



EASTERN SUBURBS JUNIOR BASEBALL

T-Ball RULES

Preamble

These Home T- Ball rules for Eastern Suburbs Junior Baseball (ESJBL) games are for the benefit of young players, so that they might -

- Enjoy their sport.
- Learn skills so as to achieve their personal best.
- Promote the game of T-ball and baseball.

The player's well being is of primary importance, with their safety and security paramount.

As a junior sport, it is to be played in the manner defined in ESJBLs Code of Conduct, as published on our website.

General

- These rules shall be read in conjunction with the "Official Australian Baseball Rules" and where they are in conflict, these rules shall prevail.
- All T-Ball games are to be of approximately 55 minutes duration.
- Scores for and against will be recorded for each game for determining the winning team, but scores are discarded after each game. There are no Semi-Finals, Finals or Grand Finals.
- It is a condition of T-Ball player registration that all persons, including coaches and other club officials, participating in T-Ball accept these rules.
- These rules may be varied by the ESJBL Executive during the season.

Competition Age Group

T Ball team players are aged from just turning 6 years to under 8 years of age as at age cutoff Age shall be taken as the player's age up to, but not including, the 1st September during the season. Players who are 8 or who turn 8 years old before 1st September are generally not eligible for this level. Dispensation for players to play below or above the above age groups may be given by the ESJBL T Ball Coordinator in specific circumstances.

Registrations and Teams

- All registrations must be made online in the Baseball NSW Gameday/ Passport registration system.
- As this is an introduction to T-Ball competition, one addition a player per team (i.e. 10 total) will be allowed to be on the field. The 10th player, if applicable, must be placed as a second LEFT field player only.
- No more than ten (10) players can be registered with any one team to ensure maximum "on field" game time for players at this level. The number of players registered per team can be varied by the T Ball coordinator. The umpire shall ensure numbers of players on each team on the day are approximately equal- this may mean one team lends the other team a player/s.
- Players must be registered and financial with ESJBL. Late registrations may be taken at the sole discretion of the T-Ball Coordinator. All coaches must hold a current baseball coaching accreditation at a minimum of Level 2 baseball accreditation, or be registered to be

enrolled in the first available Level 2 course, and have a current Working with Children certification.

- When registering players the Club Registrar may request citing birth certificate or passport as proof of a player's age.
- A player may not play or be registered with more than one baseball club during the same season without the approval of the ESJBL Executive Committee.
- The T-Ball Coordinator may need to move players between ESJBL teams during the season to achieve balance of numbers and teams.

General Playing Rules

- The maximum number of runs scored in any one (1) inning shall be six (6). The sides then swap (but see rule 5).
- Runners must remain in contact with bases until the ball is batted. The penalty for any runner leaving a base "early" shall be that the runner will be warned by the umpire and all runners must return to their previously occupied base. If runners are unable to return to their previously occupied base due to a play, it is in the umpire's discretion as to whether any runner gained any advantage by the runner that left the base "early" and the umpires may place runners at their discretion to nullify any advantage.
- Any of the players listed in the original batting line-up may be interchanged in any fielding position by the coach at any time, provided "time" has been first called by the umpire.
- If a batter is removed from the line-up due to injury, sickness or distress and not replaced, the batting order will close up and no out will be recorded through the missing batter.
- Players must maintain their listed batting order and are subject to the normal rules of baseball.
- Scorer/s may draw the umpire's attention and coach attention to any batter batting out of order.
- The team mentioned first on the draw shall be the home team, shall occupy the third base dugout and shall field first.
- Any intentional collision by a runner or fielder is not permitted.
- There are no protests in T-Ball.
- The on-deck batters must stand on the "safe" side of the batter at the plate. With a right-handed batter at the plate, the on-deck batter must stand in the on-deck circle down the 3rd base line.
- With a left-handed batter at the plate, the on-deck batter must stand in the on-deck circle down the 1st base line.
- For warm up players should arrive at least 10 minutes before the scheduled game start time (or as directed by that team's coach).
- All teams must have at least one registered Coach at all games and training sessions.
- At game commencement, time permitting, both teams should line up in front of home plate while they are addressed by the umpire.
- At the conclusion of each game, teams shall:
 - Line up at home plate along the line of the base that each team occupied with coaches at the rear to supervise while addressed by the umpire.

- The winning team is given three cheers by the losing team. The losing team is given 3 cheers by the winning team.
- Both teams give 3 cheers to the scorer/s plus umpire.
- Teams walk through home plate and proceed along the line of the base previously occupied by the opposing team, shaking hands with all members of the opposing team (gloves, helmets must be removed and left in the dugout or held under arm).

Special Rules for the first few rounds

- As this is an introductory competition, up to the first 4 rounds only (or a lesser number that the T ball Coordinator deems adequate), all batters will bat through the line up before swapping sides. If the teams have unequal numbers of players, then the team with the lesser number will bat additional players until equal numbers have batted for each side. 'Outs' will be called, but players remain on base. The umpire shall explain why the player was out. Once players know the basic rules this introductory period ends and normal baseball rules apply where 3 outs will trigger a side change.

Forfeits

There are no forfeits.

Wet Weather and Fitness of Playing area

- In the event of very wet weather, very hot weather, or unfit grounds, the coach will advise by 8am of game day if the game has been cancelled.
- In the event of inclement weather, following a decision to go ahead with any game, the ESJBL Ground Controller responsible shall decide on the fitness of the ground for the commencement of play.

Equipment

- All players must wear their team shirt and cap. Players shall use sneakers/ joggers/ sandals. No soccer boots or other footwear is permitted in T- Ball.
- Helmets must have two (2) ear guards and must be worn by all batters and base runners.
- T-Ball catchers shall wear a full-face mask helmet and must stand behind the umpire for safety.
- All balls used must be those balls approved for use by the Executive. Balls are to be 8.5 inch Safety Balls or their equivalent.
- All fields should be marked according to the rules of baseball. All bases are to be pegged or staked at all times during competition games.
- 1st base shall be coloured half red and half white to encourage players to know their area of play. Any player who intentionally interferes with the 1st base fielder shall be called out. This will be the umpire's judgement call. White is for the fielder and red for the base runner. White is positioned so it faces towards 2nd base and the red towards foul territory.
- ESJBL supplies bats and helmets. Any player who uses their own bat should ensure it is clearly marked with their name. T-Ball bats must not exceed 2¼" maximum diameter.

Umpires

- Umpires are responsible for the conduct of the game. ESJBL shall be responsible for the appointment of umpires to games as determined by the Executive Committee. Umpires must be at least 11 years old and 2 years older than the age of the players that they are umpiring. All umpires under the age of 15 should have a responsible adult to support and supervise them. The supervising adult shall report any abuse of players or the supervised Umpire, to the ESJBL Secretary.
- ESJBL will be responsible to ensure that all umpires appointed are familiar with the rules and are competent to umpire the game to which they are appointed.
- Before the commencement of a game, the umpire should read out a list of things that cannot be done on the field of play before the start of the game to all players, i.e., slinging of the bat, running on the inside of the 1st base line, leaving the bases early, standing on bases to impede a runner from advancing at his own rate, standing on an imaginary straight line between bases etc.
- In the event of an umpire having to vacate their post during the game for personal reasons or illness, the club shall appoint a replacement umpire.
- If an umpire ejects a player from a game that umpire shall be required to provide a full written report to the Club Secretary no later than 7.30pm on the Monday after the game.
- UMPIRES JUDGEMENT DECISIONS ARE FINAL AND MUST NOT BE QUESTIONED. Umpires, however, should explain a rule after the play has ceased.

Protests

There is no provision for protests in T-Ball.

Substitutes

In the event of a team not being able to field at least six (6) players, they may borrow players from their opposing (or another) T Ball team, to help ensure the game is able to proceed. The umpire shall ensure teams have approximately equal numbers of players, ideally not more than 1 player difference, and a team may borrow a player/s to help balance the numbers.

Times of Starting and Finishing

- Games shall commence at 9:00am and finish at approximately 9.55am; commence at 10.00am and finish at approximately 10.55am; and commence at 11.00am and finish at approximately 11.55am. This depends on the number of registered teams.
- No top half of an innings is to commence within ten (10) minutes of the scheduled finish time. The ten (10) minute rule shall apply from the time the third out is made in the previous innings. If an innings is started before the ten (10) minutes, then both halves of the innings are to be played unless the team batting the bottom of the innings is leading at the conclusion of the top half of the innings in which case "game" shall be called. If the bottom half of the innings is required to be played then "game" shall be called at the conclusion of any play which results in the team batting the bottom half of the innings scoring the winning run or the third out is completed to end the innings.

- If any team is more than six (6) runs behind or in front within ten (10) minutes of the scheduled finish time then the game shall be called at that time.
- All game times are to be taken from the scheduled starting time. There is no provision for a late start under any circumstances. Late arriving players may be inserted into the batting line up at the end. Players may take a position on the field provided the umpire has called time.

Misconduct of Constituents

- Each player, parent, Coach, Assistant Coach, Manager and Scorer shall abide by the club's Code of Conduct, as published on our website.
- Any parent, player or club official who repeatedly conducts himself/herself in a disorderly manner or act in a manner which may bring the game into disrepute, may be reported to the ESJBL Executive by an umpire, parent or official.
- Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players, officials, and spectators on and around playing fields.
- Any umpire appointed to control a game shall have the right to eject any player, parent or coach for persistently bad conduct, behaviour or actions which disrupt the game and is not in accordance with the rules of baseball.
- Incident Reports are to be submitted by the umpire to the ESJBL Secretary by 7.30pm as soon as possible after the game.

Right of Appeal of Members

The ESJBL Executive Committee findings are final.

Miscellaneous

- To simplify scoring at this level there is generally one scorer, who keeps scores for both teams.
- Birth certificates or copies must be made available to the ESJBL Executive upon request.
- Players who are injured and require attention may leave the game without penalty. If on base, a courtesy runner may be used until replaced by the original player. If at bat, the player may obtain treatment and if unable to be treated within a reasonable period of time, the player may be replaced or a courtesy player may continue the at-bat with the same count applied (the player, if removed for treatment, shall not bat again until their turn in the line-up again arrives).
- If in the field, a courtesy fielder may be used while treatment is applied.
- The courtesy replacement rule shall be:
 - Where possible, a substitute from the bench who has taken part in the game.
 - If no substitute is available, a player from the bench who has previously been replaced.
 - If neither of these are available, then either the last runner home or the last batter out, whichever is closest to him or her in the batting order.
- In T-Ball, one Coach of the defending side is permitted on the field whilst their team is fielding to assist in coaching the fielders and positioning them. This Coach must not interfere with the fielding or batting side.

Pitching Distances

Age Group Base Paths Pitching Distance U/8 – Aussie T-Ball 50 Feet 35 Feet

Results

Results are only used to decide the winning team.

T-Ball Guidelines

Guideline #1: THE BATTER

- The batter must wear a double earflap helmet.
- The umpire calls the next batter by saying "BATTER UP". The batter must stand in an area called the BATTER'S BOX, often not marked, adjacent to home plate.
- The batter must take a set stance in the batter's box and must not move the back foot after the umpire calls 'play ball'. Front foot movement is allowed. The umpire will warn the batter on the first occasion at that 'at bat'. On subsequent occasions the umpire will call 'foul' and one strike is recorded.
- The batter is allowed several levelling swings (practice swings) before attempting to hit the ball. If the batter accidentally knocks the ball off the tee with the levelling swing, this will not be called a foul and not count as a strike.
- The batter must attempt to hit the ball with a full natural swing. The ball must go at least 2 metres distance from the Tee. The batter is not allowed to tap (bunt) the ball off the Tee. Such action will result in a first warning for that player. Further bunts by that player during the game will be called a foul and count as a strike.
- The batter is allowed three attempts to hit the ball. After three strikes the batter is out. In T-Ball all fouls count as strikes.
- When the umpire calls 'play ball' the ball becomes live until the umpire calls 'Foul', 'Dead Ball' or 'Time'. On such a call the ball becomes dead and play is temporarily interrupted.
- If the batter mis-hits the ball which fails to be projected 2m or more into the playing field, this will be called a foul and counts as a strike.
- The batter must not throw (sling) the bat away after hitting the ball, but should simply drop it heading to 1st base. This is to prevent the batter's team-mates from being hit by a thrown bat.
- The umpire warns both teams about bat slinging before the game. If the bat is thrown (slung) during the game, the batter is given out after a 1st warning.
- The batter becomes a runner on hitting a 'FAIR BALL' (see definitions for Fair Ball), irrespective of where it lands in 'FAIR TERRITORY' (see definitions for Fair Territory).
- There is no 'infield fly' rule in T-Ball.
- When placing a tee for the batter, the stem of the tee shall be as close as possible to the home plate front edge. The tee shall be placed with safety the primary factor and for easy removal should a play at home plate occur. The umpire must remove the Tee and discarded bat to enable a runner to get home safely.

Guideline #2: THE RUNNER

- On hitting a fair ball the batter becomes a runner and must continue to wear a helmet.
- The runner may over-run 1st base without risk of being 'tagged-out' (see definitions for Tag/Tag Play) provided the runner makes no attempt to run to 2nd base.
- The runner must be in contact with their base before the ball is hit ("stealing" is not allowed in Tee-Ball). If the runner leaves the base before the ball is hit, the umpire will call 'dead ball' and warn the runner. If the runner leaves the base again, in the same innings, the runner is out.

- A base runner must run in a straight path/line between bases or a natural running arc between and around the bases. However, if in the umpire's opinion the runner deviates more than one metre from a fielder, standing in his or her running path/line (natural running path or arc), in possession of the ball and attempting to 'tag' the runner, the umpire shall call the runner out for 'running off the line'.
- If the runner is struck by a batted ball, before a fielder has the opportunity to make a play on the batted ball, the runner is out. The runner must try to avoid the ball.
- If a runner collides/bumps into a fielder who is trying to field a batted ball the runner is only 'out' for interference if, in the umpire's judgement, the collision was deliberate. In such cases the ball will be "dead" and runners will return to the last base legally occupied at the time of the collision unless forced to advance.
- If the runner over-runs 2nd or 3rd base they may be 'tagged-out' while off base.
- The runner must step on every base and home plate in succession.
- Whilst a ball is in the air ("fly ball"), runners should not run (if there is less than two out), but should remain touching their base (tagging up) until the ball is either caught or touches a fielder's glove. After the ball is caught or touches a fielder's glove, runners may advance at their own risk.
- If a runner is not touching their last legally occupied base when a batted fly ball (or any other ball) is caught on the full, the runner must return ('tag up') to their last legally occupied base, or may be put out. A runner can be put out by being tagged, or by the base being tagged, before the runner returns to the base.

Guideline #3: THE FIELDER

- The fielder must be correctly dressed including cap and glove.
- The fielders must take up normal 'baseball' fielding positions. An infielder must not field inside an imaginary line between 3rd and 1st base.
- The pitcher must stand with both feet on the pitching rubber until the ball is hit.
- The catcher must stand in the 'catcher's box', and must wear a full face helmet for protection.
- When in the umpire's opinion a particular passage of play has ceased and an 'INFIELDER' has possession of the ball and the infielder is within the confines of the diamond and is not making an attempt at a further play, the umpire shall call 'TIME' and the game is suspended. The ball is returned to the Tee.
- The outfield should throw the ball to an infielder rather than run the ball in. The umpire should not call 'time' until the OUTFIELDER has either thrown the ball to an infielder (rule 5.) or runs and steps on a base.
- A fielder may stand anywhere to field a batted ball and a runner must avoid interfering with that fielder or the runner will be given out for INTERFERENCE. The fielder may not stand in (OBSTRUCT) the runner's path without possession of the ball (even if a ball is being thrown and in flight. But this does not entitle the runner to purposely collide with the fielder. If, in the umpire's opinion the runner has been OBSTRUCTED, the umpire calls "OBSTRUCTION", the ball is dead, the runner is awarded one base from the last base the runner was legally entitled to.

- To encourage throwing to 1st and 3rd bases, if any ball thrown to a base (1st or 3rd), which in the opinion of the umpire, is an attempt to get the runner out, but results in that ball passing the fielder into foul territory, the ball shall be immediately called "dead" by the umpire when the ball crosses into foul territory. Runners will remain at their last legally occupied base (i.e. there is no passed ball rule) and any runners who pass a base after the umpire's call shall return to their previous base.

Guideline #4: THE TIME RULE

The "Time Rule" is used to stop the game at logical breaks in normal play. It is a 'control' on the game that prevents unnecessary 'panic' throwing and base running and thus reduces errors in T-Ball level. This is especially important considering the age of the players and the limited catching/throwing skills they possess.

The umpire shall call "time" when any of the following occur:

- The defence attempts no further play after the ball is in the secure possession of an infielder within the confines of the base paths. Base runners shall not pass another base.
- The ball becomes dead (ie by the ball passing 1st or 3rd base when thrown to make an out).
- Necessary due to player injury; conference, etc.
- Note: For the ball that is hit directly to an infielder and held in secure possession, the umpire should not call 'time' until the batter has reached 1st base.
- There is no 'half way' between bases. The play must continue until in the umpire's opinion no further play is being made by the defensive side or the runners do not choose to leave the base they hold.

Guideline #5: THE FORCE PLAY

- The force play occurs when a base runner must run to the next base, i.e., is 'forced' by a runner/s behind him or her.
- In T-Ball the force play can only happen when:
 - The batter hits the ball fair and is forced to run to 1st base. Note: The batter and any base runners who are forced to run are ONLY EVER forced to run one base. Once the batter or any other forced runner reaches 1st base or the base they are forced to, the FORCE is automatically removed.
 - A base runner, on base, loses his entitlement to occupy that base if a following base runner is forced to the base the runner is occupying (e.g (1) runner on 1st, batter hits a fair ball and is forced to run to 1st, the runner already on 1st is forced to 2nd e.g.(2) runners on 1st & 2nd, batter hits a fair ball and forced to run to 1st, runner already on 1st is forced to run to 2nd and forces runner on 2nd to run to 3rd.
 - If 1st, 2nd and 3rd bases are occupied by runners (i.e., "bases loaded"), this would be a 'force' to every base, including home plate.
 - When a forced runner is put out the force is automatically removed from any preceding runners.
- A runner who is 'forced' to the next base can be "PUT OUT" by a fielder who only has to touch the base to which the runner is forced with any part of their body while in possession

of the ball. This is usually done by stepping onto the base, or sweeping the foot across the base.

- Any runner, FORCED or UNFORCED, may be TAGGED OUT when they are not in contact with a base, while the ball is 'live'.
- Any runner be tagged out while occupying a base to which they are not legally entitled (i.e batter hits a fair ball, forced to 1st, runner already on first does not run. That runner can be tagged out while standing on 1st base, by virtue of the fact that the runner is forced by the batter/runner to 2nd base. The 1st base runner loses his or her right to occupy 1st base).

Guideline #6: STARTING AND ENDING A GAME

- Play shall commence when:
 - The catcher is inside the catcher's box, as estimated by umpire.
 - The pitcher is in contact with the pitcher's plate.
 - The fielders take positions within fair territory.
 - The batter takes stance in the batter's box, after the umpire calls PLAY or PLAY BALL. The fielders cannot change position until the ball is hit. The batter cannot appreciably change the position of their back foot of their original stance prior to the umpire calling PLAY or PLAY BALL.
- Coaches can interrupt a game by signalling the umpire to call "TIME" (but must not call "TIME" themselves). This suspends the game until the umpire re-starts the game with "PLAY BALL".

Definition of Terms

AN APPEAL is the act of a fielder in claiming violation of the rules by the offensive team, i.e. touching the base when a base runner: (a) hasn't tagged up (b) missed touching a base.

BASE is one of four points, which must be touched in sequence in order to score a run.

BASE COACH is permitted to be stationed near first or third base to direct the batter and the runners. The Coach must remain in foul territory adjacent to the base & must not touch the runner.

CATCH is the act of a defensive player (fielder) getting in their hands or glove, secure possession of a ball in flight and firmly holding it. It is not a catch if in falling down the ball is dropped. It is not a catch if in flight it touches an umpire, offensive player or a net etc. If possession is lost in the act of throwing after the catch is taken, then the catch shall stand. (This is called a play subsequent to the catch).

DEAD BALL is a temporary suspension of play.

FAIR BALL is one that:

- a) settles on or is first touched in fair territory between home plate and first base and home plate and third base.
- b) first touches fair territory anywhere on the field and travels into foul territory beyond first or third base.
- c) Touches first or third base.
- d) Bounds over first or third base.

FAIR TERRITORY is that part of the field within and including, the first base and third base lines, (The marked lines of a baseball field are in fair territory)

FOUL BALL is one that:

- a) Settles, or is first touched in foul territory between home and 1st base and home and 3rd base.
- b) First touches foul territory beyond first or third base. (In this instance it does not matter where the ball settles.)

FOUL TERRITORY is that part of the playing field outside the first and third baselines to the passed ball line (or fence).

FORCE PLAY is a play in which a runner legally loses their right to occupy a base by reason of the batter becoming a runner. Note: The "out" of a following runner removes the force.

INNING is that portion of a game within which the teams alternate on offence and defence and in which there are three outs for each team.

LIVE BALL is a ball that is in play.

OUT is one of the three required batter retirements of an offensive team during its time at bat.

PASSED BALL is one that is thrown by a fielder and settled outside foul territory.

PASSED BALL LINE is one outside the foul lines that defines the playable area. Only used in the absence of boundary fences.

TAGGING UP is the act of a runner returning to his last legally occupied base where legally required. In any situation where a ball is caught on the full, a runner must be in contact with his last legally occupied base at the time of the catch or at the time the ball first touches the fielders glove. If the runner is off the base at the time of the catch the runner must return to his last legally occupied base to avoid being put out. A runner returning to tag up at a base must beat the ball to the base to be safe.

RUN is scored by an offensive player who advances from the batter to runner and then touches 1st, 2nd, 3rd and home plate in that order.

SAFE is a declaration by the umpire that a runner is entitled to the base for which the runner was trying.

TAG is the action of a fielder in:

- a) Touching a base with their body while holding the ball securely in their hand or glove in the course of a forced play.
- b) Touching any part of a runner or the runner's clothing with the ball or with their hand or glove in which the ball is securely held.

TIME is the announcement by an umpire of a legal interruption of play, during which the ball is dead.