

# Oak Park Youth Baseball and Softball (OPYBS)



**TBall  
Manager's Handbook and  
League Rules & Regulations**

**\*\*\* The 2016 T-Ball Rules Committee has established the following rules and regulations. These rules are binding for the 2016 Regular Season and Playoffs. \*\*\***

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **Player Eligibility:**

A player's eligibility is determined by the boy's age as of 8/31/16. If he has turned 6 before or on this date and HAS NOT turned 8 before 4/30/16 he is eligible for T- ball.

#### **Coaches Background Checks:**

Each coach and assistant coach must have a background check on file in the OPYBS office. Please fill one out and take several for any of the assistants.

#### **Sportsmanship Requirements**

- 1) OPYBS means good sportsmanship. At registration each player and parent sign a contract detailing what is expected of each.
- 2) Any aggressive physical behavior (by a player or coach) towards any umpire, player, fan, or coach will be met with an immediate suspension from the team. The person may or may not be allowed to return after an investigation of the event and subsequent hearing before the board. Until that hearing, the person will not be allowed to HAVE ANY CONTACT with the team at any practice or game. The Board's decision will determine participation after the hearing.
- 3) Verbal abuse by any fan, player, coach, or umpire will not be tolerated and may result in a suspension upon completion of an investigation.
- 4) The head coach is responsible for the behavior of his players, coaches, and fans during the game. Unruly fans should be asked to calm down by the head coach of the team if the umpire requests. If such behavior persists after a warning, then the proper authorities should be contacted immediately.
- 5) It is a felony in the State of Illinois to threaten or accost an Umpire in a youth sports game. OPYBS will prosecute to the fullest extent of the law.
- 6) It's just t-ball. We all know it gets competitive, but remember it is 6, 7, and 8 year-olds. If a situation seems to be on the verge of getting bad, err on the side of caution and suspend the game. JUST WALK AWAY!

## **Field Maintenance:**

### 1) Routine Weekly Maintenance:

Before and after weeknight games or practices, team coaches and volunteers should inspect and provide appropriate maintenance to the fields and dugouts

- a) Spread field dry if necessary for wet spots
- b) Rake out ruts or holes created from playing.
- c) Please report to the LPs any portable toilet problems or excessive uncleanness.
- d) Report all problems or suggestions to the LPs each week. If bushes need to be trimmed, field dragged by machine, dirt patches repaired, etc., please let the LPs know so that they can contact the Park District for assistance.
- e) **Field boxes should be checked for field chalk, field dry, a chalk machine, bases, a tape measure, a rake, and functioning exterior lock. If any of this material is low or missing please contact the LPs right away.**

### 2) Winners Drag The Field:

We will continue the routine of the winning team dragging the fields after each game on weeknights and the last game of Saturdays. Consideration should be done to drag the field between Saturday games if necessary. This helps keep the fields in good condition for play. The field draggers will be kept in the Hatch equipment box.

### 3) Zero Waste Program:

OPYBS and the Park District is requesting a zero-waste program for each league. Teams are asked to provide bring home any trash and recyclables created by their team during practices and games.

## **Equipment Pick-Up:**

Each team should have a representative pick up the equipment bag from the OPYBS Office at 941 Garfield at a date and time TBD. In order for a team to be eligible to receive equipment at pick-up day, the head coach must have a completed background check.

## **Uniforms Pick-Up:**

- 1) Each team should have a representative pick up the following from the OPYBS Office at 941 Garfield at a date and time TBD: team jerseys/caps/pants, scorebook, picture forms, Hole-In-The-Wall certificates, and White Sox Night order forms.
- 2) Team jerseys are numbered from 1 to 14 and the sizes start small (#'s 1, 2 ,3) and go up to larger sizes (being #'s 13, 14).
  - a. If you add names to the jerseys keep them to the kids first or last names. Names are completely up to each individual team. Do not allow kids to make up nicknames proclaiming greatness.
  - b. What's been recommended, and works, is to have the kids line up by height and hand out jerseys accordingly, smallest kids getting the smallest numbers, etc. Hats are one size.
  - c. There are three extra shirts and caps (adult size) for coaches.
  - d. Please make sure your team matches the uniforms you pick up.

### **Picture Day: 5/1**

The Board establishes Picture Day. The team meets at its designated time at Julian and enters the building together and gets their picture taken. The team cannot go in until all the kids are there. Make sure everyone is on time. It is relatively painless if everyone is punctual. Picture forms will be in with uniforms. Please do not wear cleats. Coaches get a complimentary picture taken with their kid.

### **Fundraiser - White Sox Night - 6/9**

The Chicago White Sox give us half the proceeds on whatever tickets we sell that night. This is OPYBS's largest fundraiser and the more we sell, the more money is raised for our programs. Teams meet at the South East Gate ("Elephant Gate") about two hours before the game. The kids get a chance to walk the perimeter of the playing field before the game (entering at the centerfield utility gate, walking the warning track, past the home and visiting team dugouts and back to the entry). Uniforms are not required, but kids can wear the game shirts and hats. Each coach and player will be given complimentary and must have a "field walking" pass in order to participate.

### **All-Star Game: 6/11**

In mid-May, the OPYBS and LPs will send out an email to the coaches for two (2) names to represent their team in the All-Star game and another separate individual from their team for the Sportsmanship Award. OPYBS has deemed that there will be only two (2) All-Star games to be played per league. As in past years, there will be an A game and a B game. Please consider age and performance on the field when selecting all-stars, as these games are played at a higher level of competition.

- 1) The four head coaches for the All-Star game will be the coaches with the 2 best regular season records in each division prior to the start of the playoffs
- 2) Sportsmanship Award: One player from each team will be recognized for his character as a teammate. Prior to the All-Star Game, the Sportsmanship Awards winners from each team will be announced. They will receive a plaque with player's name on it. The coach or team representative should be at the game to hand out the award.

### **Bathrooms**

All fields will have a port-a-potty available for all games. The key will be located in the equipment box. Home coaches are responsible to put equipment in the box after their games and to lock the port-a-potty.

## **TEAMS AND SCHEDULES**

### **Team Rosters**

Players are placed on teams per the following criteria:

- 1) Returning players shall be placed on the team they played on the year before unless specifically requested not to be placed on that team or there is extenuating circumstances (like the addition of another team)

- 2) Remaining players are placed as best as possible according to any requests by their families
- 3) The league presidents seek to balance each roster by age, so that there is a fair distribution of first year and second year players.
- 4) The league presidents' primary role is to create a fair and fun experience for **ALL** the teams playing. As a result, player requests cannot always be accommodated.

**Scheduling / Rescheduling / Postponement & Cancellation of Games:**

Game schedules will be posted on the OPYBS website using the QuickScores system ([www.quickscores.com/opybs](http://www.quickscores.com/opybs)). Parents should be referred to the website for most current schedule information. If possible, games will not be scheduled during another community event involving a majority of players from a particular team, such as the First Communion or bread-baking day at Ascension. Team coaches should coordinate with their team members to identify major conflicts with posted schedule so that revised dates can be promptly coordinated with other teams.

Decisions regarding cancelling games will rest with the umpire and coaches at game time based on weather and field conditions. No game shall be played or continue to be played if the on-field temperature falls below 45 degrees Fahrenheit.

If a game is cancelled or if the umpire postpones a game due to weather, the coaches are responsible for working out a date and then contacting the president with the agreed upon date and time. The league presidents will schedule the date, then confirm the date, location and time with both coaches and an umpire.

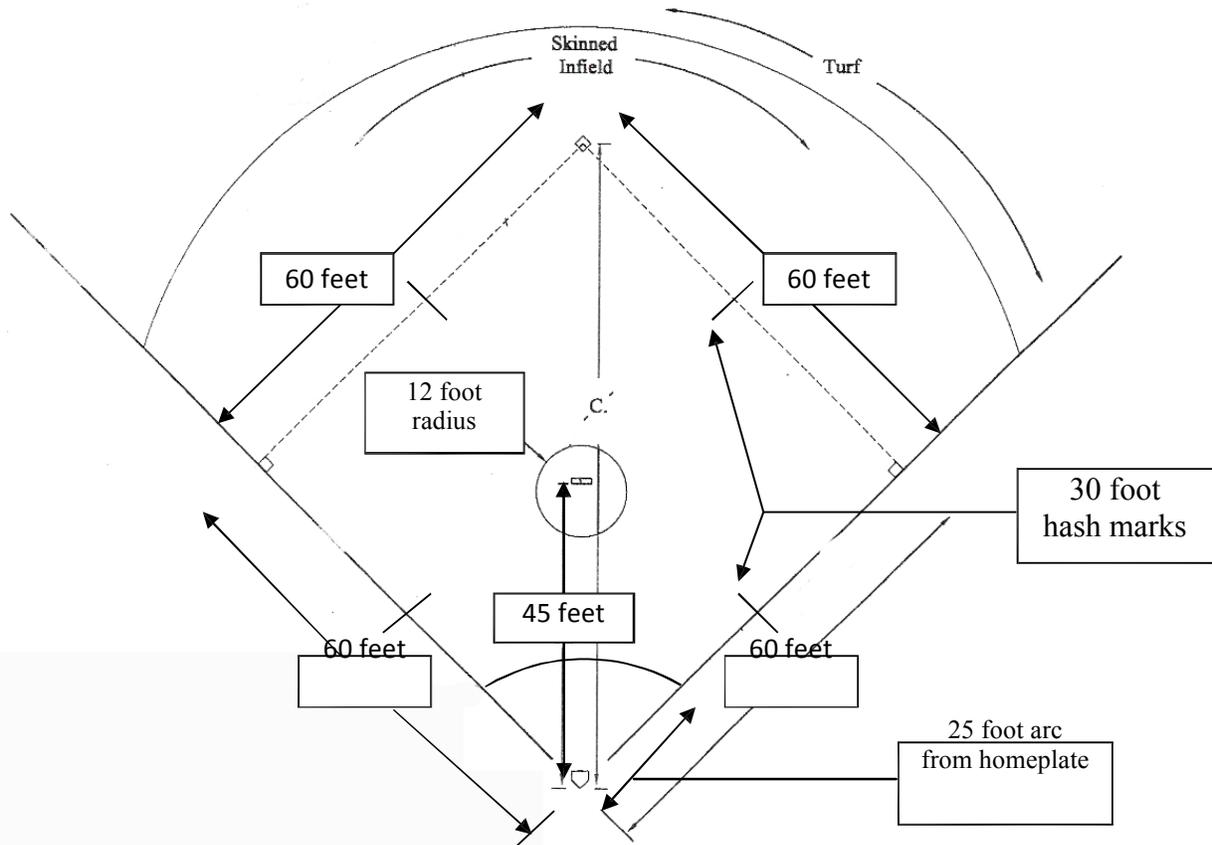
In the event of postponed games, the game will be resumed from the point where it was postponed unless the game is considered complete, meaning 4 innings have been played or 3 1/2 if the home team is winning.

## T-BALL RULES - PLAYING FIELD & CONDITIONS

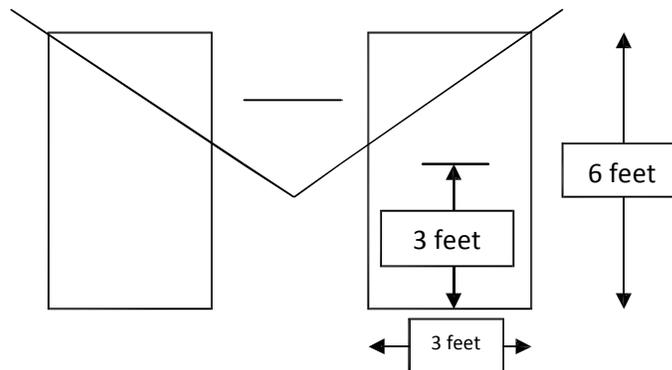
- 1) The distance from base to another base is 60 feet. Base dimensions lay out as is standard.
- 2) The pitcher's rubber will be located 45 feet from home plate.
- 3) A double safety base will be used at first base.
- 4) An arc with a radius of 25 feet from the tip of home plate will be marked. Any part of a batted ball that crosses this line will be considered "in play." If the ball crosses the line and retreats within the arc prior to being fielded, or while being fielded, the ball is "in play."
- 5) There will be hash marks halfway between all bases (besides home to first) perpendicular to the baseline. A player must be past this line when play is stopped to be given the next base. Otherwise, the player will return to the previous base.
- 6) The home team bats last and occupies the third base dugout. Dugout and batting order is not the home team's choice.
- 7) The only coaches allowed on the field are the first and third base coaches of the batting team and, if the defensive team chooses, a coach or coaches in foul territory along the left field and right field lines. All other coaches should remain in the dugout or its immediate vicinity.
- 8) **Lightning Guidelines:**
  - a. Safety is the number one priority. No lightning safety guidelines can guarantee absolute safety. All coaches, umpires and parents must be aware of weather conditions, and use common sense and good judgment. The umpire has absolute authority to call a game due to lightning.
  - b. The National Lightning Safety Institute's overall recommendation is: **"IF YOU CAN SEE IT, FLEE IT; IF YOU CAN HEAR IT, CLEAR IT!"**
  - c. If lightning is seen, all must wait in a safe area for 30 minutes after the last lightning flash or sound of thunder before resuming a game. Safe waiting areas include fully enclosed vehicles with windows rolled up. Umpires must seek shelter in a vehicle with a head coach or player's family if they do not have their own vehicle to wait in.
  - d. All must stay away from metal objects like fences, equipment boxes and bleachers. Avoid trees and open fields. If someone is struck by lightning, call 9-1-1 immediately.

- e. If the lightning has not passed after 30 minutes from the first lightning flash, the umpire will call the game, if it has not been called already by agreement between team coaches.
- f. At a later date, the game will be resumed from the point where it was postponed unless the game is considered complete (four innings have been played or three-and-a-half if the home team is winning.)

**Field Dimensions Diagram:**



**Batter's Box Layout:**



## T-BALL RULES - UNIFORMS & EQUIPMENT

### 1) Uniforms:

- a. All players are required to wear the league-issued shirt, pants, and hat during games.
- b. In case of inclement weather, a player can wear a jacket or sweatshirt over his shirt. If possible, the jacket or sweatshirt should be color-coordinated, so an offensive player can be identified on base.
- c. All players must wear athletic-type shoes. The umpire will determine if any other type of footwear is acceptable based on a concern for safety. Players are not permitted to wear shoes with metal spikes or cleats.

### 2) Equipment:

- a. Coaches and players must treat league equipment with care and respect. Players must not throw bats or helmets. An umpire may eject a player for throwing equipment.
- b. All defensive players must take a mitt into the field. Leather mitts are strongly encouraged.
- c. The catcher must wear a helmet at all times, while on defense.
- d. All players in the on-deck area must wear helmets.
- e. Batters and base runners must always begin an offensive play wearing a helmet.
- f. Bats must be Pony/T-Ball approved, no large barrel bats allowed ( $\leq 2 \frac{1}{4}$  diameter).
- g. The league and team will provide necessary helmets, bats, and balls. Players may bring their own bat but the umpire may withhold permission to use a privately owned bat if there is safety concern or if it does not comply with Pony regulations.
- h. The home team provides the game ball and the game tee. The visiting team provides the on-deck tee.

Parents are encouraged to bring water to all games, regardless of temperature, to keep players well hydrated. During sunny weather, parents are encouraged to use sunscreen on their players and bring tarps to shade the dugouts as needed.

## T-BALL RULES - GENERAL GAME

### 1) **Rule #1: Have fun!**

2) 2016 Pony Rules apply except where modified in this document.

- 3) During the regular season, each team should field a minimum of eight players for every inning.
- 4) Failure to field a minimum of eight players will result in automatic forfeit.
  - a. A team shall forfeit the game if they are not prepared to field a team of eight or more players by ten minutes past the scheduled time (9 players for playoff games).
  - b. Games can still be played but a score of 1-0 will be reported for the winning team.
  - c. If a team starts a game with nine players but one player sustains an injury and cannot continue, the team can continue to play . During playoffs, a team will not be allowed to continue to play with 8 players.
- 5) All players playing must be from assigned league rosters. Players from other teams may not be utilized as stand-ins for a game.
- 6) Regulation games are six (6) innings in length. If a game is tied at the end of six innings, we will play extra innings. During playoffs, extra innings will be played until a winner is determined.
- 7) A  $\frac{1}{2}$  inning is complete when five runs are scored or three defensive outs have been made. A new inning may not begin after 8:00 P.M. on weeknight games.
- 8) If the umpire postpones a game due to weather, field conditions or darkness, the game will be resumed from the point where it was postponed unless the game is considered complete (four innings have been played or three-and-a-half innings if the home team is winning.)
- 9) Batting orders are exchanged by coaches before the game starts.
- 10) All players must bat in a continuous batting order as listed in the exchange of batting order.
  - a. Any player who shows up after the game starts (or their spot in the order) will be placed at the end of the order and bat in that position for the remainder of the game.
  - b. Please notify the opposing coach of changes.
- 11) Each player must play a minimum of two (2) defensive positions each game but no more than four (4) innings per game at any one given position.
- 12) Each player must play a minimum of three (3) defensive innings each game.
  - a. The only exception is if the game is terminated due to mathematical elimination of one team.

- b. However, OPYBS encourages all coaches to attempt to play as many innings of T-Ball as possible to maximize player development, regardless of the score.
- 13) Failure to play three (3) defensive innings and a minimum of two different defensive positions may result in forfeit; the Rules and Competition Committee will review such circumstances upon appeal.
- 14) Once the first batter has swung the bat in each inning, no defensive substitutions may be made except for injury or illness.
- 15) Restroom substitutions are permitted but the restroom-breaking player must return to his position immediately upon returning from the restroom. Coaches are encouraged to remind players to "use it" before each game.
- 16) Each team's scorekeeper should compare and confirm the score with the opposing team's scorekeeper at the end of each  $\frac{1}{2}$  inning.
- 17) **Winning coach should enter the final score in at [www.quickscores.com/opybs](http://www.quickscores.com/opybs) according to the directions provided to them prior to the season.**

## **T-BALL RULES - "THE PLAY IS OVER" & THE PITCHER**

### **The Play Is Over When...**

- 1) The ball is under the control of the pitcher in the 12' diameter pitcher's circle and the pitcher is no longer attempting to make a play on a base runner.
- Advancing runners must return to the prior base if less than half way to the next base.
  - Inadvertently running through the circle with the ball to make a play will not stop the play.
  - If the initial play is the batted ball hit back to the pitcher, the pitcher can catch the ball and quickly throw to a base if he is within the circle.
  - If the batted ball is not hit back to the pitcher, is in play, and is thrown back to the pitcher (who is within the circle) in order to have "play over", the pitcher **CANNOT** quickly catch the ball and make a throw at a base unless he is **OUTSIDE** the circle to catch the ball.
- 2) The ball has been thrown out of play by the umpire who has called "DEAD BALL" and runners have advanced their maximum allowable number of bases.

- 3) The lead runner has been stopped on a base by the defending team and play is called dead by the umpire.
- 4) Three (3) outs have been made
- 5) Five (5) runs have been scored in a half inning.

### **The Pitcher:**

- 1) Once the ball is placed on the tee by the catcher, and the umpire announces, "Ball up," or similar; the pitcher should announce the start of a play by shouting "All set?" or similar, to the defensive players before the start of each "pitch."
- 2) The pitcher must then start the "pitch" with one foot on the pitcher's rubber and make an obvious pitching motion.
- 3) The pitcher may not leave the pitcher's circle (12' diameter) with any part of his body prior to the ball being struck.
- 4) Any unorthodox motion by the pitcher, in an attempt to confuse the batter, or the pitcher leaving the pitching rubber before the hit, is an illegal pitch and the umpire will call play dead.
  - (Exception - if a known "big hitter" is up, the pitcher may move to the back of the circle directly behind the rubber for safety)
- 5) If the ball is struck prior to "the pitch" the umpire will call "no pitch" and start the play over.

## **T-BALL Rules - Fielders & Overthrows**

### **The Fielders:**

- 1) Outfielders must begin the play with their feet in the outfield grass.
- 2) All infielders must not position themselves in the baseline.
  - a. **The shortstop and 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman are allowed to begin a play as close as one step behind the baseline connecting first and second bases or second and third bases. They may not break that plane until the ball is batted.**
  - b. The 3<sup>rd</sup> baseman and 1<sup>st</sup> baseman can play up to 3 feet in front of the base. They cannot be in the baseline if a runner is on base.

- 3) The catcher must wear a helmet at all times. The catcher will be instructed by the umpire to place the ball on the tee and move to the backstop facing the batter, at that time the umpire will call "ball up" or similar.

### **The Overthrow:**

- 1) Because T-Ball is an instructional league, the number of bases awarded to base runners due to an overthrow is limited. See "The Base Runner."
- 2) A ball is considered out of play when it goes into foul territory beyond the backstop extended or dugout fences.
- 3) An overthrow is defined as a thrown ball, which is not caught and controlled by the receiving defensive player. An overthrow is when the thrown ball passes beyond the imaginary, extended line of the front dugout fence beyond the first base line or third base fence line.

## **T-BALL RULES - THE BATTER**

### **The Batter:**

- 1) The batter must wear a helmet.
- 2) Only one player in the on-deck area at a time. Please have a coach monitor the on deck area.
- 3) After the 8<sup>th</sup> game, coaches should minimize player positioning in the batter's box.
  - a. Younger players or players with special needs may need help all season, but coaches should remember the point is to develop good baseball fundamentals.
  - b. Teach players to position themselves to hit as if a pitch is coming (so not standing behind the plate pointed to third base).
- 4) The batter may not shift his feet after the ball is on the tee and the umpire has called "ball up," or similar. A dead ball will be called. If the player shifts his feet after the "ball up" call, the team will be warned and on subsequent occurrences the batter will be called out.
- 5) A player must be in the batter's box when he hits the ball (so no drop stepping out of the batter's box). Batter's who step out of the box to hit the ball will be given one

warning and then will be called out if they subsequently step out of the box again in the same at bat.

- 6) The batter may not swing until the pitcher has made a pitching motion. Any ball hit after being placed on the tee and prior to the pitching motion will be called "dead ball".
- 7) The batter must make a full swing when hitting the ball. No chopping or half-swings.
- 8) As of each team's 8<sup>th</sup> game, the batter will have 5 swings to put the ball in play. If he does not, he will be called out on strikes.
- 9) If the batter makes contact with a fairly batted ball on his way to first base, he will be called "out."
- 10) The batter must not throw the bat.
  - a. If the bat is thrown, a team warning will be given and on subsequent occurrences in the game the batter will be called "out."
  - b. One team warning for each team only. Warning is not for individual players.
- 11) The batter must be either forced out at first base or tagged out by a defensive player.
  - a. If the batter rounds first base, he will be considered in play and eligible to be tagged out.
  - b. The batter must run through first base, stop at first base, or turn right after passing first base to be considered out of play.
  - c. The umpire will make the determination if a runner is making an attempt to run to second or simply does not know his left from his right.

## **T-BALL RULES - THE BASERUNNERS & OVERTHROWS**

- 1) The base runner must begin each play wearing a helmet.
- 2) The base runner cannot steal a base.
- 3) The runner must be in contact with the base when the ball is hit.
  - a. A lead-off is not permitted.
  - b. A team warning will be given and subsequent occurrences will result in the runner being called "out" if a lead-off is taken.
- 4) A base coach may NOT touch a player at any time during a play.

- a. If a coach touches a base runner, the runner will be called "out" due to coach's interference.
  - b. Giving "five" to a player over-running first base does not constitute touching a runner.
  - c. This rule is to keep coaches from holding a player on a base or pushing a player toward the next base.
- 5) If a thrown ball strikes a runner, the umpire will call the play "dead" and the runner is safely awarded the base to which he is advancing or retreating.
- 6) A batted ball is in fair territory and any forced runner is "forced" to run if it is hit within the foul lines and touches the 25' arc from home plate.
- 7) If a base runner is touched by a batted ball in fair territory before the ball was touched by a defensive player, the base runner is out and the ball is declared dead. Other base runners must return to their previously occupied base unless they are forced to advance because the batter would be awarded first base.
- 8) No base runner may pass another base runner at any time. If one does pass the other, the "trailing" runner will be called out. Base runners may legally have contact with one another but may not pass.
- 9) On an overthrow, out of play, to third base, the runner(s) advance one base beyond the base they are running toward. Also, if there is an overthrow from an attempt to get out a runner who has already reached first base (ex. trying to double up runner after caught popup), the runner(s) will advance one base.
- 10) Interference / Obstruction - if the umpire decides interference (runner interfering with the fielder) takes place or obstruction (fielder obstructing a runner's path) the ball will be dead.
- a. If "interference" is called, the proper runners will be called out.
  - b. If "obstruction" is called, the proper bases will be rewarded.
  - c. Please understand the fielder always has the right to field the batted ball and the runner must make every attempt to avoid the fielder on this initial play.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Base Overthrow Rule**

- 1) Since 2010, there has not been an automatic additional base (for batter or existing runners) on an overthrow ball that goes out of play at first base on a play on the batter running to first base after he immediately hits the ball.
- a. The ball will be ruled "dead ball" once it is deemed an overthrow and out of play.
  - b. The batter running to first base is ruled safe and all other runners advance to the next base only (i.e. runner on first moves only to second, etc).

- 2) Live overthrows of first base will still be live overthrows (so balls that don't break the plane of the dugout fence are still live balls).
  - a. Defensive players need to make a play on the ball until a play ball is ruled "dead ball" by the umpire.
  - b. All base runners can advance at their own risk.
  - c. Additionally, if there is a caught pop-up and someone makes a play for a runner going back to first base, an overthrow can occur and an automatic base will be awarded to that runner.
- 3) Live over throws on all other bases remain the same as described above.
- 4) The whole point of the rule is to encourage kids to try to make the throw to first base on the batter running to first on a batted ball and to keep more force plays in play so that kids can pick up the strategy of that part of the game more often.
- 5) Sample scenarios:
  - a. Bases empty and batter hits ball to pitcher who throws past first baseman, out of play. Ball is dead, play is over, and batter remains at first base.
  - b. Runner on first and batter hits ball that results in an overthrow, out of play. Ball is dead, play is over, and batter remains at first base with runner on first base advances to second base.
  - c. Runner on second base and batter hits a ball that results in an overthrow at first base out of play. Runner advances to third base (not home) and batter would be award first base. No extra base for either.
- 6) Also, please teach kids to turn correct way when running through first base. If ball is live and they turn the wrong direction (into the field) when running through the base, they can be tagged out. Coaches are not allowed to touch, restrain...etc runners at any time.

## T-BALL RULES - THE UMPIRE

- 1) The umpire is the ultimate authority on the field. All decisions by the umpire are final.
- 2) The umpire's primary objective is to ensure the safety of all players, coaches, and spectators.

- 3) The umpire's secondary objective is to ensure a fair and evenly called game.
- 4) One umpire will be at each regular season game.
- 5) Two umpires will be at all playoff games after the first round. The home plate umpire's decision is final except where the home plate umpire defers to the second umpire.
- 6) Only the head coach should approach the umpire with questions, clarifications, or comments.
- 7) All complaints from the head coaches about an umpire should be handled after the game is complete. The head coach should contact his respective league presidents to lodge a complaint. HE SHOULD NOT BADGER THE UMPIRE WITH THE COMPLAINT.
- 8) Verbal or physical abuse of the umpires will not be tolerated any level. Any such behavior will result in, at minimum, an immediate suspension from the team during an investigation into the complaints. Until said investigation is complete, no contact can be made with the team at all. The Board's decision will dictate the terms after it has been rendered.
- 9) It is a felony in the State of Illinois to threaten or accost an umpire in a youth sports game. OPYBS will prosecute to the fullest extent of the law.