

YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PHILOSOPHY

Over the past few years, the YMCA has noticed some alarming trends in youth sports programs: the pressure for more rigorous competition and higher achievement. These trends come from adult-oriented attitudes and the misconception that youth sports programs are scaled-down versions of professional sports. This is not only false, but also dangerous.

The YMCA stresses child-oriented attitudes by keeping winning in perspective, having fun, improving physical fitness, and working with the whole child. The YMCA wants the quality of play to improve in order to meet the needs of all participants whatever their ability and skills.

The YMCA accomplishes this by training adult volunteers in clinics and workshops. **The YMCA believes that the child is first and winning is second.**

The YMCA does not encourage the elimination of competition or winning. Winning is essential to enjoyable competition. However, it is the “striving to win” that yields the joy of sports.

The key for parents and coaches is to keep winning in perspective. It is this key that holds the YMCA Youth Sports program together. Competition will happen in youth sports without any external pressures. **It is important to keep competition at a level appropriate for the athlete.**

The YMCA would not be whole without its commitment to a Christian emphasis. The goal of the Youth Sports program is to help the child grow to his/her fullest potential in mind, body, and spirit: activity helps the body grow; thinking advances the mind; and belief makes our spirit grow.



The Mission of the YMCA of Austin is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

YMCA T-BALL & COACH PITCH BASEBALL RULES AND GUIDELINES



- **General Guidelines**

Divisions

- 4-5 yrs. old (T-ball)
- 6-7 & 8-9 yrs. old (Coach Pitch)

Coach's duties

- Relay league and team information to all players on the team.
- Organize and run team practices/games
- Create team batting order/field positioning and ensure every player participates
- Assist in keeping players safe and off the backstop

Practices

4-5 Yr Olds:

- Teams will have the first 20 minutes of the scheduled hour to work on fielding, hitting, and base running. During practice each team will be given the opportunity to bat through their line-up with each child receiving a few practice hits.

6-9 Yr Olds:

- Teams will organize an hour long practice each week.
- Teams will rotate between fielding and batting during the designated practice time.

Equipment

- The YMCA provides jerseys, hats, balls, bats*, helmets*, and catchers gear
- Players are responsible for gloves, pants or shorts, and shoes or cleats (rubber spike only)
**players may use their own personal bats and helmets*

Substitutions

- To insure all players participate in at least half of every game, no player may sit out two innings in a row, and no player may sit out a second inning until all players have sat out at least one.
- The batting order will be continuous and will consist of every player's name. Players continue batting in the proper order regardless if they are in the field that inning or not.
- The batting order should be rotated every game to ensure every player has a chance to bat at different positions throughout the line-up.

- **Game Play**

- Duration of game**

- 4-5 Yr Olds:**

- Games should last a minimum of 3 innings (the remaining 40 minutes of the scheduled hour).
 - If the appropriate time limit has expired the team batting will finish through the line-up and the game will be called.

- 6-9 Yr Olds:**

- Three inning or 60 minute (clock starts at scheduled game time) games.
 - 5 runs or 3 outs per inning (whichever occurs first).

- Number of players**

- 4-5 Yr Olds:**

- No team will carry more than 15 players on their roster.
 - No team will participate in a game with fewer than 7 players on the field unless agreed upon by both coaches.

- 6-9 Yr Olds:**

- No team will carry more than 12 players on their roster.
 - No team will participate in a game with fewer than 7 players or more than 10 players on the field.

- Batting**

- 4-5 Yr Olds:**

- Each player will be given the opportunity each at bat to swing until a ball is hit in play.
 - Teams will bat the next 6 players through the lineup each inning. Outs are not recorded.

- 6-9 Yr Olds:**

- Each player will receive 3 pitches. If they fail to hit the ball into play by the third pitch they have a choice of two more pitches or two swings from a tee. If they miss or foul on the fifth swing the batter is out.
 - Batting helmets are required to be worn.
 - Lead offs, steals, and bunting (ball must pass designated "bunt" line or considered foul) are prohibited. Bunt line will be 6ft from the front of home plate.

**If a batter throws the bat, he/she or will be warned. If a second violation occurs, the player will be penalized by an automatic out being assessed to his/her team.

Fielding

All Players:

- Players playing the pitcher position must be within the pitcher's circle until the ball is hit.
- Play will stop when an infielder has possession of the ball in the infield and does not attempt to make a play at any base.
- The pitcher after fielding the ball must throw the ball to a base for an out.

6-9 Yr Olds:

- Fielders can tag out a runner only if the ball is recovered in the baseline or received from a teammate (players should not field the ball and run across the diamond in an attempt to tag out a player).
- Catchers' equipment is required to be worn.

Over-throws

- No player may automatically be awarded home plate on an overthrow.
- Players may automatically advance to the base the player was going to prior to the start of the play plus one base on an overthrow that goes out-of-bounds (errant throw).

Positions

- No player may play the same position more than 1 inning in the t-ball division and more than 2 innings in the coach pitch division in a game. A player cannot play both pitcher and first base in the same game.
- Coaches are required to rotate outfielders to infielders and vice versa equally throughout the game and season.
- Base coaches must also assist as umpires.

Adult pitcher (Coach Pitch Division only)

- An adult pitcher pitches to their team only.
- The pitcher must be a parent or coach from that team.
- If the adult pitcher interferes with the play, the ball automatically becomes dead and all base runners are awarded one base.

Rainouts

- If a game in progress is rained out, it will be declared an official game if ½ of the game time has elapsed (4-5 Yr Olds - 30 minutes & 6-9 Yr Olds - 35 minutes).
- Games canceled prior to the completion of ½ of the game time will be rescheduled for the week following the week of the last games. A maximum of 1 make-up game will be allowed.

YOUTH SPORTS PLEDGE:

At the start of each game, all players, coaches, and referees will meet at the center circle to recite the Youth Sports Pledge and address any rule clarifications.

YOUTH SPORTS PLEDGE

**I PLEDGE TO PLAY THE GAME,
THE BEST THAT I CAN,
TO BE A TEAM PLAYER,
TO RESPECT MY OPPONENTS,
THE RULES AND OFFICIALS,
AND IMPROVE MYSELF IN MIND,
BODY, AND SPIRIT.**

YMCA of Austin Youth Baseball Guidelines

Age Group	Game Length	Players on Field	Special Rules
4-5 (T-ball)	3 innings minimum (40 min. of scheduled hour) (20 min. practice before game)	Min of 7 players Max of 11 players (6 players bat each inning)	Continuous batting order; No bat throwing (automatic out after 1st warning); Outs not recorded; No lead offs or steals; Pitcher stays within pitcher's circle until ball is hit; Player cannot play both pitcher and 1st base in the same game
6-7 & 8-9 (Coach Pitch)	3 innings or 60 min. (Team organizes weekly 1 hour practice)	Min of 7 players Max of 11 players	5 runs or 3 outs per inning (whichever comes first); Batting helmets must be worn; No bat throwing (automatic out after warning); Lead offs, steals, and bunting (must pass bunt line) are allowed; Pitcher stays within pitching circle until ball hit; Catcher's equipment must be worn; Player not granted automatic home plate on overthrow; Player cannot play both pitcher and 1st base in the same game; Adult pitcher must be parent or coach from the team; If adult pitcher interferes with play, it becomes dead ball & base runners given one base