



7/8 Machine Pitch Rules Spring 2026

The Isle of Palms Recreation Department's Youth Baseball/Softball League is designed to give the Isle of Palms youth an opportunity to play in an adult supervised youth baseball/softball program. The league is set up as a recreational activity, and the primary goals of the program are FUN, PARTICIPATION, SPORTSMANSHIP, and to provide each participant with POSITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE. We ask each coach, parent, and participant to keep this in mind on the playing field, practice field, at home, etc. **Being a good loser is just as important as being a good winner.**

Parents are requested to notify the coach when practices and games are to be missed. Consistently missing practices and games will lessen a player's playing time. Practices and games will be limited to no more than 2 days per week before and during the season. **Games/Practices held on softball field.**

The purpose of the Machine Pitch league is to teach basic baseball fundamentals within a fun and safe environment. This should be the main focus of practices and games. The following rules apply:

PREGAME RULES:

1. The home team sits on the first base bench and bats last.
2. The visiting team will provide a base umpire and home team will provide a home plate umpire.

GAME RULES:

1. Score and league standings will not be kept. This league is designed for participation, sportsmanship and for improving the basic skills – throwing, catching and hitting. Keep it fun!
2. The home plate umpire will call "Play Ball" to begin the game.
3. Games should begin and end on time. Each game will last one hour. If the hour is up and the game is in the middle of an inning, the inning can be completed.
4. Rainouts are posted on IOP Rec. Dept. Facebook Page

Defense

5. A team may start with as few as 7 players. If a team has any extra player's the coaches should play those player's in the outfield.
6. The "pitcher" is positioned behind the pitching machine and to either side of the mound. The player should be as close to the pitcher's mound as possible. This is a pitcher not another shortstop.
7. Two coaches may remain outside the dugout while their team is on defense. Another adult should be in the dugout to maintain discipline.

Offense

8. Coaches are responsible for their batting order. Stay organized and keep the game moving. Have the batters ready to hit and the players ready to go on defense as quickly as possible.
9. Each batter and runner must wear a helmet with a facemask. The chinstraps must remain buckled at all times.
10. All players will bat each inning, this includes the players that are not playing defense. When defensive changes are made, the batting order remains the same.
11. A player must not sit on the bench more than 1 inning each game.
12. A team will bat until it has three outs or until all players have batted. If three outs occur, the bases will be cleared and the team will continue to bat until the entire team has batted that inning.

13. Each player will be awarded three swinging strikes or 5 pitches per time at bat. If the 5th pitch is foul the batter is allowed one more pitch. Base on Balls (walks) do not exist.
14. If a batter slings the bat, the batter will be warned, and brought back to the plate. The pitch will count toward the 5-pitch maximum. If the same batter slings the bat at any time throughout the game, the batter will be called out.
15. The defensive team should keep up with the outs. Do not announce last batter. Let play continue as normal, and when the last batter has completed the time at bat, the teams will switch sides.
16. Coaches are responsible for monitoring the participation rules by keeping a scorebook. Score should not be recorded.
17. Stealing, bunting, infield fly rule and headfirst sliding is not allowed.
18. A play ends when the umpire calls "time" after an infielder has control of the ball (on the infield) and makes a motion to request time.

Other Game Rules

19. **The offensive team's coach or representative feeds the ball into the pitching machine. ONLY Adults should use the machine.** During inclement weather coaches will pitch to their teams from the pitching rubber. The ball should be thrown overhand, and have little or no arc.
20. The pitching machine should be placed 40ft. from home plate. The speed must be between 25-30 miles per hour. No exceptions to the speed rule!
21. A batted ball that hits the pitching machine or operator is a dead ball and must be replayed. The pitch does not count toward the 5-pitch maximum.
22. Thrown balls that hit the machine or operator are in play. Operators should refrain from interfering with play by catching the ball. Wait until play has stopped. Also, operators and umpires should retrieve passed balls and throw the ball back to the "pitcher", who will give the ball to the operator.
23. On overthrows to 1st or 3rd base that go into foul territory, runners may advance one base. On overthrows into fair territory, runners may advance as far as they can, at their own risk.
24. The batter and on deck hitter should be the only players with a bat.

POSTGAME RULES:

1. Both teams should clean their dugout after each game.
2. Both teams should line up and shake hands with the opposite team. Good sportsmanship is a must!
3. Coaches should ensure all players are picked up before leaving the field.

COACHES CONDUCT:

1. Spectators are not allowed on the field during a game. Coaches are responsible for their parent's behavior during the game. Any unsportsmanlike behavior should be reported to the Isle of Palms Recreation Staff.
2. Smoking, smokeless tobacco, alcohol, drugs and/or profanity are not allowed during games or practices. Violations will result in the coach being asked to leave the field and may result in the coach being removed as coach.
3. Any coach ejected from a game must leave the field and will be suspended for the next game. Two ejections will result in suspension for the year.

The following guidelines are encouraged to ensure your players have a positive baseball experience.

- Let your players play a variety of positions throughout the year. The safety of the players should be considered when placing them in the field. However, positions should be varied during practices.
- Rotate your batting order to allow players to bat in a variety of slots.
- Encourage good sportsmanship before, during, and after the game. Have your players shake hands with the opposing team and give positive comments.
- Make practices and games fun.
- Please contact the Recreation department with any problems or concerns. Our goal is a positive baseball experience for all of the participants.
- Thank you for dedicating your time to coaching and have a great season!