



Creeks Athletic Association

Field of Dreams (FOD) Playing Rules and Regulations

Effective March 16, 2011

The Field of Dreams (FOD) Playing Rules and Regulations were approved by the FOD Board of Directors and made effective on March 16, 2011. Any modifications to these Playing Rules and Regulations will be communicated in writing to all league coaches.

If you have any questions or comments concerning these Playing Rules and Regulations, please discuss them with your respective team head coach or feel free to contact any FOD Board Member.

Please remember to visit the FOD website for up-to-date communications. This website is located at www.fodbaseball.com.

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Playing Rules and Regulations: Any playing rule or regulation that is not explicitly defined and explained in these rules and regulations, will default to those currently in use by CAA Youth League Baseball.

Game: An official game consists of six (6) innings or one (1) hour and thirty (30) minutes of play, whichever comes first. If the time limit is reached, the entire inning must complete.

Umpire or Designated League Official: At any league game, an umpire or a designated league official (DLO) must be present throughout the entire game. No game can be played or continue without an umpire or DLO present. The umpire or DLO must have no affiliation with either team playing.

Game Start Time: Prior to the start of a game, the umpire or DLO, will announce the official game start time to both team head coaches. It is the responsibility of the umpire or DLO to notify both head coaches when there is 10 minutes left to play. Once time has expired, the umpire or DLO will announce that there is no time remaining. However, any inning in progress must complete.

Game End Time: No new inning can start if the time limit has been reached.

Inning: There is no total number of outs per inning. An inning will end when the team at bat has batted at least ten (10) players. Once the 10th batter has batted, then the half-inning is over (see 10th Batter Rule for further clarification).

10th Batter Rule: The team at bat must announce to the umpire or DLO that the current batter is the 10th batter in this half-inning. The umpire or DLO must then notify the defensive team of the 10th batter. The inning will not end until the defensive team touches any base or base runner with the ball.

Outs: When an out is recorded on the batter or base runner, then that batter or base runner must return to their respective bench area.

Runs: There is no official score kept for league games. However, participating teams are encouraged to keep track of runs scored and defensive outs made. This would help coaches' measure improvements that are being made by their teams throughout the season.

Minimum Play Rule (Offense): All players that are present and eligible to participate will be placed in the batting order and bat in turn. Please see Violation of Minimum Play Rule for additional information.

Minimum Play Rule (Defense): All players that are present and eligible to participate will play at least one defensive position, as determined by the head coach, for a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the total defensive innings played. In the event that a player has not played in fifty percent (50%) of the defensive innings played or if there are an odd number of innings played, then that player must be a designated defensive starter at the team's next game.

Violation of Minimum Play Rule: Failure on the part of a head coach to adhere to the Minimum Play Rule is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including suspension from all coaching privileges as determined by the FOD Board of Directors. However, if a player is removed from the batting order due to injury, illness, ejection, a disciplinary decision or any valid personal reason as determined by the head coach, the head coach is responsible to notify the umpire or DLO. This notification needs to occur when either the players batting order position is reached or between innings, whichever comes first.

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Defensive Team:

- A maximum of ten (10) defensive players are allowed on the field at any one time during live ball play. This includes all traditional infield positions, pitcher, catcher and four (4) outfielders.
- Except for the catcher and when the batter enters the batter's box, all defensive players must be positioned in fair territory. Once the ball is put in play by the batter, defensive players are permitted to move from their positions to field a ball in play.
- When the batter enters the batter's box, all outfielders must be positioned at least fifteen (15) feet behind the baselines. This position must be maintained until the ball is put in play by the batter.
- When the batter enters the batter's box, all infielders, except for the pitcher, can be positioned no closer to home plate than six feet from their respective base lines. This position must be maintained until the ball is put in play by the batter.
- When the batter enters the batter's box, the pitcher must be positioned on or directly in front of the pitching plate or line as determined by the umpire or DLO prior to the start of each game. This position must be maintained until the ball is put in play by the batter.
- When the batter enters the batter's box, the catcher must be positioned in foul territory behind and on the opposite side of the batter. This position must be maintained until the ball is put in play by the batter.
- Free defensive substitutions are allowed at any time provided the head coach asks for and receives a defensive substitution time-out from the umpire or DLO.

Offensive Team:

- There is no maximum number of offensive players on a team.
- Any player that is on the team roster, is present at the field and is eligible to participate must be in the batting order that is given to the umpire or DLO prior to the start of the game.
- If a player shows up after the game has started and that player is eligible to participate, then that player is added to the bottom of the batting order.
- Each team is required to maintain their batting order throughout the game unless a player is removed from the line-up due to injury, ejection, illness or as requested by the umpire or DLO.
- If a player is unable to bat when it is their turn, then that player is bypassed in the lineup. It is the responsibility of the head coach to notify the umpire or DLO that a particular player will not be batting. There is no penalty imposed on the offensive team. The batter once removed or bypassed, can reenter into their original position in the batting order at any time.

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Hitting (Head coach Preference):

- Each batter has the option, based upon head coach preference, of hitting the ball off a tee or having a head coach or buddy pitch.
- If the head coach determines that a batter is to hit off a tee, the following applies:
 - The head coach or buddy will put the batting tee on home plate, place the ball on the tee and then instruct the batter to bat the ball.
 - The batter will be given three attempts to put the ball in play.
 - If the batter fails to hit the ball after three attempts, the umpire or DLO will award first base to the batter.
- If the head coach determines that a batter is to hit off a pitch, the following applies:
 - The pitcher, as determined by the head coach, will position themselves half-way between home plate and the pitching plate or line.
 - The pitcher can use either an overhand or underhand motion to deliver a pitch.
 - The batter will be given six attempts to put the ball in play with each attempt being a hittable pitch as determined by the umpire or DLO.
 - If the batter fails to hit the ball after six attempts, the umpire or DLO will award first base to the batter.
 - When the batter puts the ball in play, the pitcher must exit fair territory in such a manner that they do not interfere with the fielders making a play on a batted ball.
 - If a batted ball hits the pitcher, the play is dead and the batter is awarded first base. Any base runner forced to move to the next base must do so.
- The Buddy or any coach can physically assist and guide the batter in the batters attempt to hit the ball. This applies to either a pitched ball or a ball that is to be hit off the tee.
- Intentional bunting is not permitted.

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Equipment:

- Baseball: A Reduced Injury Factor (RIF) Level 5 baseball will be used. RIF baseballs are rated from Level 1 to Level 10 with Level 1 being a softer ball and Level 10 being near “regulation”. A RIF baseball Level 5 is soft enough to help the fear factor and increase player safety.
- Helmet: Any offensive player in the on-deck circle, coaching the bases, batting or running the bases must wear a helmet with ear flaps. The helmet must fit snugly and completely cover the player ears. It is optional for any defensive player, except for the catcher, to wear a helmet. The helmet must meet all NOCSAE performance and safety standards and have the official NOCSAE seal clearly visible (see below):



- Player, Coach or Buddy Foot-wear: Metal cleats are not permitted for any player, coach or buddy. Any type of athletic footwear, sneakers, baseball/soccer type shoes with rubber soles or medically necessary footwear prescribed by a doctor are permitted. There are no other restrictions.
- Catcher Position: A defensive catcher is permitted and must wear the following equipment:
 - A catchers helmet with a faceguard must be worn; the helmet and faceguard must meet NOCSAE performance and safety standards (see Helmet Rule above), fit snugly and completely covers the players ears.
 - A dangling throat protector must be worn for any type of catchers helmet including the hockey style helmet.
 - The catcher must wear knee and shin guards that meet NOCSAE performance and safety standards. Where applicable, the knee and shin guard must completely cover the catchers knee cap and front part of the ankles.
 - A catchers chest protector with drop down flap that is designed to protect the groin area must be worn. The chest protector must meet NOCSAE performance and safety standards.
 - For male catchers and where applicable, an athletic supporter and cup are required.
 - A catchers' mitt is recommended but is not required.
- Player Gloves: there are no restrictions as to the type or color of gloves that defensive players can use. However, buddies are required to wear and use a glove in their role.
- Bats:
 - The diameter of the bat barrel cannot exceed 2 ¼ inch.
 - The length of the bat cannot exceed 33 inches.
 - Metal composite bats not exceeding a Bat Performance Factor (BPF) of 1.5, wooden bats, plastic or foam style bats are permitted but cannot exceed barrel and length restrictions.

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Game Protocols:

- Prior to the start of every game, the field must be inspected to its fitness for league play by the assigned umpire or the DLO. If any part of the designated field can cause a hazard to the players, participants or fans, then the hazard must be either removed or repaired prior to play.
- Prior to the start of every game, the umpire or DLO will inspect all playing equipment to determine its fitness for use during the game. Any equipment that is determined to be unfit for use must be removed from the field and team bench areas prior to play.
- Ten (10) minutes before the start of any game, the field must be vacated and all players, coaches and buddies must return to their respective team bench areas. The umpire will call both team managers to home plate where an exchange of line-ups will occur, ground rules and game logistics will be discussed.
- Once the plate meeting is over, the umpire will then notify both team managers and their teams as to the official game start time.
- At the end of each game, both teams are to line up and cross the field to congratulate each other. During this congratulatory walk, each participant needs to show respect and good sportsmanship.

Postponed, Suspended or Cancelled Games:

- The assigned umpire or DLO has the final authority to postpone, suspend or cancel a game at any time. In the event of inclement weather, this decision will be based on player and spectator safety.
- If a game is suspended or postponed and the game cannot continue due to inclement weather, the DLO will be responsible for re-scheduling.
- A cancelled game will not be re-scheduled.

Game Protests:

Any game protest must be brought to the immediate attention of the umpire. The only grounds for a protest are violations of these rules and regulations. The assigned umpire can include other DLO's prior to making a final decision. No game will continue until the protest is resolved. The decision of the umpire is final.

Sportsmanship:

Any and all game participants, league officials and spectators are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible and respectful manner. Any behavior not viewed as being in the spirit of the game or is a violation of basic sportsmanship practices will be grounds for removal from the game, field or park as determined by the umpire or DLO. Any ejection of a game participant or spectator will require the individual to follow the Creeks Athletic Association policies for suspension/ejection and reinstatement where applicable.

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Roles and Responsibilities

Umpire or Designated League Official (DLO):

- The umpire or DLO has the ultimate role to facilitate the game and apply any rule or regulation that governs play. Player, spectator and participant safety is the primary priority aside from encouraging a fun learning experience for all. Once a game starts all decisions made by the umpire are final.
- Prior to the start of any game, the umpire or DLO will review game protocols and responsibilities with every Buddy that will be participating (see Buddies Roles and Responsibilities).

Buddies:

- Buddies are volunteers from local High School teams and are invited to participate by a DLO.
- All Buddies must be at the field 30 minutes prior to game time, attend a brief orientation session hosted by the umpire or DLO and must be in their designated team uniform.
- The main objective of the Buddy is to be a friend to their assigned league player; engage them in conversation; talk; laugh and help the player have a rewarding and fun experience.
- During a game and depending on the ability of the player, the Buddy is responsible for the following:
 - Don't be afraid to ask your player what type of assistance they may or may not need.
 - Assist the player in running the bases, hitting, catching or throwing a ball.
 - If your player uses a wheelchair, you can help push the wheelchair around the bases.
 - Do not catch a ball that is hit by a player and do not throw a ball; simply assist your player in making plays.
 - Help keep the players attention on the game.
 - Help make sure that no one gets hit by a ball and that player actions are safe.
 - If a ball is coming hard to your player and you feel that it may hit him or her, simply try to knock it down – remember, safety first.
 - If you have any concerns about your player or if your player is not responding to your help, ask for time and talk to the umpire or DLO assigned to the game.
- Players in this league will remember the game but their experiences and interactions with their Buddies will last a lifetime – help make this a rewarding experience for them and for yourself.
- Have fun!

Coaches:

- The role of the head coach and all assistant coaches are to be instructors and teachers of the game. Players and spectators will model the behaviors displayed on and off the field that originates from these individuals. In essence, you are role models and facilitators of a rewarding experience for all.
- The Head Coach and all assistant coaches are ultimately responsible for the behavior of their players and spectators.
- Any verbal or physical display of unsportsmanlike behavior on the part of any person affiliated with a team; any intentional violation of these playing rules and regulations or any action that is deemed inappropriate by the umpire or DLO, is grounds for immediate ejection of that individual by the umpire or DLO. When an ejection occurs, all disciplinary actions and procedures as defined by the Creeks Athletic Association (CAA) and by St. Johns County Parks and Recreation will apply.