***2022 Churchville Baseball 7-8 League Rules***

First and foremost, the 7-8 Age Group of Churchville Baseball is an instructional league. Coaches, players and spectators should remember that at all times it is the goal of Churchville Baseball to help our young participants grow in their abilities throughout the program. The following rules have been assembled to foster this growth. Some of these rules may seem strange but should be considered in concert with the philosophy of Churchville Baseball. The rules promote the development of certain essential skills necessary for our players at this age level while striving to maintain a fair and competitive environment.

***FIELD DIMENSIONS***

The infield shall be a square whose corners are bases denoted (in a counterclockwise direction): home, 1st base, 2nd base and 3rd base. The distances between bases shall be 60 feet. First, second and third bases are marked by white canvas or white rubber bags. The bags for first and third base are positioned such that the bags are contained entirely within the square. The bag for second base is positioned such that the center of the bag is directly over the intersection for second base. Home is marked by a 17 inch square, flat rubber plate with two adjacent corners trimmed. The home plate shall be positioned such that it lies entirely with the square with the trimmed edges positioned to touch the edges of the square. In the center of the infield positioned on a line between home base and second base is the pitcher’s plate. The pitcher’s plate is positioned such that the distance from the front edge of the plate to the home base is 40 feet.

***HOME TEAM***

The home team must supply a new ball for each game (RIF5). Churchville Baseball Field crews will set fields for games at the main complex. At off-site locations it is the Home Teams responsibility to make sure the field is ready and playable.

***VISITING TEAM***

The visiting team must supply a game ball (RIF5). They must assist the home team in field set-up at dressing if need be.

Both Teams shall make sure all trash is deposited in the appropriate receptacles.

**PITCHING**

The official position of the board of Churchville Baseball is that the 7-8 League is A Machine Pitch/Coach Pitch League until the designated date below at which time we transition to Kid pitch. While we would like for you to make every effort to use the machine provided we will allow the Coaches to decide prior to each game what they would like to do for the game. Should one coach prefer the machine, you must both use the machine. If you choose not to use the machine, then you will coach pitch from a knee or bucket. In either case, the Batting Teams Coach or Designate will operate the machine or pitch.

During games in which a machine/coach is used to pitch to the batter, if after five pitches that are considered strikes, the batter does not hit a ball into fair territory, the batter will be returned to the bench with a strike-out recorded as an out. The exception to this rule is that the final pitch delivered to a batter cannot result in a foul ball. Thus, if the fifth pitch (and any subsequent pitches) results in a foul ball, the batter resumes his position in the batter’s box and another pitch is delivered.

For the 2022 baseball season, the 7-8 age group will initiate player pitch starting on May 7th. Use of players as pitcher must be done by mutual agreement between opposing managers. BOTH teams are not required to player pitch (it is preferred by the league, however not required). Any player selected for pitching must be able to throw from the full 40 foot distance between the pitcher’s and home plates. Unlike during games using a machine/coach to pitch, balls and strikes will be kept to establish a full at bat when players pitch. If a pitcher throws “Four balls,” the coach will take over pitching to complete the at bat until such time as the batter either strikes out or hits a fair ball. Three strikes end an at bat, and will result in a recorded out. Responsibilities for calling balls and strikes will reside with the coach for the batting team or his designate. For games with player pitch, a pitcher may pitch for no more than two consecutive innings. Once removed as pitcher, a player may NOT return to pitch later in the same game. If a pitcher hits two batters in the same inning or 3 overall, that player must be removed from pitching for the duration of the game. During player pitch games, if a team exhausts its supply of possible pitchers, or makes a decision not to continue with player pitch, the machine/coach should be used in the players place. If the coach opts to go back to the machine/coach, machine/coach pitch rules will apply. Players pitching are prohibited from wearing long sleeve white shirts or batting gloves while pitching.

**BATTING**

The goal of the 7-8 age group is to encourage players to swing. To this end, during machine/coach pitch games, outs will only be recorded when resulting from plays on batted balls or after 5 pitches over the plate and the batter does not put the ball in play. Strikeouts will be recorded. During machine/coach pitch games it is expected that the pitches will be generally in the strike zone for all batters and thus no bases on balls will be recorded. During player pitch games, a batter’s time at bat is determined by the counting of balls and strikes. After three strikes the batter’s time at bat ends and an out is recorded. After “four balls” the coach will take over pitching until such time as the batter strikes out or hits a fair ball. All players will bat in the lineup. During their time at bat, teams will bat once through their lineup, until 5 runs are scored, or until 3 outs are record, whichever comes first. If a batted ball hits the coach or machine, it is considered a dead ball. The batter will be placed on first base. All runners on base are returned to the base occupied at the time of the pitch unless forced to advance from the award to the batter. Coaches should warn opposing fielders and coaches when strong hitters are up for their time at bat.

**DEFENSIVE TEAM**

Coaches are directed to take care when positioning fielders. Fielders may not stand on the base and should be taught how to cover a base when a play is being made or to clear a base when no play is being made. While standard infield positions should be used, a possible 5th infielder can be used to play behind second base and field a hit ball or cover second base in attempt to record a force out. Infielders must stand in the approximate location of a position and try to make a play on the ball. NO MORE THAN 5 INFIELDERS CAN BE USED. For outfield positions, the outfield should be filled before utilizing a catcher. Any extra players should be positioned in the outfield with outfields evenly distributed. No player should be left on the bench unless injured or being worked with for subsequent use as a pitcher. Outfielders must be positioned to begin each play in a clearly defined outfield position, not used as a 6th infielder. There should be an obvious break between the outfield and infield. Infielders should be positioned so they are not in the baseline and should be taught not to stand near a base EXCEPT when a play at that base is going to be made. The pitcher must stand on the mound, next to or behind the coach pitching/feeding the machine.

**PLAYING RULES**

No sliding in 1st base is allowed. No head first sliding is allowed. Only one player is allowed in the on deck circle at a time. The on deck batter must be monitored at all times by a coach/parent. There is no infield fly rule. Defensive coaches are allowed on the field to assist in teaching players the game. When possible, however, defense coaches should be limited to two at any one time. Coaches are encouraged to have fielders throw the ball to bases to make a play instead of running with the ball across the field. On errant/over throws which leave the field of play, no extra bases shall be awarded.

7-8 age level games and practices should be targeted for 60-90 minutes in length. No new innings after 7:50pm on school nights or after 1:45 hours has elapsed from the start of the game.

**STEALING**

No stealing is allowed.

**BUNTING**

No bunting is allowed.

**ADVANCEMENT**

Runners may advance until the ball is controlled by a player in the infield or thrown out of the playing field.

**ENDING A PLAY (DEAD BALL RULE)**

A play ends either when the ball is controlled by a player in the infield or the ball is thrown out of the playing field. Once any and all offensive players complete their movement to/from the base to which they may be advancing, the ball is considered dead.

**PLAYER DEVELOPMENT**

Managers are required to rotate their players between various defensive positions, such that all players will get a chance to play in both the infield and outfield. Coaches should strive to have any one player play no more than 1 inning in one position per game.

**PLAYER SUBSTITUTION**

Players may be substituted at any time during the game. Players arriving after the start of the game will be inserted to the bottom of the batting lineup and may immediately be positioned in the field.

**ALL-STAR GAME**

Date and Time TBD

At the end of the season coaches should choose 3-4 players to participate in an All-star game.

**NOTE:**

The Churchville Baseball 7-8 age level is associated with Babe Ruth Baseball, Cal Ripken Jr. Division. Any rules not specifically covered here will revert to the Babe Ruth Rule Set. Should the Rule not be covered in either set, revert to current MLB Rules.