



Official Rulebook

***The Backyard Rule**

There will be no umpires present to make calls on safe or out, ball or strike. Competitors will agree on all calls. If they are unable to do so, they are missing the point!!

Fields

1. Field length down foul lines are 70 ft. Center field is 80 ft.
2. Bases are 45 ft.
3. The center of the pitchers mound is 30 ft. from the back of home plate

Teams

1. Teams: Teams are typically made up of 4 - 5 players. Only 4 players are allowed on the field for defense, including the pitcher. All players bat.
2. Players are free to switch/substitute whenever, wherever, and however many times they want in a game

Pitching

1. No chucking: Pitchers will NOT throw hard. 50% speed at most. There should be a small arc on all pitches. If batters are consistently late on pitches, or if a pitcher has a high number of strikeouts, he is probably throwing too hard.
2. Pitchers Poison: Ground balls can be thrown back to pitchers, instead of 1st base to force out the batter at first. The pitcher must have at least one foot on the mound when he receives the ball before the batter reaches first. This is called "Pitchers Poison", and this only applies for 1st base. All forces at 2nd and 3rd base must tag the base itself.
3. Pitchers Hand: Pitchers control the gameplay. When the ball leaves the mound, whether from a pitch, or a pick off attempt, play begins. When the pitcher obtains possession of the ball on the mound, play stops.
4. Pitchers line(P-line): If a pitcher retrieves the ball before it passes the "P-line", before the hitter reaches first, the batter is out. The pitcher does not have to return to the mound if he gets the ball before it passes the P-line.
5. No balks

Hitting

1. Strikes: 3 strikes is an out.
2. No Walks: 4 balls is a new count. There are NO WALKS. Swing away.
3. Zone: A strike zone will be set up behind home plate. If a pitch hits the zone, it is an automatic strike.

Fielding

1. Pitchers Poison: See **Pitching** (Page 2)
2. Double Plays: Double plays can be turned in multiple ways:
 - 2.1. Tag the lead force bag, then throw back to pitcher before batter reaches first
 - 2.2. Tag/peg one or more runners
 - 2.3. Tag/peg a runner, and throw back to pitcher
 - 2.4. Catch fly ball, and throw to bag behind runner (if runner did not tag up). The ball must be thrown to the bag the runner came from, NOT back to the pitcher.
3. Pegs: Peg/tag runners in-between bases for outs. If a fielder drops a ball after tagging a runner, that runner is still out. If a ball is thrown out of play (over either foul line, or over the fence) runners must stop. They may only advance to the next bag if they are more than halfway there.

Running

1. No steals: Runners may get leads, but NO SECONDARY leads. Pitchers are allowed to pick off. Once the ball leave the mound runners are free to advance. If a pitcher does pick off, and throws the ball out of play, the runner who the pickoff was directed towards may advance one bag.
2. Out of play: If a ball is thrown out of play (over either foul line, or over the fence) runners must stop at the bag they are on, or continue to the bag they were heading towards. A runner must have forward progress in order to continue to the next base.
3. Pitchers Poison force play: If there is a runner on 1st base, and the batter hits ground ball back to the pitcher, the runner on 1st does not have to advance because the batter is automatically out. There is no longer a force at 2nd base. The same applies for runners on 1st and 2nd, or bases loaded. If runners do go in this scenario, they must be pegged/tagged for an out.

