

EBSA ROOKIE DIVISION RULES

Spring 2026

ROOKIE RULES AT-A-GLANCE

1. **FIELD SETUP:**
 - BASE DISTANCE: 50 feet

 2. **GAME FORMAT:**
 - Approximately 1 hour
 - Approximately 2 innings
 - Every player bats each inning
 - Every player plays the field

 2. **BATTING + BASERUNNING:**
 - No outs are recorded
 - Every player reaches base safely
 - Runners advance one base at a time
 - When the last batter in an inning hits, all runners—including the batter—advance to home plate.
-

I. OVERVIEW

1. **ABOUT THE ROOKIE DIVISION:** The Rookie Division is a fun, instructional introduction to baseball for children ages 4–6 (Pre-K and Kindergarten). The focus is on building confidence, learning fundamentals, and enjoying the game. Success is measured by participation, improvement, and enjoyment of the game.

2. **PLAYERS ARE INTRODUCED TO:**
 - a. Throwing and catching
 - b. Bat control and swing mechanics
 - c. Base running and field awareness
 - d. Basic situational understanding

The season begins with tee hitting and gradually introduces coach pitching as players develop.

3. **GAME FORMAT:**
 - a. Games are played on Saturday mornings
 - b. Each game lasts approximately one hour (about two innings)
 - c. Every player bats each inning and plays in the field

4. **UNIFORMS:** Players receive a complete uniform: shirt, pants, socks, and hat.

II. PRACTICES

Practices are optional but encouraged and should remain short and engaging.

1. **RECOMMENDED STRUCTURE:**
 - a. 45–60 minutes per session is recommended
 - b. May be held during the week or before games

2. **TEAMS OFTEN:**
 - a. Use the first 10–15 minutes before games as warm-up time
 - b. Begin practice up to 30 minutes before game time
 - c. Parent participation is encouraged when welcomed by coaches to provide more individual instruction

3. **PRACTICE LOCATION:** A formal field is not required. Open grass areas are ideal for this level.

III. GAME GUIDELINES

1. **FIELD SETUP**

- a. Each team has the field for one hour
- b. Bases should be spaced 50–60 feet apart
- c. Throw-down or pre-painted bases may be used

2. **BATTING**

- a. Every player bats each inning
- b. No outs are recorded
- c. Every player reaches base safely
- d. Runners advance one base at a time

3. **LAST BATTER RULE:** When the final batter hits, all runners—including the batter—advance to home plate.

IV. ON-FIELD COACHING

1. **OFFENSE**

- a. A coach or parent may stand at each base to guide runners
- b. A coach assists at home plate as needed

2. **DEFENSE**

- a. All players are positioned in the field (no catcher)
- b. Coaches may remain on the field to provide direction

V. COACH PITCH GUIDELINES

1. Maintain a steady pace of play
2. After 5–6 unsuccessful pitches, transition the player to a tee
3. **PITCHING APPROACH:**
 - a. Avoid lobbing the ball
 - b. Deliver pitches on a straight line into the swing path

- c. Pitch from one knee for a consistent, level trajectory

VI. SAFETY

1. **HELMETS:** Batters, base runners, and on-deck hitters must wear helmets.

2. **THROWN BATS:**

- a. Bats are not to be thrown following a swing.
- b. If a player has trouble dropping their bat rather than throwing it, please ensure other players are FAR away while they take their at-bat.

3. **PLAYER CONDUCT AND POSITIONING**

- a. Players must remain on the bench unless batting, on-deck, running the bases, or in the field
- b. On-deck hitters must warm up in a designated safe area
- c. No player not involved in the current play may enter the field during live play

4. **CONTACT AND WEATHER**

- a. Coaches should always be aware of weather and field conditions
- b. Play stops immediately at the first sign of lightning or based on communication from the EBSA official on-site per EBSA weather policies.
- c. Commissioners determine field conditions and will relay cancellations and rescheduling to league coaches.
- d. While EBSA will make best efforts to communicate globally, it is the responsibility of coaches to communicate cancellations to their teams.

5. **LIGHTING WARNING SYSTEM IN SELECT EVANSTON PARKS:**

The City of Evanston's Recreation Division installed lightning prediction and warning systems at James Park and Robert Crown Park in Spring 2007.

The warning system measures the surrounding atmosphere's electrostatic energy and warns of an impending lightning strike. If you are in the area of the warning system and conditions favorable to the creation of lightning have been detected, you will hear one 15-second blast of the horn and a strobe light will begin flashing. This signals that you must immediately seek an appropriate, safe shelter. The strobe will continue flashing until safe conditions return.

1. You may resume activities only after three 5-second blasts of the horn are sounded and the strobe light stops flashing.
2. If you remain outdoors after the warning is issued, you are putting yourself at serious risk.
3. The system will operate from 9 am to 10 pm seven days a week from April through November.

ADDITIONAL LIGHTNING PROCEDURES

1. **LIGHTING WARNING SYSTEM:** The lightning warning system does not need to activate for the 30-minute rule referenced below to take effect. Umpires have been instructed to follow the 30-minute rule regardless of other "all clear" signals.
2. **THUNDER:** When thunder is heard or a cloud to ground lightning bolt is seen, the storm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play and take shelter immediately.
3. **30-MINUTE RULE:** Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count reset the "clock" and another 30-minute count should begin.

SHELTER INFORMATION

Not all parks have shelter for heavy weather or large groups.

1. **JAMES PARK:** Use the Levy Center as a primary shelter, if the field house is open, it may also be used as a shelter. DO NOT use the metal canopy in the concourse as shelter during lightning events.

2. **ROBERT CROWN:** Use the Robert Crown Center. All players are required to stay under the covered area by the main entrance if not inside the building.
3. **FOSTER:** If open, use the Fleetwood-Jourdain Center.

VII. COACH EQUIPMENT RETURN POLICY

1. **AFTER THE SEASON:** Following completion of your last game the Manager is responsible for making arrangements with the commissioner(s) to return the equipment.
2. **ALL EQUIPMENT MUST BE CHECKED BACK IN:** Regardless of whether you are coaching in the following season, all equipment must be checked back in either via communication, or in person to ensure proper inventory. Missing tees or catcher's gear will incur fees for coaches as detailed in initial welcome notes from commissioners or the league.