

1st Grade Baseball - Practice, Rules, and Suggestions (2023)

1. POINTS OF EMPHASIS: This is first grade baseball. The goals are for the kids to have fun, learn fundamentals and, most importantly, want to play in the fall or next spring. Safety is paramount and should always take precedent whenever circumstances arise. You are responsible for the goals. DO NOT make this a competitive environment....there are plenty of years left for that!
2. Practice for approximately 30 minutes before each game. This is very important. While some kids will strongly prefer to “just play,” the goal of Dover Sherborn baseball is to continuously improve fundamentally.
3. Break the team into 2 or 3 smaller groups/stations. Each week, make sure the basics are covered: throwing, catching, batting, base running and the rules. As you know, the attention span is pretty low at this age so the more the kids are doing, the better.
4. Coordinator should provide a list of fundamental exercises for the coaches to utilize prior to games.
5. Games are played for three innings (time, weather, darkness permitting). Take time during the game to explain the rules of the game. For example, if a child runs when the batter hits a pop up that is caught and is doubled up (need to tag up).
6. Bases should be set at a shorter distance than the normal Little League distances. Use your judgment, but 30-45 feet may be about right.
7. Every player bats each inning (no three outs). NO “ON DECK” WARM-UPS. The only player who should be holding a bat is the player at bat.
8. Safety First Always – The easiest way for a child to be seriously hurt is to hit by a swung bat – be very firm that everyone knows that there are NO warm up swings unless the player is batting. Be aware of any special medical circumstances (in roster provided) such as allergies or asthma. While the ball is not a real hard ball, a child can be hurt by thrown balls towards children that are not expecting it. Please make sure that the kids understand that they have to throw the ball to a player who is ready.
9. Coaches pitch and catch to their own teams. No kid catch or pitch in first grade. However, a player may play the “pitcher” position on defense, next to the coach. Parents or coaches should be assigned for 1st and 3rd base coaches.

10. When a batter is ruled “out”, the player should return to the bench.
11. Do not keep score. All games officially end in ties, although the kids may well be keeping score.
12. Make sure to rotate the batting order and the fielding positions. Every player should get a chance to play both infield and outfield and bat first and last.
13. Batter may proceed to 2nd base (a double) on a well hit ball but no further (let the pitcher call this to avoid confusion). Runners on base may only advance 2 bases on a well hit ball into the outfield; one base on a ground ball.
14. No hard balls allowed.
15. Coaches should fully expect a wide range of abilities and be prepared for it. The goal is to make this a fun experience so try your best to help each child simply reach their next plateau – not everyone can be the star of the team.
16. REMINDER: This is first grade baseball. The goals are for the kids to have fun, learn fundamentals and want to play in the fall or next spring. You are responsible for the goals. Do NOT make this a competitive environment....there are plenty of years left for that!