBall®	DLL, DLL-1, DLL-1MC, DLL- 2, DFX-LC5LL, D-YB, DLL- 3
A.D. Starr®	STARR•1 Safety 1-S	STARR•5 Safety 5-S	AD-100LL, AD100LL1, AD-100LL-XL, ADT100LL
*More brands/models available			

- B. **ILLEGAL BATS:** Bats may not exceed 2 ¼ inches in diameter. If an illegal bat is discovered prior to use, the umpire will remove the bat from the field/dugout. If an illegal bat is discovered after a hit, the batter is out and base runners must return to their base prior to the hit occurring.
- C. **PERSONAL SAFETY EQUIPMENT:** Each youth baseball participant is strongly encouraged to wear an athletic supporter, cup, groin pad or combination of those items during all practices and games to decrease the risk of serious injury. ***Metal cleats are prohibited.***
- D. **UNIFORMS:** During games, all teams are required to wear uniforms consisting of the same or similar colored hat, shirt and pants. Jerseys or shirts should be printed with minimum 6 inch numbers on the back. Players failing to meet the uniform requirements will be ineligible to play. Temporary modifications are prohibited: No taped-on or written-on numbers.
- E. **ROSTER:** Each team must possess a completed official roster, listing each player's name, address, telephone number, and date of birth. All players must be listed on an official roster. Players may play on only one team within the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Youth Baseball League. Each team will be allowed to make roster additions up to the respective roster limit prior to the first (1st) regular season game. Official Rosters are locked and frozen once the first (1st) game of the season is underway. Roster limits are as follows:
1. **5-6 Age Group (Tee Ball) – 10 PLAYER MIN, 12 PLAYER MAX**
  2. **All other Age Groups – 10 PLAYER MIN, 15 PLAYER MAX**
- F. **TEAM PHOTO ID SHEET:** Each team must possess a completed official Team Photo ID Sheet. In order for each player to be eligible to play the Photo ID Sheet must be verified and signed by the Facility Manager of that center or the Athletic Director of the independent organization, prior to

## 2019 Youth Spring Baseball Rules

playing the 1st game of the season. Date of birth must be stated for every player on the Photo ID Sheet. Each team manager/coach must have a copy of their Team Photo ID Sheet at each game & ensure that the opposing team has had an opportunity to verify them, at least 10 minutes before each game. **Exception: 5-6 Tee ball and 7-8 Machine Pitch teams are not required to have Photo ID Sheets.**

- G. **BIRTH CERTIFICATES:** Participant Birth Certificates must be verified at their respective Recreation Center at the time of registration or prior to the verification/signing of the Photo ID Sheet by the Facility Manager.
- H. **LINE UPS:** All line-ups shall be first name initial and last name only. NO NICKNAMES. A name cannot be entered into the scorebook unless the player is present at game time.
- I. **FORFEITS:** Each team must be ready to begin play with a minimum of 7 players on site at their scheduled game time (there is a 10-minute Grace Period for all 10U and 12U games; once 7 players for each team are present, the game will begin). In the event a team is unable to produce an 8th player by the start of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning, the result is a forfeit by that team **(NEW in 2018)**. In the event both teams are unable to produce the required amount of players to begin the game, then both teams will receive a forfeit and a loss will be applied to both teams' record for the purposes of the league standings. If a team forfeits 3 times in a season, it will be subject to dismissal from the league, pending review by the Youth Sports Focus Team. If a team, coach or participant attempt to delay, hinder or prevent the start of or completion of a game in protest, the team, coach or participant may be subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension. **Exception:** There will be no forfeits in the ages 5-6 (T-ball) and 7-8 (Machine Pitch) divisions. Games will begin with those players present at the scheduled game time. Late arriving players enter the game on offense at the end of the batting order and on defense when their team has finished batting **(NEW in 2018)**.

### IV. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- A. **INELIGIBLE PLAYERS:** Participants can play on only one team within the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation league structure. Any player listed on multiple rosters or participating on multiple teams will be found to be ineligible immediately. Any and all teams which the ineligible player is found to be listed on the roster of will be subject to forcible forfeit of all games found in violation. An ineligible player will be subject to suspension, pending review of incident. Any team manager/ coach knowingly or willingly playing a suspended or ineligible player will be suspended for one calendar year or more, from all Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation youth sports activities

### V. AGE CLASSIFICATION

- A. **CUT OFF DATE:** Age Classifications are determined by the participant's calculated age as of April 1, 2019.
- B. **AGE GROUPS:** The following is a list of the offered age groups:

(TEE BALL)	Ages 4, 5 and 6
(MACHINE PITCH)	Ages 7 and 8
(PLAYER PITCH)	Ages 9 and 10
(PLAYER PITCH)	Ages 11 and 12
- C. **PLAY UP POLICY:** Participants registering in Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department Youth Sport Programs are strongly recommended to register within their corresponding

## 2019 Youth Spring Baseball Rules

pre-determined age group according to their chronological age as determined by the "cut off" date. In the event that a parent or guardian feels that their child would benefit greatly from participating in a higher age division, the department acknowledges the request and will accommodate the parent/guardian by approving the "Play Up" request for participants moving up by 1 Year of Age only. A Play up Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk Agreement should be signed by a legal guardian and stored on file at the respective recreation center, as well as a copy submitted for the Youth Sports Development Staff at Revolution Park Sports Academy.

### VI. MUST PLAY RULE

- A. **MUST PLAY:** All teams must abide by the "MUST PLAY" Rule to meet the minimum required playing time for each player. Coaches must play all players as equally as possible to ensure skill development for all participants. Player substitutions should be managed as a priority over competition.
1. **TEE BALL:** Coaches should play all players at all times. Once the required defensive infield positions are assigned, the remaining players shall be equally distributed in to the outfield space. Each player must play one inning in the infield and one inning in the outfield. No player should be sitting on the bench (unless injured).
  2. **MACHINE PITCH & PLAYER PITCH:** All players present must play at least 2 innings defensively by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning (unless injured) **(NEW in 2018)**.

### VII. TOURNAMENT PLAY

- A. **COUNTYWIDE TOURNAMENT MODIFICATIONS (Player Pitch Divisions Only):** Each Countywide Tournament game, including the championship game, will have a 2-hour time limit, with the 10-run "mercy rule" remaining in effect **(NEW in 2018)**.  
**Extra Innings/Sudden Death:** In the event that any tournament game is tied after the completion of the 2-hour time limit, the umpire will implement "modified sudden death" play per International Baseball Federation rules. The visiting team will bat first and place the last 2 batters from the previous inning on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base. There will be 2 automatic outs. The next batter in the line-up will bat and play continues until 3 outs are recorded or the run maximum is reached (5 for 10U, 7 for 12U). Once the ½ inning ends, the home team will have a turn at bat with the exact same restrictions. The batting order of any subsequent innings will be determined by how the previous inning ended. Sudden death innings will continue until a winner is declared **(NEW in 2018)**
- B. **TEAM SELECTION:** The top teams in each league with the best regular season record will advance to the tournament. Seeding will be determined by the regular season standings. A sliding scale will be used to determine the teams who will qualify for the Countywide Tournament (see table below).

# TEAMS IN REGULAR SEASON LEAGUE	# TEAMS ADVANCING TO COUNTYWIDE TOURNAMENT
9-10 TEAMS	TOP 6
7-8 TEAMS	TOP 5
5-6 TEAMS	TOP 4
4 TEAMS	TOP 3

- C. **TIE BREAKERS:** If the event of a tie between 2 or more teams, tournament seeding will be determined by the following tie-breakers:
- 1) Win-Loss Record
  - 2) Fewest number of forfeited games

## 2019 Youth Spring Baseball Rules

- 3) Head-to-head record
- 4) Fewest total defensive runs (allowed) against each other
- 5) Fewest total defensive runs (allowed) in the regular season
- 6) Coin toss

- D. STATE WIDE ATHLETICS COMMITTEE TOURNAMENT:** Participants in the 9 and 10 year old age divisions and any higher age divisions will have the opportunity to participate in the (SWAC) State RECREATIONAL & OPEN tournaments, respectively.

NOTE: TEAMS THAT REGISTER TO PARTICIPATE WILL ASSUME ALL RESPONSIBILITY IN REGARDS TO RULES, POLICY, PROCEDURE, REGISTRATION, PLANNING AND FUNDING. (FUNDING INCLUDES BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO: TOURNAMENT REGISTRATION FEES, TRAVEL EXPENSES, FOOD AND LODGING EXPENSES.)

Please visit [www.ncrpa.net](http://www.ncrpa.net) for tournament information. Click on "SWAC".

### VII. PROTESTS

- A. PROTESTS:** PROTESTS WILL NOT BE HONORED.

Discrepancies about participant age should be resolved by staff on site utilizing the Photo ID sheets provided.

- B. CONFLICT RESOLUTION / CHAIN OF COMMAND:**

If a conflict arises & no decision is rendered by the onsite Park and Recreation staff, then the Youth Sports Staff must be contacted to make the final decision. Order of decision making:

1. Umpires/Officials: Govern play on the field.
2. Park and Recreation Staff: Provide onsite administrative checkpoints for rule modifications, paperwork and scorekeeping and oversee game day operations, addresses issues/concerns.
3. Youth Sports Staff: Oversee league administration, addresses issues/concerns.

### VIII. CODE OF CONDUCT

**\*MCPRD POSSESSES A ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY FOR COACHES, PARTICIPANTS, PARENTS AND SPECTATORS IN REGARD TO INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT AND RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ASSESS SUSPENSIONS AND/OR PROHIBIT ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION AT THEIR DISCRETION. COACHES AND PARENTS OF PARTICIPANTS MUST HAVE SIGNED THE APPLICABLE NAYS CODE OF ETHICS IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN SAFETY, APPROPRIATE CONDUCT AND OVERALL PROGRAM INTEGRITY. EACH COACH, PARTICIPANT, PARENT AND SPECTATOR WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE FOLLOWING CONDUCT STANDARDS:**

- A. INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION WITH OFFICIALS:**

**\*Questioning/Arguing judgment calls made by officials is STRICTLY PROHIBITED.**

1. ONLY HEAD COACHES will be permitted to consult with the OFFICIAL regarding rule clarification ONLY and this MUST ONLY BE DONE IN A SPORTSMANLIKE MANNER. It is in the best interest of head coaches to approach officials in a courteous manner and in the presence of staff whenever possible.

2. Arguing/disputing judgment calls is strictly prohibited and will be viewed as verbal abuse. Coaches, participants and/or spectators are not permitted to badger, criticize, harass or mock officials.

- B. INTIMIDATION, COMMUNICATING THREATS, VERBAL ABUSE & BULLYING:**

1. Coaches, participants, parents and spectators may not attempt to intimidate, threaten, verbally abuse or engage in a verbal confrontation of any sort with any other coaches, participants, parents, spectators, Park and Recreation staff or officials.

2. Coaches, participants, parents and spectators may not make physical contact of any kind with

## 2019 Youth Spring Baseball Rules

any other coaches, participants, parents, spectators, Park and Recreation staff or officials.

### C. POOR SPORTSMANSHIP & INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR:

1. Any and all team-affiliated persons (coaches, participants, parents and spectators) must conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner when involved in any Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department's youth athletic programs. This rule applies to conduct on all MECKLENBURG COUNTY PARK PROPERTY before, during, and after scheduled events.

**NOTE:** If spectators and/or affiliated persons' conduct become overly unruly & unsportsmanlike during the course of the game, the M CPRD staff & game officials reserve the authority to empty the facility & allow only coaches & players to remain, in the effort to finish game play.

### D. ALCOHOL/ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES:

1. The possession of, use of and/or participation while under the influence of alcohol or any other illegal substance is strictly prohibited.

### E. EJECTIONS:

Any coaches, participants or spectators who are ejected from a youth sports program, activity or event will be automatically ineligible to coach, participate and/or spectate until such time that they are notified by the Youth Sports Staff (See F. Incident Procedures below).

### F. INCIDENT PROCEDURES:

Individuals reported to be ejected or in violation of the Conduct of Conduct will be notified of an immediate temporary suspension from the program and asked to provide a written statement regarding the details of the incident in question, as well as their involvement or participation in said incident no later than 5:00pm of the following Tuesday to a Youth Sports staff member at [YouthSports@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov](mailto:YouthSports@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov). Failure to provide a written statement is viewed as an admission of guilt.

## IX. SUSPENSIONS

For more information on suspensions, please refer to the [Sports Suspension Policy for Youth Sports](#).

For more information about the youth sports programs in Mecklenburg County, please contact your nearest Recreation Center or the Revolution Park Sports Academy at (980) 314-1116 or email [YouthSports@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov](mailto:YouthSports@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov).

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department encourages and promotes inclusive leisure experiences in all of our programs, activities and sports. Inclusive leisure experiences encourage and enhance opportunities for people of varying abilities to participate and interact in life's activities together with dignity. It also provides an environment that promotes and fosters physical, social and psychological inclusion of people with diverse experiences and skill levels. Inclusion enhances individuals' potential for full and active participation in leisure activities and experiences.



Mecklenburg County  
Park and Recreation  
*The Natural Place  
To Be...*

