

# 2021 Hampton Athletic Association Foal League Rules



## SPORTSMANSHIP

ALL PLAYERS, COACHES AND PARENTS WILL BE EXPECTED TO BEHAVE IN A SPORTSMANLIKE MANNER AT ALL TIMES. PARENTS AND COACHES ARE REMINDED THAT THIS IS A YOUTH LEAGUE GAME AND ALL INVOLVED SHOULD ACT IN A RESPONSIBLE AND SPORTSMANLIKE MANNER. THE INTENTIONS OF THIS LEAGUE IS TO BE INSTRUCTIONAL AND FUN FOR EVERYONE.

ANY PLAYER, COACH, PARENT OR FAN WHOSE CONDUCT IS UNBECOMING OR ABUSIVE WILL, AT A MINIMUM, BE WARNED AND MAY BE REMOVED FROM THE PLAYING FIELD AND/OR STANDS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE UMPIRES, COMMISSIONER, AND/OR HAA'S BOARD. SUCH CONDUCT AND ANY RULE INFRACTIONS WILL BE SUBJECT TO HAA'S PROGRESSIVE ACTION CONDUCT VIOLATION POLICY.

The following rules shall be followed for the entire season.

**Foal League Objective:** The goal and primary focus of this league is an instructional league to teach three to five-year-old players the fundamentals of baseball and softball by the simplest method possible - letting them play the game. Coaches will teach basic catching, throwing, batting and fielding, and a love of the game of baseball without making the experience a course of intensified instruction. The best approach is to let the teams play with little thought to victory or defeat, but merely for the joy of participation while, at the same time, learning the fundamentals of teamwork, group discipline and sportsmanship. If this purpose is kept paramount, the Foal league can be a valuable addition to the more formally organized leagues for older players. Emphasis must be on instruction, not on the league championship. The Foal league is not meant to be competitive in the form of wins/losses, playoffs, and championships.

Coaches are allowed on the field to offer instruction during the game. The rules require that players be given the opportunity to try different positions, and that all of them get to play in every game.

Players in this age range have a short attention span in any single activity and games must move rapidly. Only the basic fundamentals of the game should be brought out. It is not uncommon for players of this age, initially, to be unfamiliar with which is first base, which is third base, and which field is left and which is right. Lack of knowledge indicates merely that the player has not yet been introduced to the game and has no relationship to the player's potential athletic ability.

Age group commissioners may adjust these rules on a season to season basis as long as all Foal coaches, the VP of Lower Age Baseball, and VP of Rules and Umpires are in agreement to any changes.

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## **MANAGER'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is the team manager's responsibility to control his/her team, coaches and fans. Conduct violations will be subject to HAA's Progressive Action Conduct Violation Policy.

### **Home Team Manager**

1. Responsible for calling off the game due to inclement weather. The visiting team manager should be notified immediately so that his/her players can be contacted.
2. Responsible for field preparation prior to the game. This includes attaching the bases and lining the field and batter's boxes (if necessary).
3. Responsible for cleaning dugout used by his/her team following the game.

### **Visiting Team Manager**

1. Responsible for field maintenance following the game.
2. Responsible for cleaning dugout used by his/her team following the game.

Notwithstanding the rules above, there is a common courtesy that should be extended whereas the away team should help out the home team if enough bodies/coaches are available in order to facilitate an on time start and to ensure each team gets adequate warm up time. For example, if the home team is short staffed with 1 or 2 coaches, the away team should step up and help out with field setup and lend as many helping hands as they can in that situation.

BOTH teams should help postgame to rake fields etc.

## **GENERAL GROUND RULES**

1. Lightning and/or the approach of a dangerous storm will immediately suspend play. This is at the discretion of the umpire or either manager and should be in accordance with the current HAA Thunder and Lightning Policy. Any offending parties of the above approved rule shall be subject to a hearing by the HAA Officers and respective League Commissioner to determine any disciplinary action to be taken. This rule has been adopted to protect you and your children from a very unpredictable, lethal weather condition. Please help the league to enforce this rule.
2. Commissioners will determine game play rule adjustments season to season based on the overall capability of the players in the league. All decisions of the commissioner shall be final.
3. The coaches will be the umpires and should make fair calls regarding outs, player advancement, etc.
4. Tee balls (safety/soft core) will be used.
5. The distance between all bases will be 50 feet.

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## **GAME PLAY RULES**

1. All games will be at least three full (3) innings but will not exceed 1 hour and 15 minutes.
2. Outs will not be enforced, but if an out is made the defensive player(s) involved will be acknowledged.
3. Each team bats a continuous batting order per inning until all players have an at-bat. The last player to bat in the half inning is the "home run hitter". The home run hitter will hit the ball and all on base runners will round the bases until the batter touches home plate. At that point, the half inning will end.
4. Runs scored and final score will not be tracked.
5. There will not be wins and losses.
6. There will not be any playoffs at the end of the season.
7. Games consist of seven (7) players or more in the field per team. No player should sit on the bench. The infield will be restricted to a pitcher and a maximum of four (4) infielders. The outfield will consist of all remaining players evenly spaced across the outfield.
8. Teams must be ready to play at the scheduled game time. If a team is significantly short players at the start of the game then sharing players from the other team to make the teams even should be the approach to take.
9. A player can arrive at any time and should be allowed to play in the game. The player that shows up late will be added to the bottom of the batting order.
10. **FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR PLAYERS, COACHES ARE ENCOURAGED TO MOVE PLAYERS AROUND.** No kid should play the same position the entire season. No player may play the same position the entire game. Equal time spent at every position throughout the season should be the goal for all of the players.
11. No metal spikes or street shoes are permitted to be worn during a game. Molded rubber cleats or sneakers are the only allowable shoes.

## **FIELDING**

1. All games will be played as "player control". "Player control" is defined as one of the defensive players having the ball firmly in his/her hand or glove. Once player control is established, no runners may advance beyond the base they are heading to.
2. In the event a ball is thrown or kicked out of the field of play, the play is dead immediately and no extra bases will be awarded.
3. The infield fly rule does not apply.

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4. Defensive coaches will be positioned in the infield and outfield to assist with players.

## **BATTING/RUNNING**

1. Only one on deck batter is permitted in the on deck circle. Only the on-deck batter may be in the warm up area. Helmets are not to be removed until the player has completely left the playing field. All other players must remain in the dugout.
2. Only USA Baseball USABat certified bats for little league / pony league are allowed. If the batter is caught at the plate with any unapproved bat, the batter must remove the unapproved bat from play and find and use an approved bat.
3. Throwing a bat will result in a player warning. Eventually (at the coach's discretion) if the same player throws the bat a second time he will be called out and the play is dead. This is to ensure the safety of those in and around the batting box area.
4. Bunting is not permitted.
5. No tagging up on an infield fly ball.
6. No runner advancing to a base shall slide headfirst.
7. There will be no leads at any base and no stealing is permitted. Runners cannot leave a base until the ball is hit.
8. Once player control is established by the defense, no runners may advance beyond the base they are heading to.

## **PITCHING**

1. Only one (1) defensive pitcher is permitted in the infield. The coaches should position the pitcher with safety as the first priority.
2. Players will use a tee to hit. Later on in the season, coaches may pitch balls to players they feel are ready to hit coach pitches.
  - a. The pitching coach can pick how to pitch (standing up or kneeling). Overhand throws are suggested to be made to future baseball players and underhand throws are suggested to be made to future softball players.
  - b. Batters will be given four (4) pitches or soft toss opportunities. If they do not put a ball into fair play after the 4th try, a tee must be used to hit.