

MANHATTAN PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT
T-Ball League Rules

The Optimist Club T-Ball program is governed by rules designed to meet the following goals, established by the Optimist Club Board.

1. All players will be given an opportunity to play each game.
2. Sportsmanship will be promoted at all times.
3. Player's health and safety shall be promoted at all times.

A. AGE - Participants in the Optimist T-Ball league shall be those in grade K of the current school year.

B. PLAYING FIELD

1. The diamond shall have 50-foot baselines.
2. The pitching distance is designated by a circle with a 10' radius. The center of the circle will be 35 feet from the back point of home plate.
3. The fair/foul distance line at home plate shall be constituted by an arc with a 12-foot radius measured from the back point of home plate and extending from the 1st base foul line to the 3rd base foul line.

C. TEAM ORGANIZATION

1. Before any boy or girl is permitted to participate in Optimist T-Ball league play, he or she must be registered with the Parks and Recreation Department.
2. A youngster who moves into the Manhattan area will be assigned to a team by the MPRD Supervisor. Other late signers shall be placed in a waiting pool and assigned to teams by the MPRD Supervisor as spots become available.
3. All teams are organized by the Parks and Recreation Athletics Department.
4. Once a team is established, each boy or girl will remain on this team. Brothers or sisters who are in the same league may be placed on the same team for reason of family convenience. No player may switch teams under any circumstances except when approved by the MPRD Supervisor.
5. Coach Assignment Policy: Coaches will be assigned to the team on which their son(s) or daughter(s) are playing if so desired.

D. EQUIPMENT

1. In the Optimist T-Ball program, any glove is permitted at any position. A child may choose to play without a glove if circumstances deem necessary, but the use of a glove is highly recommended.
2. Metal cleats of any type shall not be worn by any player participating in the Optimist T-Ball program.
3. Aluminum bats will be allowed.
4. The batting tee will be placed directly in front of home plate.
5. In the interest of safety, the following equipment rules shall be enforced:
 - a. A protective NOCSAE-approved batting helmet covering the ears must be worn by any player who is on deck, at bat, or playing the catcher position.
 - b. Exposed jewelry such as earrings of any kind, wrist watches, bracelets, neck chains, rings, and nose jewelry cannot be worn during the game. The umpire will stop the game and ask for exposed jewelry to be removed.

6. During games, all equipment must be kept inside the dugout.
7. Coaches are responsible for contacting the MPRD Recreation Supervisor of Athletics to replace lost, damaged, and unusable equipment.
8. Game balls are provided by the Parks and Recreation Department.

E. COACHES AND OFFICIALS

1. Coaches are strongly encouraged to arrange and conduct a meeting with the parents of their players during the first week of practice.
2. Bat boys and bat girls are not allowed in Optimist T-Ball. Only coaches and team members are allowed in the dugout or on the field. The umpire has authority to remove unauthorized people from the dugout.
3. Tobacco and Vaping products are prohibited in all MPRD Facilities
4. By Manhattan City ordinance, alcohol is not allowed in Manhattan City Parks.
5. Coaches and umpires will meet at home plate prior to the start of each game.
6. Coaches of the fielding team may choose to stand in the outfield grass or out of play area (foul ball territory) to help the fielders.

F. PLAYER & COACH CONDUCT

1. Harassment of officials and/or umpires by coaches, spectators, etc. will result in ejection from the game.
2. Once ejected from a game, the individual must leave the park. The field supervisor will be summoned, if necessary, to escort ejected persons out of the park. Coaches who are ejected will not be allowed to return to the park for the remainder of the evening.
3. Poor sportsmanship (such as intentional throwing of bat, glove, cap, etc.) by a player and/or coach will not be tolerated.
4. Unsportsmanlike behavior may result in penalties being imposed upon the offending individual, including coaches, participants, or spectators. Penalties may include banishment from further participation in Recreation Department activities. Penalties will be decided by the Recreation Supervisor of Athletics.

G. THE GAME

1. A regulation game in Optimist T-Ball league will be 60 minutes or 4 innings, whichever comes first. Once this time limit has expired, no new innings shall be started.
2. In the Optimist T-Ball league, half-innings consists of all present players batting.
3. Number of players in the lineup:
 - a. A team will be allowed everyone to play the field.
 - 1) Four fielders must be positioned in the outfield unless there are less than 10 players available.
 - 2) The fielding pitcher must be positioned on the mound when the ball is hit.
 - 3) The catcher will position him/herself approximately 45 degrees and 4 feet behind and to the side facing the batter.
 - b. A team may play with as few as seven players if there are absences. If there are less than seven team members, the coaches, umpires, and the field supervisor may agree to play the game by borrowing players, etc.
 - c. If a team has ten or less players, all must play unless there is an injury or illness.
 - d. If a team begins play with less than ten players, late-arriving team members must be inserted numerically in the batting order. A late-arriving player (or players) shall assume their defensive positions during the first dead ball occurrence following their arrival. The umpire must be notified.

- e. If, at any time during the game, less than seven team members are eligible and available to continue playing, the game will be continued only if head coaches, the umpire, and the t-ball coordinator agree to do so.
4. No score or team standings will be announced or recorded during or following a game.

H. BATTING

1. All participants that are present will bat in a half inning.
2. If a player is unable to take or to complete his/her turn at bat due to injury, illness, etc., his/her spot in the order will be skipped and the next player in the lineup will bat.
3. If a player who previously was unable to bat due to illness or injury is able to take his/her next turn at bat, he/she will be reinstated in the batting order.
4. If an eligible player or players arrive late to the game, then they must be inserted numerically in the batting order.
5. Each batter will remain a batter until the ball is put into fair play. NOTE: A foul ball that is legally caught by a fielder will be counted as an out. The batter is out.
6. Any batted ball must travel to or past the twelve foot arc in front of home plate in order to be a fair ball.
7. FINAL BATTER:
 - a. A team will bat all present participants each inning.
 - b. The last batter must be announced to the opposing team before the at-bat takes place.
 - c. If the last batter bats the ball legally into fair play, he/she becomes a base runner. It shall be considered a force-out when a fielder, while in possession of ball, tags any base before the batter-base runner reaches that base.
8. All team members of the team at bat must remain behind the dugout screen or fence except the batter and on-deck batter. The on-deck batter must remain in the on-deck circle until the batter has completed his/her time at bat and a dead ball has been called.
9. After hitting the ball or in attempting to do so, the batter will not be allowed to throw or toss the bat, intentionally or unintentionally, in any manner. A player who throws their bat will be out. The ball will be dead. All base runners will return to the base last touched at the time of the pitch. The decision as to whether the bat is thrown or not will be made by the umpire as a judgment call.
10. The infield fly rule will not be in effect.

I. BASERUNNING

1. Leading off and stealing are not allowed in the Optimist T-Ball league. Base runners must remain on the base until the ball is batted into play by the batter. Violation of this rule results in the base runner being called out.
2. OVERTHROWS After the first overthrow (first thrown ball which gets past the intended fielder), a dead ball will be called.

NOTE: This rule is intended to reduce the confusion following overthrows which are prevalent at this age and to simplify the administration of advancing base runners (see rule I-3). There is no advancement on an overthrow.

EXAMPLE 1: A ground ball is hit to the shortstop who fields the ball and overthrows the first baseman (or the ball gets past the first baseman because he/she mishandles it). The umpire will call a dead ball and the batter-runner will be awarded first base and any other base runners will be awarded bases accordingly.

EXAMPLE 2: A ball is hit to the left fielder who throws the ball and misses the cut-off fielder. A dead ball will be called and bases awarded accordingly.

3. **DEAD BALL** When a dead ball has been called by the umpire, base runners less than half the distance between two bases must return to the base last touched. Base runners more than half the distance between two bases must advance to the next base beyond the one last touched at the time of the dead ball. Umpires judgment will determine which base a base runner must go to.
4. The following rules shall govern the “crash rule,” i.e.: the situation involving contact between fielders and base runners at any base including home.
 - a. A base runner is not required to slide at any time. However, if a fielder clearly has possession of the ball and is waiting for the base runner, then it is the responsibility of the base runner to avoid contact with the fielder. If contact is made, it must be in an attempt to slide.
 - b. A fielder cannot block the base or baseline without clear possession of the ball. When waiting for a thrown ball, the fielder (including the catcher) must be positioned out of the baseline. Straddling the base is not out of the baseline. A fielder can move toward the base runner only when in clear possession of the ball.
 - c. **PENALTIES:**
 - 1) If a base runner makes contact with a fielder in clear possession of the ball other than in an attempt to slide, an immediate dead ball will be called. The base runner will be called out. If the base runner deliberately contacts the fielder with great force, the base runner is subject to ejection in addition to being called out. All other base runners are returned to the last base touched at the time of the dead ball.
 - 2) If a fielder is blocking the baseline and does not have clear possession of the ball, any contact (other than deliberate contact by either player) shall be ruled obstruction; and bases shall be granted accordingly.
 - d. When the fielder, base runner, and ball arrive simultaneously at a base, the umpire will rule on any illegal or unnecessary contact that may occur. In any case, no player may initiate deliberate contact without being subject to penalties.

J. DEFENSIVE PLAY

1. After a batted ball is fair and in play, the umpire will call time when the ball is in possession of the pitcher or any infielder, and all play has ceased. **EXCEPTION – FINAL BATTER** (rule H-7). Base runners must return or advance depending on their position in the baseline when time out is called (see rule I-3). Umpire’s judgment will determine when time-out is called.
2. The pitcher must be positioned on the mound when the ball is hit.
3. No fielders may play closer than the regular base paths when the ball is hit.

L. GENERAL

1. National Baseball Congress Rules are in order when situations are not covered in these printed rules.
2. The T-Ball coordinator will determine the readiness of the field for play of all ball games.
3. The T-Ball coordinator will have power to rule on all infractions.
4. For all games, the home team will occupy the first base dugout. The visiting team will occupy the third base dugout. Home team/visiting team is designated on the league schedule.
5. Rained out games will be rescheduled when possible by the T-Ball coordinator.
6. **REMINDER:** Bat boys/bat girls are not allowed in Optimist T-Ball. This rule is instituted solely for safety’s sake.