

Port Arthur Nationals

2026 Rookie League Playing Rules

Pitching Machine & Safety

- * Machine Setup: The machine will be placed at a designated spot, 44–46 feet from the rear of home plate.
- * A coach from the offensive team operates the pitching machine and is also the umpire for that half inning. Players **cannot** operate the pitching machine.
- * Safety Circle: A 10-foot diameter circle is "drawn" around the machine. If a batted or thrown ball hits the machine, operator, or enters this circle, it is a "dead ball" and the batter is awarded 1st base and any runner will advance 1 base.
- * The Machine should be set to 3-3-6
- * Defensive Position: The player/pitcher must stand behind the machine or to the side, outside the circle, with one foot on a designated line until the ball is released.
- * Speed Adjustment: Machine speed will be set by the league at 35-40 mph and will not be changed during the game.

Batting Rules

- * Maximum Pitches: Batters receive a maximum of 5 pitches. If the ball is not put in play, the batter is out.
- * Foul Balls: If the final pitch (5th pitch) is a foul ball, the batter is not out and receives additional pitches, until the ball is put in play, does not swing or batter swings and misses.
- * Strike Outs: If a batter swings and misses at 3 pitches, the batter is out.
- * No Walks: There are NO base-on-balls (walks).
- * Dead Bat: Batters must not throw their bat. Teams will be given one warning before a batter is called out for throwing the bat.

Game & Field Rules

- * Baseballs: We will use real baseballs, not the safety balls.
- * Each team supplies three baseballs per game.
- * Bats: Must be USA certified
- * The offensive team must have an adult coach in each of the 1st & 3rd coaches box, while their team is batting. **NO** players.
- * Game Time: The game will be 6 innings long and/or **NO** inning shall be started after 1 hour & 45 minutes. We will extend the time limit to 2 hrs for the play-offs.
- * Defensive Team: 10 players are on the field, including 4 outfielders (4th outfielder must stay on the grass until the ball is put in play).
- * Infield Position: No infielder (except the pitcher) may be closer than 40 feet to home plate until the ball is hit.
- * **No Stealing/Leading:** Base runners cannot leave the base until the ball is hit.
- * Stopping Play: The ball is considered dead when the player/pitcher has control of the ball inside the safety circle, or when it is returned to the infield.
- * Scoring: A maximum number of 5 runs per inning, or the side is retired after 3 outs.
- * In the case of inclement weather, it is the coaches decision, as far as rain goes to play or continue playing. 4 complete innings, is considered a full game.
- * "When thunder roars, go indoors!". If lightning is seen or thunder is heard, all play must be suspended immediately, and everyone must move to a safe, enclosed shelter. Play cannot resume until 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning or clap of thunder.
- * Distance: Bases are 60 feet apart.

Rain Out/Make Up Dates

- * There are a few empty dates on the calendar for make-up games, but not many. If we have to use our Saturday practice times to make-up games we could do so.
- * In the case of a rainout, we will try and schedule a make-up game immediately in the next open slot.
- * Please check the PA Nationals Facebook page and/or website prior to the game if the weather has been bad.