

# **BRISBANE METRO BASEBALL**

## **Rookie Ball 2023-24 season**



### **U9's Rules**

At this age level emphasis is on games and modified games to help develop basic motor skills and necessary baseball skills.

#### **1. Team Size**

1.1 Teams may field up to nine players and bat through the order up to 12 players.

#### **2. Zooka Machine (first half of the season)**

2.1 The Zooka machine must be used for the pre-Christmas competition.

2.2 The Zooka machine is to be fitted with the small tripod legs.

2.3 The Zooka machine is to be set-up with the centre stem of the legs two foot-6 inches off the line between second base and home plate, at the mark that is 40 foot from the back of home plate.

2.4 The Zooka machine should be positioned at a distance of 42 feet.

2.5 The Zooka machine is to be set such that the ball projects at 40 miles per hour or 50% of power.

2.6 If the Zooka machine breaks down, the weather does not allow for safe use or another is not readily available, the game will revert to equal innings, and the coaches will pitch.

2.7 The Zooka Machine will be placed at an angle of 40.

#### **3. Coach pitching (2nd half of the season)**

3.1 For the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the season, coach pitching may be used as an alternative to aid in player development.

3.2 Coaches will agree the pitching method before the start of the game.

3.3 For coach pitching, coaches are to pitch in an overarm fashion at a speed suitable for the batter, similar to the Zooka machine.

#### **4. Batting and General Play (with Zooka)**

4.1 This section applies if the Zooka machine is being used.

4.2 When the batter and fielders are ready, the umpire shall call 'Play'. The umpire shall put the ball into the Zooka machine and return to the pitcher's plate.

**4.3** The plate umpire shall ensure that only one ball is on the diamond at any one time; however, plate umpires are encouraged to have multiple balls in their possession to speed up play.

**4.4** The Zooka Machine will be operated by the umpire only with a towel to clean balls prior to feeding them into the machine.

**4.5** If the batter hits the ball into the Zooka machine or the ball is hit through the Zooka machine's legs, the ball is 'dead', and the batter is awarded a single base hit (all other runners advance one base only).

**4.6** Every pitch is deemed a strike unless it is so low, so high or so wide that the umpire deems it a 'No- Pitch'. The umpire has the discretion to call a 'No-Pitch'. If in his or her judgment, the pitch was so far out of the strike zone, or the batter did not have a fair chance to hit the ball, then a 'no pitch' may be called. A 'no pitch' could happen if the Zooka machine misfires the ball.

**4.7** If a thrown ball hits the machine, the ball will be called dead. Baserunners will take the base they were running to.

## **5. Batting and general play (Zooka or coach pitch)**

**5.1** There are no Base on Balls (Walks) in Rookie Ball.

**5.2** Each batter will have three (3) swings after which time a tee will be provided for the batter to hit off. The batting teams coach - or proxy - is responsible for placing the tee in position for their batter and removing it after the ball is in play. The batter will continue his/ her at-bat until such time as he/she hits the ball into fair territory. (Only full rubber tees or fold up tees are to be used.)

**5.3** When the tee is in use, the batter must hit the ball a minimum of 15 feet from the tee before the ball is considered to be in fair territory.

**5.4** Once the ball is in play (either from the pitched ball or batting tee) the runner advances until the ball reaches the infield.

## **6. Base running**

**6.1** Base stealing or advancing on passed balls is not permitted.

**6.2** Base runners must not steal home.

**6.3** Base runners may not leave their base until the batter makes contact with the ball or the ball has reached the plate.

Penalty: Should the umpire observe such an infringement, the umpire will call 'Left Early', and the runner is sent back to the base last legally occupied.

If the pitch is hit into fair territory, the infringing runner is ruled out. All other plays resulting

from that hit stand.

If the pitch is hit foul, the strike count increases as usual with no other penalty (the base runner returns to their base).

**6.4** Once the ball reaches the infield, the umpire will call time and play stops. Baserunners will proceed to the base they were running to. This rule is to prevent the ball being thrown around and the runners advancing on errors.

**6.5** An umpire must also call time if there is an overthrow at any base. In this instance, the ball is declared 'dead', and all runners, including the batter, may only advance to the base they were approaching.

**6.6** An innings will end when three outs are made, or when a play occurs that causes the 6th run to be scored, whether by a batted ball, hit batter or catcher's interference. Six runs is the maximum runs that can be scored in any one innings.

## **7. Time Rule**

**7.1** When an infielder has 'control of the ball' and the umpire considers that no further play will occur, then the umpire shall call 'time'. After time is called, the ball is dead, and runners should remain on their closest base. Calling of time is at the discretion of the umpire. The purpose of this rule is to ensure games are as near as practicable to a baseball game. If the umpire considers runners would make no further attempt at a base in a regulation game of baseball, then they should call time.

**7.2** Coaches should not encourage excessive baserunning with the purpose of forcing an error.

## **8. Fielding**

**8.1** Infielders must assume their initial fielding position behind the base paths. Outfielders must be at least 5 metres behind their infielders before play can start. All infielders should remain relatively stationary when the umpire calls 'play ball'.

**8.2** The infield fly rule does not apply to Rookie Ball. Therefore, if an infielder catches a fly ball, the batter is out, and the ball becomes dead. Coaches should teach players how to 'tag-up' in the event of a fly ball.

## **9. Coaches**

**9.1** Coaches are permitted on the field, for coach pitching during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the season or positioned behind their infielders. When on the field, coaches may not physically touch a hit ball or a player in the act of fielding.

**9.2** Appeals by a defensive coach for:

- a. runners leaving early,
- b. bat throwing, or
- c. for runners taking extra bases,

may occur after the said play. Such appeals must be in the form of a question to the umpire

and must occur before the next pitch to the next batter.

**9.3** Coaches must wear at least the Club uniform shirt and cap and be neatly dressed at all times. Closed in footwear is compulsory.

## **10. Scoring**

**10.1** All Clubs are strongly encouraged to provide a scorer for each game, either scorebook or Gamechanger, with the intent to develop the skills of scoring amongst the parent group.

**10.2** Each innings will end when the batting team scores six runs across the plate or three outs, whichever is achieved first.

**10.3** No statistical data is to be kept for players at this age group.

## **11. Umpiring**

**11.1** The home team is responsible for providing a plate umpire, and the visiting team is responsible for providing a base umpire.

**11.2** The plate umpire is positioned in the middle of the diamond. They must wear a skull cap and be in charge of the Zooka machine (if used) at all times.

**11.3** The base umpire is positioned in the regulation field umpire position as per a regulation game.

## **12. Game Time**

**12.1** Regulation game time is 1 hour and 15 minutes.

**12.2** If an innings is completed after 1 hour and 10 minutes, then the game is called.

**12.3** Play may extend by 10 minutes to 1 hour and 25 minutes to complete an innings already commenced.