

## **AA Game Rules–2024 Edition**

### **1.0 Umpires**

Most umpires for AA are youth umpires. Many of them are serving as umpires for the first time (or second year). There is no tolerance for coaches or parents who argue with the umpires. Any violation of this rule will result in sanction by the league.

#### **Meetings with Umpires**

Both head coaches must confer with the umpire(s) before the game. Review ground rules for the field as well as rules specific to AA baseball (e.g., five run cap for machine pitch innings). It is also recommended that coaches plan to check back in with umpires after 2-3 innings to review the flow of the game as well as the strike zone as called. These meetings must include a coach from each team.

#### **Strike Zone**

The strike zone is from the letters to the knees and one ball width wider than the plate. The strike zone should be big. Walks are bad. We want to teach our players to be aggressive hitters, not passive batters.

#### **Questions about Calls**

If a coach has a question about a call, they are permitted to ask what rule was utilized in making the call to ensure that the right rule was followed. There may not be any arguing about strikes and balls. Or any other judgment calls in the field, including out or safe on the bases.

#### **Feedback**

The League welcomes feedback about the umpires after the game. No feedback should be given directly to the umpires.

### **2.0 Game Balls**

Game balls should be available in the bins at Amory and Pierce. Team should also have new balls available for each game. Be sure to use RIF10 baseballs. Balls that say “Minor League” on them and that are bouncy are not permitted in AA games. (Those are RIF5 balls.)

A set of 3-4 new game balls should be used for kid pitch innings. Coaches are permitted to bring a bucket of balls with them to the mound for machine pitch innings. All baseballs used in the bucket must be in good condition and must be RIF10 baseballs.

All needs for game balls should be taken up with the League Commissioners in advance.

### 3.0 Pitching

Pitching in every AA game is a combination of kid pitch and machine pitch innings. The combination varies during the season, culminating with 3 innings of each.

#### Kid Pitch

Every regular season game will have at least one inning of kid-pitch baseball. It is expected that players will pitch no more than one inning per game and no more than two innings per week. Coaches are required to keep pitch counts and report the pitches to the league after every game. ***The winning team must report pitch counts for all pitchers and the final score.***

Players are permitted to pitch from closer than the rubber if necessary. Coaches must use their discretion as to what is reasonable. Opposing coaches may ask for a pitcher to move back if it appears that the pitcher has sufficient arm strength and control to fulfill their obligations from a longer distance. The maximum distance ahead of the rubber that a pitcher may stand is 3 feet.

If a pitcher hits three batters in an inning they must be replaced. They are not required to be replaced due to walks. It is highly likely that some pitchers will walk several batters. It is encouraged, but not required, that each player have the chance to pitch at least once during the season (even if only to a couple of batters).

If a pitcher throws more than 30 pitches in an inning, they cannot pitch again on the next calendar day if a team has back-to-back games on back-to-back calendar days. No pitcher may throw more than 40 pitches in a game.

Week starting April 27: one inning of kid pitch

Week starting May 4: two innings of kid pitch

Week starting May 11 (and all games thereafter): three innings of kid pitch

#### Machine Pitch

The pitching machine should be set up by both head coaches at the top of the inning when machine pitching begins. The machine should be close to the rubber of the pitching mound. Typically, the head coach is standing near the rubber (but in front of it), when delivering a pitch.

The batting team's coach uses the machine to pitch to the player. If a player gets to a four-ball count, the entire count resets. So if it was 3-2, and the pitch is a ball, the batter's count resets to 0-0. No walks are issued. No bases are awarded for hit by pitch, either.

Please spend time in practice trying to finesse and learn the machines. Adjustments will be needed during the game. No coach-pitched innings are permitted.

If a batted ball hits the machine, the bucket, or the coach, the batter is awarded first base and all players advance only one base from where the play began. Coaches must make efforts to get out of the way of throws across the diamond and enable the pitcher's helper to make plays.

#### **4.0 Utilization of Players**

AA is a developmental league. Players of all different skill levels are in the league. It is important that all players are given quality opportunities. That is more important than team success in a game.

##### *Assignment of Positions*

It is expected that every player will play at least two innings in the infield each game. It is preferred that everyone play at least 3 innings in the infield each game. As a result, players are also expected to play at least one inning in the outfield. All players should be given the opportunity to pitch and catch if they express interest in those positions.

##### *Time on Bench*

No one may sit on the bench more than one inning until all other players have sat at least one inning. With rosters of 11-12, no one should ever sit more than two innings. And no player may sit two or more innings in consecutive games.

First base is a position where a priority should be in having someone who can catch well on the base.

#### **5.0 Batting Lineups**

You will use a continuous batting order. Everyone hits, regardless of whether they played in the field that last inning. You might have anywhere from 8 to 12 players in your lineup. In some games, players will get many at bats. In other games, they might only get 2.

#### **6.0 Number of Players**

You may play as many as 10 players in the field at a time (four outfielders). Teams are required to have at least 7 players at the field for the length of the game to play a game. If, for example, 8 players participate but one arrives late and another leaves early, the team has complied with the rule.

##### *Call-ups*

AA teams are permitted to request help from Single A rosters in coordination with the coaches and commissioners of Single A.

##### *Borrowing Players*

Opposing teams may lend up to two outfielders per inning. Borrowed players are expected to try hard and make plays in the field. If anyone intentionally misses a play in the field to benefit their actual team, the batter will be ruled out.

## **7.0 Time of Game**

Games should be played in two hours or less. The top of an inning may not start more than 1 hour and 45 minutes after the scheduled start of the game. If, for example, you reach the end of the fourth inning at 7:20 p.m. (following a 5:30 p.m. start time), the game must end there. You cannot start a new inning in that situation.

You must complete every inning that you start, unless the home team is winning after the top half of the final inning has been completed. You can, but are not required, to play the bottom half of the sixth inning if the home team is winning. That is in the coaches' discretion and time-permitting.

## **8.0 Mercy Rules**

There is no mercy rule for the game overall.

Teams may not score more than 3 runs per inning in a kid pitch inning. Teams may not score more than 5 runs per inning in a machine pitch inning. It is possible for one team to get ahead by so many runs that it is mathematically impossible for the other team to come back. You must still complete the game (or at least 1 hour and 46 minutes of baseball).

## **9.0 Positioning of Players on Defense**

Teams may have up to four outfielders. Outfielders must play at least 30 feet beyond the infielders. No short outfielders posing as extra infielders are permitted.

A pitcher's helper may be positioned on either side of the pitching machine, but must begin the play generally in line with the front of the machine. They are allowed to be a bit in front to avoid bumping into the machine when making a play.

## **10.0 Baserunning**

Learning how to run the bases is an important component of AA baseball. There are some particular rules.

### Overthrows

Overthrows beyond first base that go out of play enable every runner to advance one base, including scoring from third base. Overthrows that go into the field of play (e.g., the outfield) remain live and players may advance as many bases as they choose at their own risk until the play is over.

On plays made at third base, players are not permitted to advance home on an overthrow unless they have already passed third base and are heading home when the throw goes out of

play or beyond the fielder. “Advancing home” means several steps toward home plate, not one or two steps past third base.

The ball does not need to go out of play for this rule to be invoked. If the ball goes out of play, this rule still applies as well. Why? We want to encourage fielders to try to make plays. Otherwise, you will likely tell your players not to throw toward third base out of concern that an overthrow means a run.

If the ball stays with the vicinity of the third baseman (approximately 5-10 feet away), the ball remains live and runners can advance at their peril.

### End of Plays

When runners are on base, plays are concluded when the fielding team attempts to get the ball to the pitcher or pitcher’s helper. *The ball must be in the vicinity of the pitcher’s mound, but the pitcher does not need to successfully catch the ball.*

If a throw goes toward, and then past, the pitcher, the play is dead.

The pitcher must be close to the mound in order to receive the ball or must bring the ball to the mound for the play to be over. In other words, if the pitcher goes to second base to get a throw from the outfield, the play is not over until they bring the ball to the mound.

### Taking an Extra Base

Runners on base are permitted to take an extra base even when the ball is in the infield. However, they may only advance if they have gone at least one-third of the way to the next base by the time that the ball is at or near the pitcher (or pitcher’s helper).

For example, with a runner on second base at the start of a play, the batter grounds out to second base (throwing to first base). The runner stops at third and then begins to advance home as the first baseman throws back to the pitcher. There, the runner must return to third base.

If, however, in the same play, the first baseman holds the ball and the runner has made it halfway to home by the time the throw to the pitcher is made, the run can count.

***Coaches please use your discretion. At the beginning of the season, you should err on the side of sending runners back. And, please please please, monitor your third base coaches. They should not be overly aggressive. This is a developmental league.***

### Avoiding Collisions

Runners are required to avoid collisions with fielders. This can include sliding or moving slightly away from the fielder to avoid contact. Sliding is not required, but is suggested in AA baseball. Base runners must make some attempt to avoid contact.

*Updated as of April 25, 2025*

If a throw moves a position player into contact with the runner, the runner is not ruled out for NOT avoiding the collision. But runners are out if they make contact without attempting to avoid it.

*Stealing or Leading*

There is no stealing of bases or leading off of bases in AA baseball. Players must wait until the ball crosses home plate or is hit by a batter in order to leave the base they are on.