



# DOVER BASEBALL CAL RIPKEN MINORS DIVISION GUIDELINES

Revised: March 2026

The Dover Baseball Association is affiliated with Babe Ruth League, Inc., which includes the Cal Ripken Baseball League. These organizations have adopted the Official Baseball Rules, published by the Commissioner of Baseball, as their primary playing rules. These rules allow for local league modifications to best suit the needs of its players.

The following modifications to the existing national Cal Ripken rules have been generated, and Board approved, with the intent of helping every player reach their full potential in a safe and competitive environment.

## **I. Player Eligibility**

- A. Players participating in the Minor Division must be 9 or 10 years of age by the Babe Ruth designated cut-off date of April 30<sup>th</sup>.

## **II. Game Day Rules and Expectations**

### **A. Defining an Inning and Game Length**

1. Games will be played at Beckwith Field and Sullivan Field, and possibly Keays Field. There will be 1-2 weekday games and 1 game on Saturday.
2. A game is considered complete if any of the following occurs:
  - a. The completion of six innings or two hours of play (no time limit for playoff games), whichever comes first; or
  - b. If the home team is in the lead after the top of the sixth inning; or
  - c. If at the end of the 5th inning either team is ahead by 10 runs or more, 4 ½ innings if the home team is ahead by 10 runs or more; or
  - d. If at the end of the 4th inning either team is ahead by 15 or more runs, 3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead by 15 runs or more;
  - e. Note: If a team is ahead by 20 runs or more before the 3rd inning then the scoreboard shall be turned off.
3. No full inning will start later than two hours past the official start of the game for regular season games. Coaches and umpires shall agree on the official start time



prior to the first pitch of the game. Playoff games have no time limit and will be played in full unless the umpire determines it is not safe to continue due to darkness.

4. A half-inning is complete once 3 outs have been made, or if a team scores 10 runs in 1 inning.
5. Any game that is suspended by weather or other reason prior to being a complete game (a complete game is 4 innings per Cal Ripken Rule 4.10(c)(1)page 55 in 2024 rulebook), shall be picked up where the game was left off. An attempt should be made to suspend a game at the end of a half or full inning if possible. Pitch counts thrown will count towards pitch count restrictions. Any game that is suspended by weather in a ½ inning after 4 will go back to what the score was at the end of the last full inning

## **B. Umpiring**

1. The league will employ at least one umpire for each game.
  - a. The league would prefer the umpire make all calls from behind home plate.

## **C. Rules of play**

1. There is no leading until after the ball has passed home plate
2. Stealing is allowed:
  - a. A base runner is allowed to attempt a steal once the ball has passed home plate.
  - b. Once a batting team is ahead by 8 or more runs, the runner on third is frozen and cannot steal home. They can only score on a bases loaded walk, bases loaded HBP, or a batted ball
3. There are no balks
4. A team is only allowed to score 10 runs per inning (with a max of 13 runs if there was a grand slam homerun and the tenth run was on 3<sup>rd</sup> base.)

## **D. Batting**

1. USA Bat Standard: Babe Ruth Rules are to be followed regarding bats. Repeated violation(s) of this rule may subject the team manager to a violation of the Dover Baseball Code of Conduct.



2. A continuous batting order with available players will be established for each game.
3. The Manager will determine the batting line up for each game.
4. A player arriving late will be added to the end of the batting lineup.
5. If a player is unable to bat for any reason, he/she will not be counted as an out.
6. A player hit by a pitch will automatically be awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base. Players cannot elect to continue the at bat.

#### **E. Fielding**

1. Teams will field the traditional 9 defensive players
2. Defensive players, with the exception of pitcher, may not be moved during an inning except for an injury or other emergency.
3. Barring injury, player decision, or player conduct issue, each eligible player must not sit out for more than 2 defensive innings in a given game.
4. No player may field a given position for more than 3 innings in a game. Playing in a position for 1 pitch counts as a full inning in that position.
5. All players must play at least two innings in the infield unless there is a safety concern. The Division Director needs to be aware of these concerns and will give his/her approval.
6. Sharing Players – From time to time a team may need to share a player from the opposing team. The player selected in a given inning will be the player to make the last out in the previous inning. This player will play an outfield position but will continue to bat for their own team.

#### **F. Pitching**

1. The BABE RUTH PITCH SMART GUIDELINES shall be followed in any Dover Baseball game and shall apply to pitches thrown outside Dover Baseball as well. All pitchers shall be subject to the following pitch count/rest schedule during regular season:



**Maximum Pitches**

<u>Per Day</u>	<u>0 Days Rest</u>	<u>1 Day Rest</u>	<u>2 Days Rest</u>	<u>3 Days Rest</u>	<u>4 Days Rest</u>
<u>75 Pitches</u>	<u>1-20</u>	<u>21-35</u>	<u>36-50</u>	<u>51-65</u>	<u>66+</u>

2. Regardless of what league or division the pitches were thrown in, pitchers MUST receive the complete full day(s) of rest required in order to be eligible to pitch in Dover Baseball. For example, if a pitcher throws 50 pitches in either an AAU game or a Dover Baseball game on a Sunday, then he or she must receive two (2) full days rest and is NOT eligible to pitch in Dover Baseball until Wednesday. Coaches are encouraged to communicate with parents of AAU or club team players who pitch to make sure these rules are followed.
3. Managers shall reach a consensus on the number of pitches thrown by each pitcher at the end of each inning and at an individual pitcher's removal from the game. Any disputes shall be resolved before leaving the field.
4. Pitch counts shall be recorded and verified by both Managers after each game and then forwarded to the Division Director
5. Once a pitcher has been removed from the mound, they may not re-enter the mound within the same game.
6. No pitcher shall record more than 9 outs.
7. Intentional Walks are allowed only during the playoffs. At any point during a pitch count, a manager may allow an opposing batter to take first base via intentional walk simply by signaling the umpire. Upon receiving the intentional walk instructions, the umpire shall rule the ball dead and instruct the batter to take first base. No further pitches will be required to be thrown to that batter.
8. No pitcher shall appear as a pitcher in three consecutive games, regardless of their pitch counts. This is for regular season and playoffs
9. Violation(s): Any violation of the pitching rules may result in game forfeiture and/or other sanctions.
10. The CAL RIPKEN TOURNAMENT PITCH COUNT RULE shall be in effect for the playoffs and shall apply to pitches thrown outside Dover Baseball as well. All pitchers shall be subject to the following pitch count/rest schedule during the playoffs:



### Maximum Pitches

<b>Per Day</b>	<b>0 Day Rest</b>	<b>1 Day Rest</b>	<b>2 Days Rest</b>
75 Pitches	1-40	41-65	66+

#### **G. Player Safety**

1. Only the player at bat and the player on deck will have a bat in their hands.
2. All batters and base runners will wear a helmet. They will keep their helmets on from the time they enter the designated on-deck area until the time they return to the dugout after the play is over.
3. All players will be clear of the dugout entrances during games
4. All players will wear a protective cup/jill during all games and practices.

### **III. Game Day Responsibilities**

#### **A. Home Team**

1. Listed first on the schedule and will use the 1<sup>st</sup> base dugout;
2. Responsible for preparing the field for play; including putting out bases and chalking lines;
3. Responsible for providing volunteers to open and operate the concession stand during games.
4. Scheduled to use the batting cage 60 minutes before game time for a total of 20 minutes, and will have infield practice scheduled 30 minutes before game time and will last for 10 minutes;
5. Responsible for furnishing two brand new league approved game balls; Balls will be provided to teams by Dover Baseball;
6. Responsible for reporting the final score of the game to the division director and/or entering the score directly on the Dover Baseball website/mobile app;
  - a. It is the responsibility of the two head coaches to confer both during the game and at the end of the game to verify the game score.
  - b. Home team's scorebook is the official scorebook. All scoring disputes should be settled before leaving the field.
7. Responsible for picking up trash in the home dugout and the right field bleachers. This includes emptying trash cans in the home dugout and up the right field line if



needed.

## **B. Visiting Team**

1. Listed second on the schedule and will use the 3<sup>rd</sup> base dugout;
2. Responsible for maintaining the field after play; including raking the infield, putting away the bases, putting tarps out if there is rain in the forecast, and making sure that the scorer's booth, dugouts, and field shed are locked up before leaving the field;
3. Scheduled to use the batting cage 40 minutes before game time for a total of 20 minutes, and will have infield practice scheduled 15 minutes before game time and will last for 10 minutes;
4. Responsible for providing a volunteer to operate the scoreboard.
5. Responsible for picking up trash in the visitor dugout and the left field bleachers. This includes emptying trash cans in the visitor dugout and up the left field line if needed .

## **IV. All Star Eligibility**

### **A. Player Eligibility**

1. Player must be eligible for this league based upon player's age;
2. Player must play at least ½ of the regular season games; and be on the roster by June 1st
3. If a player cannot fulfill the 2nd requirement for any reason, then he/she will need a Waiver from the Division Director and League President on their Eligibility Status. The waiver needs to be approved or disapproved by the League President.

### **B. Manager and Coach Eligibility**

1. All Star and tournament team coaches must be a Manager, Coach or Assistant Coach during the regular season; and
2. Must be on a regular season team roster by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **V. Division Director Responsibilities**

### **A. Communication**

1. The Division Director is responsible for maintaining contact with coaches and



parents regarding issues pertaining to the division.

2. Assist anyone in need of any equipment before or during the season.
3. The Division Director will have the ability to change the breakdown of games and practices at the beginning of the season or during the season.

#### **B. League Standings**

1. The Division Director is responsible for making sure that the website is kept up to date with game results.
2. Scores and standings will be kept solely for the purpose of determining a playoff order.

#### **C. Cancellations and Makeups**

1. The Division Director, the VP of Baseball Operations, and/or the umpire will be responsible for any and all game cancellations. Coaches may not cancel games.
2. An attempt should be made to make up all cancelled games.
3. All make-up games must be rescheduled through the Division Director.
4. League games shall not be canceled due to roster shortages for AAU or club team games. When teams are formed, an attempt should be made to spread out AAU and club players evenly amongst teams.

#### **D. Player Call-Ups and Roster Shortages**

1. When a coach becomes aware that he/she will not have enough players to field a team for a given game they must contact the Cal Ripken Minor Division Director. The Division Director will reach out the teams that do not have a scheduled game or practice to try and find a fill in player from within the Minor division. Coaches may not find their own fill in player.
2. Substitute player from within the division can play any position on the field except pitcher. Coaches should use discretion to not play the substitute player in the infield positions if there are players on the team capable of playing those infield positions. This player will bat last in the batting order.
3. When a substitute player can't be found then the team that is short is allowed to share a player with the opposing team for defensive purposes only. The player shall be the last out from the previous inning and still hits with his/her team.



## **VI. Parent Responsibility**

### **A. Communication**

1. Parents should communicate to the Coaches the number of pitches their child has thrown in another league, so as to not put the child or the team at risk of either injury or of violating the pitching rules within Dover Baseball.
2. Parents should appropriately communicate with coaches any concerns they have.
3. Parents should make the coach aware of games or practices that their child will not be able to attend.

### **B. Code of Conduct**

1. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that they adhere to the Dover Baseball Code of Conduct policy. Parents, please make sure to go over the code of conduct with your player as well.

### **C. Concession Stand Coverage**

1. Each family shall be responsible for covering the concession stand for at least one game during the course of the season.

## **VII. Coaching and Player Development**

### **A. Weekly Field Time**

1. Weekly field time should include 1-2 practices and 2-3 games each week. Games and practices will be played on Beckwith field and Sullivan Field. Practices will be on Beckwith and/or Sullivan. This breakdown of games and practices may be subject to change at the Division Directors discretion.

### **B. Player Development Expectations**

By the end of the Cal Ripken Minor Division season players should be consistently demonstrating knowledge of:

1. Field set-up and base-running concepts:
  - a. The different bases and fielding positions;
  - b. Running through 1st base and home plate vs. stopping at 2nd and 3rd base;
  - c. Learning about a secondary lead;
2. Basic fielding concepts:



- a. The ready position;
  - b. The fielding responsibilities of the positions - ie. The 2nd baseman covers second on balls hit to the left side or center field and cuts off the throws from the right fielder;
  - c. An awareness of base runners when fielding and throwing a ball;
  - d. Players should be developing an understanding of game time situations;
3. Basic Hitting Concepts:
- a. Stance and swing;
  - b. Proper grip of the bat;
  - c. Players should be developing a level swing vs an exaggerated upper-cut swing
  - d. Swinging when others are a safe distance away;
  - e. No throwing of the bat
  - f. Swinging at good pitches
4. Basic Individual Catching and Throwing Technique:
- a. Using two hands to catch the ball;
  - b. Catching out in front of the body;
  - c. Throwing from a side-ways direction;
  - d. Using the front foot and glove to direct the path of the ball
  - e. Throwing with an overhand motion

**\*\*FINAL NOTE\*\***

The game of baseball is just that, A GAME! Mistakes will be made. There will be fielding mistakes; there will be coaching mistakes; and there will be umpiring mistakes. But there should be no mistakes in behavior.

It is the objective of the Dover Baseball Association to teach the game of baseball and to implant firmly in the children of the community the ideals of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage, and respect for authority, so that they may be well adjusted, stronger, and happier children that will grow up to be good, decent, healthy, and trustworthy citizens.

This objective can only be reached with the help of all; players, coaches and spectators alike! Dover Baseball has developed a Code of Conduct Policy that is intended to serve as a means of helping us meet this objective.

The policy can be found on the association website, [www.dovernhbaseball.org](http://www.dovernhbaseball.org).



## HOME PLATE MEETING

Items to be discussed with umpires before Dover Baseball Minors league games:

### Beckwith Field:

- Continuous batting order – bat all available players at a given game.
- Open substitutions – defensive substitutions can be made freely in between innings. Pitcher is the only position that can be changed during an inning (unless there is an injury or other emergency situation).
- Home team keeps the official scorebook.
- Pitch counts are handled between the head coaches and should be communicated throughout the games
- There are no balks called.
- Runners are locked down at 3<sup>rd</sup> base when a team is ahead by 8 or more runs.
- There can only be 10 runs scored per inning (could be 13 max if there was a grand slam homerun and the 10<sup>th</sup> run was at 3<sup>rd</sup> base.
- Run Rule – 10 runs after 5 innings (or 4 ½ innings), 15 runs after 4 (or 3/12)
- No new inning can start after 2 hours from the start of the game. The start time will be agreed upon at the home plate meeting. There is no time limit during playoffs.
- Ground rules:
  - Face of dugouts is - in play
  - Wood above dugouts is – out of play
  - Opening in dugouts is - out of play
  - Opening under gate down the left field line – out of play

### Sullivan Field:

- Continuous batting order – bat all available players at a given game.
- Open substitutions – defensive substitutions can be made freely in between innings. Pitcher is the only position that can be changed during an inning. Unless there is an injury or other emergency situation.
- Home team keeps the official scorebook.



- Pitch counts are handled between the head coaches and should be communicated throughout the games
- There are no balks called.
- Runners are locked down at 3<sup>rd</sup> base when a team is ahead by 8 or more runs.
- There can only be 10 runs scored per inning (13 run max with a grand slam homerun and the 10<sup>th</sup> run at 3<sup>rd</sup> base.)
- Run Rule – 10 runs after 5 innings (or 4 ½ innings), 15 runs after 4 (or 3/12)
- No new inning can start after 2 hours from the start of the game. The start time will be agreed upon at the home plate meeting. There is no time limit during playoffs.
- Ground rules:
  - Face if dugouts is – in play
  - Wood above dugouts is - out of play
  - Openings in the dugouts – out of play
  - Opening under gate down the right field line is -out of play
  - Opening in fences in the outfield – out of play