



5/6 T-Ball Rules Spring 2026

The Isle of Palms Recreation Department's Youth Baseball/Softball League is designed to give the Isle of Palms area 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 a 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. Practices and games will be limited to no more than 2 days per week before and during the season. **Games held on softball field, practices on multipurpose field.**

The purpose of the T-Ball 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. Game balls will come from ball bucket used for practices.
2. The home team sits on the first base bench and bats last.
3. There are no forfeits, but also no grace period. At game time, if a team has less than 7 players, it may "borrow" a player(s) from the opposing team, or it may play with the number of players present.
4. The visiting team will provide a base umpire, and the home team will provide a home plate umpire.

GAME RULES:

1. Score and league standings will not be kept and outs will not be counted. T-Ball is designed for participation, sportsmanship and for teaching basic skills – throwing, catching and hitting. Keep it fun!
2. All players bat and play the field each inning. A regulation game is 2 innings. A game ends when both teams have batted twice or when inclement weather poses a danger to the players. (Rained out games will be rescheduled by Athletic Staff if time permits.) Rainouts will be posted on IOP Rec. Dept. Facebook Page
3. The home plate umpire will call "Play Ball" to begin the game.

Defense

4. The defensive team plays all of its players in the field. Infield players (one 1st, 2nd, 3rd basemen and shortstop) should be positioned outside of the base paths.
5. The pitcher is positioned with both feet in the pitcher's circle.
6. If a team has more than 8 players, it must provide a catcher, who is positioned with both feet inside the designated circle facing the batter. The catcher must also wear a batting helmet.
7. All remaining players must be positioned in the outfield, which will be the grassy area beyond the infield. Coaches should ensure outfield players are positioned BEHIND the infield dirt.
8. Two coaches may walk around the outfield while their team is on defense. The coaches may not interfere with play, but may discuss an umpire's call after play is stopped and the umpire grants a time out.

Offense

9. Coaches are responsible for their batting order. Stay organized and keep the game moving.
 10. Batters are required to wear a helmet with a chin strap while batting.
 11. Each batter is given five attempts to hit the ball. If a fair ball is not hit off the tee, the batter is out.
 12. The entire offensive team will bat each inning. ****Do not inform the other team that the last batter is at the plate. Let play continue as normal, and when the last batter has completed his time at bat, the teams will switch sides.****
 13. No stealing, bunting, infield fly rule or head first sliding.
 14. If a batter slings the bat out of the batter's circle, the ball is dead, all runners hold, and the batter must hit again. The swing counts toward the 5-swing count. If the batter slings the bat again, the batter is out. If the batter slings the bat on the 5th swing, the batter is out.
NOTE: Use good judgment. A bat slowly rolling out of the circle is different than one flying toward the dugout.
 15. 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, or, when the pitcher has the ball and has both feet inside the pitcher's circle. Runners more than halfway to a base when play stops will be awarded that base. Others must return to the base in which they just left.
 16. A pitcher fielding the ball may make an initial play on a base (and is encouraged to do so) even if both feet are inside the circle as the play is being made.
17. Ground Rules
- The 10-foot circle around the pitcher's mound is a dead zone. When a player has possession of the ball inside the circle, play is dead.
 - The arc around home plate is "foul" territory. Batted balls must travel outside this arc to be considered a fair ball.
 - Thrown balls that go over the fence or in the dugouts are dead balls. Runners advance to the base to which they are running, and then must stop.
 - Batted balls that hit the pitching coach are dead balls. The batter hits again, and the swing does not count against the batter.
 - Thrown balls that hit the pitching coach are dead balls. Runners advance to the base to which they are running, and then stop.
 - Pop-ups behind home plate that are caught by the catcher are outs, provided the ball traveled higher than the batter's head.
 - A runner obviously missing a base (3 feet or more) may be placed back on that base, provided there are no following runners.
 - The only players that should be holding/swinging a bat are the batter and the on deck hitter.

POST-GAME RULES

1. Both teams should clean their bench area after each game.
2. 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 parents' behavior during the game. Any unsportsmanlike behavior should be reported to the IOP Staff.
2. Smoking, smokeless tobacco, alcohol, drugs and/or profanity are not allowed during practices or games, on or off the field. Coaches will be asked to leave the field and/or may be removed from coaching staff. Appropriate actions will be taken for those violating this policy.
3. Any coach ejected from a game must leave the field, 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.
- Rotate the 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. Thanks for coaching, and have a great season!