



TEE BALL

**A Handy Reference for Parents
& New-Comers to the game.**

**With Variations Applicable to
Sturt Tee Ball Club.**

Season 2005/2006

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The main objectives of Tee Ball are:

- (a) To introduce children (and parents and spectators) to baseball.
- (b) To encourage good sportsmanship.

The game is for all to enjoy and have fun in participation. Parents should help by coaching, scoring, umpiring, managing a team, or being an equipment officer for a team or club -- all having enjoyment working so that children play a team sport and have healthy exercise.

An umpire's judgement decision is final. However, an inquiry may be made on decisions based on rules interpretations, but **ONLY** by the team coach and in a non-threatening manner. In such cases 'TIME' will be requested by the coach.

PLAYER REQUIREMENTS:

Players should be between the ages of 5 and 11 years (as at 1 January following the season commencing). Children who are outside of these ages may be permitted to play by the committee after taking any pertinent aspects into consideration.

Two teams of nine players compete on a Tee Ball field which is divided between an infield and an outfield. The infield, called the "diamond," is where the bases are located. Players in the field include three outfielders, four infielders, one pitcher, and one catcher. Substitutions may take place any time the ball is not in play.



Pitcher - Fields at the pitchers plate located in the center of the diamond. They must be at this position when the batter is ready to hit the ball. The pitcher must wear the pitchers helmet with the front cage which is provided by the club.

Catcher - Plays in a position behind home plate away from the swing of the batter (usually at the far corner of the non occupied batting box). The catcher wears the batting team's pitcher's helmet (or a catchers helmet if desired).

First Base - Positioned near to the base (but behind the "line" from 1st to 2nd base). He fields the Tee Ball when it is hit down the first base foul line and also covers the base on "force plays."

Second Base -Plays in the gap between second base and the first baseman (but behind the "line" from 1st to 2nd base). He fields the balls hit to this part of the infield, covers plays to second, and relays throws from the outfielders.

Shortstop-Stands between second and third base (but behind the "line" from 2nd to 3rd base) and fields balls hit to this side of the infield. He is able to cover second base if the second base fielder is chasing a ball out towards right field.

Third Base - Plays just to the left of third base (but behind the "line" from 2nd to 3rd base) He covers third when runners approach and is responsible for fielding balls hit down the third base foul line.

Outfielders (Left, Center, and Right) - These three players catch the "fly balls" and field the ground ball hits that go through the infield. They need to throw the ball in to the infielder quickly to prevent runners from advancing around too many bases. If the ball makes it to the cones, it is an automatic two base hit (or home run if on the full) and the fielders can then field the ball with less urgency.

Umpire Stands behind the home-plate and is in control of the game. A second umpire may stand outside of the cones and assist with decisions as required by the game umpire

Coaches The area near first and third base, outside the foul lines, are each occupied by a coach of the batting (offensive) side. The fielding side in U7's and U9's may also have a coach on the field with them. The U11 coach must take up a position outside of the diamond area. The coaches may talk to their players, wave arms and give signals, but may not interfere with the play.

INNINGS

The game of "Tee" Ball is played by two teams of up to thirteen players, though only nine players may field at any one time, all players in the team may bat. The game is won by the team which scores more runs than the other during seven innings of play or one hour, whichever comes first.

The game starts with the visiting team batting in an attempt to score runs. Players of the home team take up fielding positions and attempt to prevent the visiting team from scoring runs. They also try to get the batters out and end the first half ("top") of the innings by putting three batters out. The next innings starts with the next listed batter. After three outs, or nine batters, the teams reverse positions for the second half ("Bottom") of the innings. The home team comes in from the field to bat. The visiting team takes positions in the field on the defence. The teams continue alternating in batting and fielding until the seven innings or one hour's playing time has elapsed

In U9 and U11 competitions, the innings concludes after the ninth batter has batted or three "outs" have been made. The umpire shall declare "side away".

In U7 competition, the innings continues until after the last batter has had their turn at bat irrespective of the number of players already out. The umpire shall declare "side away". (The players who get out will come off the diamond and take their position on the bench). The fielding team will score a bonus "run" for each OUT made by their team. Where the teams have different number, the coaches are to agree on the number of players who will bat each innings-this may mean that batters on a team with fewer batters may need to bat twice to make up the numbers

RUNS AND HITS

A run is scored when a batter (before three outs are made or nine batters have batted) makes a complete circuit of the four bases safely, starting at the home-plate and returning to it by running around the bases in an anti-clockwise direction.

Before the batter can start running to the first base, they must stand in the rectangular batter's box next to home-plate. Note that there is a box on each side of the plate for both right and left handed batters. The batter must stand within the confines of whichever box that is used, and may not step out of it to swing at the ball. Each batter is permitted only one practice swing at the ball. The second and subsequent swings must either hit the ball or be called strikes

The batter attempts to hit the ball into fair territory with the bat. If the batter succeeds in hitting the ball, and it lands fair (inside the foul lines), then the batter runs to first base. The players in the field try to catch or pick up the ball and throw it to first base, to put the runner out. If the batter reaches first base before the ball, then they are safe. The batter may continue on to second base etc if they or the coach considers it safe to do so.

To avoid collisions at first base, there are 2 first bases, one is white, the other is yellow (orange). The white base is to be placed so that one edge is on the line from home plate to first base and the other edge along the first base to second base lines. The majority of the base is inside the diamond. The white base belongs to the fielding team, so for an out to be achieved at first base, the fielding team must be touching the white first base when they are in possession of the ball. If the fielding team is touching the yellow(orange) first base, the runner is safe. The yellow (orange) base is placed on the outside i.e. in foul territory of the white first base. The yellow(orange) base belongs to the runner and the runner should run to the yellow (orange) base. The runner is safe if they touch either the white or yellow(orange) first base before the fielder gets the ball and makes the play.

In the attempt to get to first base before the Ball is thrown there, the batter may touch their foot on the base and continue to run past it without the worry of being tagged out.

This rule applies only to first base

RUNNING BASES

The instant a batter hits the ball, he becomes a base runner. The bases serve as safety stations, and the runner is safe as long as contact with one of the bases is maintained. Base runners can only leave the base when the ball has been hit by the batter i.e. they cannot "steal" bases. Once a runner is moving to the next base he can be out by the fielder tagging the runner with the hand or glove that holds the ball, or by holding the ball and touching the base the runner is running to with their foot (if the runner is "forced").

The batter may over-run first base on his hit without being tagged out, provided that no attempt is made to advance to second base.

If a runner over-runs second or third base they may be tagged out. This is why runners sometimes slide in to second and third bases, besides avoiding a tag, the slide prevents over-running. (This is a skill best learnt in the older age group as injuries can occur)

PLACEMENT OF THE TEE

The Tee should be placed in firm ground in **front of and not touching the home plate**. The umpire shall be the sole judge of placement of the tee.

Umpires should remove the tee after each fair hit to ensure that children are not injured.

PLAY

The umpire will call "batter up" and "play ball" for each batter and after every strike, foul ball, dead ball or when "TIME" has been called. This ensures that the runners and fielders are in their correct positions before the ball is hit. When the ball is hit, play proceeds normally until all runners have held up on bases, and the umpire calls "time". If the batter hits before "Play Ball" is called, the ball is dead and no count is recorded on the batter.

In U7 and U9 competition, the umpire will call "time" when the ball is held aloft by any player within the infield diamond. If a base runner is less than 1/3 of the way from their last base at this point in time, they must return to that base until the next batter has hit the ball. Conversely if they are more than 1/3 way towards the next base, they may continue. Once "Time" has been called by the umpire, no further play will count eg outs.

In U11 competition "time" will be called by the umpire when the ball is controlled by an infielder and is not attempting to make a play, or in the umpire's opinion, all play has ceased. The runners should hold on the base they are occupying or, if running to the next base, hold on the base to which they are heading. This avoids the ball being thrown around the diamond "chasing" runners.

The umpire shall call DEAD BALL and return all runners to their bases if the pitcher is not in contact with the pitching plate, the catcher is not in their correct position, any fielder other than the pitcher is inside the diamond, or a fielder is in foul territory except when in the umpires opinion the batting side gains an advantage from the resulting play over the fielding side. On all occasions the umpire shall warn the offending player. (If the offence is committed well before the ball is hit, then DEAD BALL is called. However the offence is sometimes committed as the batter hits the ball and if DEAD BALL is called the batting side could be penalised.

Passed Ball - when a ball is thrown to a fielder at a base and the fielder is unable to stop it from going (a reasonable distance - usually level with the bench) into foul territory a passed ball occurs. As a penalty against the fielding side, all runners are advanced to the base ahead of the one to which they were running at the time the throw was made. (ie they will generally advance two bases)

RUNNING AFTER FLY IS CAUGHT

When a batter hits a ball which is caught on the fly (before it bounces) by any fielder, anywhere on the playing field in fair territory or foul, the batter is out. It doesn't matter if the batter has passed first base when the fly ball is caught, he is out anyway.

When a fair fly is hit, a base runner may do one of two things, depending on what he thinks will happen. If the runner thinks that the fly will drop to the ground for a hit, the runner may take a lead off base, or actually start running so that he can advance to the next base or further. However, should the ball be caught, he must return to the base he left. If the runner gets back before the fielder at that base receives the ball from the other fielder, then "safe" is the decision. If the runner does not get back in time, the runner is "out" without a tag, the fielder at the base merely has to catch the throw and touch the base with their foot. On the other hand, if the runner expects the fly to be caught, he may "tag up" (hold the base) and wait for the fly to be caught. Then, at the instant the ball is caught, he may run to the next base. In this case the runner is safe, if the runner arrives there without being tagged.

There is no infield fly rule.

FORCE PLAYS

A runner on first base is "forced" to run to second base whenever the batter hits the ball. Otherwise, the runner will be put out at second. Obviously, first base must be opened up for the batter as soon as he hits the ball. There is one exception - the batter may fly out, and in that case the runner must tag up on the base. If there are runners on both first and second bases, then each of them is forced to run to the next base when the batter hits anything but a fly out. If the bases are loaded (the runners on first, second and third) then the runners are all forced, and the runner at third must run to home plate (and score) before the fielder catches the ball and touches the base. A runner who is forced does not have to be tagged for the put out. In U9 and U11, if the force play at any base is the third out, a runner crossing the plate does not score a run, whether having crossed it before the actual force out or not.

NON FORCE PLAYS

A runner is not forced to run if the base prior to them is not occupied by another runner. eg If the runners are at third and first bases when the batter is hitting, the runner at third base is NOT forced. If this runner chooses to run then the fielder **MUST** tag them prior to them making it to home plate to get them out. If there is only one runner, and they are at second base when the batter is hitting, they are not forced to run and the fielder must **TAG** them out at third base (or between bases) if they choose to run. Should the runner overrun third base, the fielder may tag them out.

STRIKE OUTS

The batter is out if three swings are made without putting the ball in play. A missed swing and also ALL foul hits are counted as strikes. The batter is also out if the bat is thrown after the ball is hit. (The umpire should warn the batter once of this during the game and if the bat is thrown again, the batter will be out). . The ball is dead and runners cannot advance.

MAKING PUT-OUTS ON THE BATTER

When the batter hits the ball, the object is to immediately run for first base. If the ball is hit foul the batter should run until the umpire calls "foul ball" the batter will then return for another hit. If the ball is hit fair, the batter runs and the fielder who is nearest to the ball tries to make a play. If the ball is in the air, the fielder tries to catch it on the full and put the batter out automatically. If it is a "grounder" (a ball hit along the ground), the fielder tries to pick it up and throw it to the first base fielder in advance of the batter's arrival. Often there is a close race between the batter and the ball. If the ball arrives in the first base fielder's glove (and with the foot touching the **WHITE** base) before the batter's foot touches either of the first bases, then the batter is out. If the batter arrives before the ball or the first base fielder has their foot touching the **YELLOW/ORANGE** safety base, or the fielder does not have full control of the ball or drops the catch, then safe is the call. On this play the first baseman does not need to make a tag of the batter, as the batter was forced out at first.

FOUL BALLS

(Can occur in the following situations:

- 1)When the batter takes a swing at the ball on the tee and misses.
- 2)If, in the umpire's opinion, the tee is substantially dislodged from the vertical by the batter striking at the ball (that is he hits more tee than ball).
- 3)If the ball does not travel further than the 3m arc in front of the batters box
- 4)If, in the umpire's opinion, the batter does not take a normal full forceful swing when striking the ball.
- 5)When the umpire calls: "Batter Up" the batter shall take a set stance in the batting box. From the call: "Play Ball", the batter is not permitted to re-position his back foot such that he will hit in an appreciably different direction. (Front foot movement is permitted.) Each time the back foot is moved, "Foul" is called and one strike is recorded on the batter.

NOTE: Umpire should not call "FOUL BALL" until the ball becomes a foul ball as in the normal rules of baseball or until it touches the ground on all other occasions. The ball would remain a FAIR BALL if caught. REASON: If "FOUL BALL" is called early, the ball is dead and no play can be made with a dead ball. That means the batter can not be caught, runners can not be given out if off bases and runners can not advance if ball is caught. Also if catch is not allowed, the fielding side could be disadvantaged if batter hits safely on subsequent hits.

All foul balls are counted as strikes and after three strikes, the batter is out.

BATTING OUT OF ORDER

When a batter bats out of turn, the umpire shall nullify the play which took place whilst the improper batter was at bat by returning all runners to the bases where they were before the ball was hit by the improper batter, and the proper batter shall take their turn at bat.

GENERAL RULES

Scorers must sit together near the point of and outside the pass ball lines and must notify the umpire if a batter bats out of order, and when batter number nine is at bat.

Correct uniforms including caps must be worn at all times. Shirts should be tucked in to avoid them causing finger injuries.

Batting helmets **MUST** be worn by all batters and base runners. Fielders in pitching position **MUST** wear a pitching helmet which is fitted with a "cage" to protect the face, and catchers will wear a catcher's helmet with mask or the other teams pitching helmet. All children will be encouraged to wear mouth guards.

Fielders are to be rotated each fielding innings, and no listed batter shall sit out two consecutive fielding innings.

Batting order is to be rotated each week, such that the first batter in week 1 becomes the last batter in week 2, the 2nd batter in week 1 becomes the first batter in week 2 and so on.

Any issues with rules or decisions are to be discussed privately between the umpire and coaches.

SPECIFICATIONS

Under 7 and U 9:

1. Diamond Size

Base paths 45' or 13.7m, pitchers rubber 35' or 10.6m from home plate.

Home run line 110' or 33.7m from home plate

2. Baseball

Soft rubber practice, Under 7 and U9

Under 11

1. Diamond Size

Base paths 60' or 18.3m, pitchers rubber 46' or 14.0m from home plate.

Home run line 150" or 45.8m

2. Baseball

Hard rubber practice, Under 11.

UNIFORMS

These are provided to all players on a loan basis by the club and we ask that you keep it in good condition as it needs to be used for several years. Please ensure that tops and pants are **dried inside out** to reduce fading. At the end of season carnival in March the top and pants are to be returned ready for the next season. If you require larger pants during the year, please advise the canteen staff who will organise with the uniform co-ordinator to have pairs available.

Handy Terms & Phrases.

Bases Loaded - Term for when there are runners on first, second, and third base.

Batter's Box - The rectangular areas on either side of home plate where players stand when batting.

Bunt - A batter uses a partial swing to gently hit the ball into the infield in an attempt to outrun a throw to first base or advance a base runner. **In Tee Ball**, all batters must make a full and forceful swing at the ball. **'Bunting' is not permitted.**

Coach's Box - The outlined area on either side of first and third base. From there, coaches for the batting team signal instructions to batters and runners.

The Count - The number of balls and strikes registered against a batter. A count of three balls and two strikes is called a 'full count'.

Diamond - Another name for the infield, derived from the diamond shape formed by the three bases and home plate.

Double Play - When the fielding team puts out two base runners on a hit ball.

Force Play - Occurs when a batter hits a fair ball and runs to first base, forcing a base runner directly ahead of him to run to the next base. In this situation, an infielder holding the ball need only tag the base ahead of a runner in order to get him out. Of course, a fielder may tag a runner at any time to make an out. A runner is out if not in contact with a base when tagged.

Fly Ball - A ball hit high in the air usually past the infield.

Grand Slam - A home run with the bases loaded. Four runs are scored.

Ground Ball Double - When a fair ball goes passed the cones after bouncing, the batter gets an automatic double ('2 bases') as do any base runners.

Grounder - A batted ball hit along the ground.

Lineup - The order in which players bat.

Safe - Called by the umpire when a runner successfully reaches a base.

Signals - Hand and arm gestures used by players and coaches to communicate plays with each other across the field. Umpires also use hand signals to inform players, coaches, and fans of their calls.

Slide - To avoid being tagged out on close fielding plays, runners will often slide feet first into a base.

Tagging (bases) - It is only necessary to be in contact with the base whilst holding the ball to complete a tag of the base and so put a forced runner out.

Tagging (runners) A fielder must be in possession of the ball, and the runner tagged by the hand/glove holding that ball, to complete an out. If the ball is subsequently dropped, the runner becomes "safe". Therefore it is safer to have the ball enclosed within the glove to avoid it being dislodged easily during the "tag"

A runner is out if a dead heat of ball/runner reaching the base occurs. The runner must beat the throw to a base to be safe.

Tagging Up - Once a fly ball has been caught by an outfielder, a base runner may tag his base and try to run to the next base before the ball is thrown there. If the runner leaves a base before the ball is caught, the runner may be put out by the fielding side throwing the 'caught' ball to that base. In this case, the runner is out if he has not returned safely to that base. The runner need not be tagged for the out.