



Official Game Rules School Baseball Classic Rhein-Main

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SG Sportzentrum Rosenhöhe
Lauterbornweg 7, Offenbach am Main

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OFFICIAL GAME RULES

SCHOOL BASEBALL CLASSIC

Beginner-Friendly Rules for School and Youth Teams

These rules were developed specifically for the **School Baseball Classic**. The tournament is primarily intended for school teams as well as players who have little or no previous experience in baseball.

The main objectives are:

- Fun and enjoyment of baseball
- Fairness and mutual respect
- Safety of all players
- Simple and easy-to-understand rules
- A game that is as balanced as possible
- Avoiding unnecessary risk of injury

The rules are generally based on baseball, but have been simplified for the School Baseball Classic.

RULE 1 – BASIC DEFINITIONS

Section 1 – OUT

A player is **OUT** when one of the following situations occurs:

a) Fly Out

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A batted ball is caught directly in the air by a fielder before the ball touches the ground.

The batter is therefore **OUT**.

b) Force Out

A runner is required to advance to the next base due to the game situation. The fielder gets the ball to the appropriate base before the runner and touches the base with one foot.

The runner is **OUT**.

c) Tag Out

A fielder has possession of the ball and touches a runner with the ball while the runner is not safely on a base.

The runner is **OUT**.

A tag must be made in a controlled manner and without unnecessary force.

d) Strikeout

A batter receives three strikes without making a legal hit.

The batter is **OUT**.

e) Leaving the Base

A runner may not leave his or her base prematurely.

RULE 2 – SAFE

A runner is **SAFE** when the runner reaches a base and is safely on it before the defense can make the runner **OUT**.

A runner may remain on a base as long as the game situation does not force the runner to advance to the next base.

RULE 3 – STRIKE

A strike is counted when:

a) the batter swings at the ball and misses;

- b) the batter hits a foul ball and has fewer than two strikes;
- c) the batter does not hit a pitch that the umpire calls a strike.

With two strikes, a normal foul ball does not automatically result in a third strike.

RULE 4 – FOUL BALL

A foul ball is a batted ball that lands outside the fair playing area.

A foul ball is generally a **dead ball**.

Runners may not advance on a foul ball.

RULE 5 – RUN / SCORE

A run is scored when a runner reaches the following bases in the proper order:

First Base → Second Base → Third Base → Home Plate

without being made OUT beforehand.

RULE 6 – INNING

A team normally ends its offensive half-inning after three OUTs.

For the School Baseball Classic, an additional limit applies so that games do not become unnecessarily long.

Maximum Number of Batters

A team may send a maximum of **10 batters** to the plate during each half-inning.

If three OUTs are recorded before the 10th batter, the offensive half-inning ends earlier.

If the 10th batter begins his or her at-bat, the offensive half-inning ends after that at-bat has been completed, regardless of how many OUTs have been recorded.

The team then switches to defense.

Example

A team has recorded only two OUTs.

The 10th batter comes to the plate.

After that at-bat is completed, the offensive half-inning ends and the team switches to defense.

This rule applies regardless of the result of the final at-bat.

RULE 7 – TIME LIMIT

In addition, the tournament organizer may establish a time limit for each game.

The recommended maximum game time is:

90 minutes.

The umpire or tournament director will announce in good time when the playing time expires.

After the Time Limit Expires

- An at-bat that has already started is completed.
- The current half-inning is then completed.
- The game ends after that.

A new inning should not be started after the time limit has expired.

Priority

At an official tournament, the time limit announced by the organizer before the game takes precedence.

For example, the organizer may set a 90-minute limit for preliminary-round games and a longer playing time for final games.

RULE 8 – CONTINUOUS BATTING ORDER

The School Baseball Classic generally uses a **Continuous Batting Order**.

This means:

All players on a team are included in the batting order and are allowed to bat during the game.

It does not matter whether a player is currently playing on defense or is temporarily not playing in the field.

Example

A team has 12 players.

All 12 players are entered into the batting order:

1. Player A
2. Player B
3. Player C
4. Player D
5. Player E
6. Player F
7. Player G
8. Player H
9. Player I
10. Player J
11. Player K
12. Player L

After Player L, the batting order starts again with Player A.

Benefit

This allows players with little baseball experience to regularly have the opportunity to bat.

It is not permitted to deliberately and permanently exclude individual players from batting if they are part of the team and eligible to play.

RULE 9 – SUBSTITUTIONS

Players may be substituted in and out during the game.

A player may return to the game after taking a break.

This applies especially when a player:

- is tired,
- needs a break,
- does not feel well,
- may be at risk of injury,
- has previously been used as a pitcher or catcher.

Safety Rule

A coach should remove a player from the game at any time if the coach believes that the player is physically overwhelmed or is no longer safe to continue playing.

The player may subsequently return to the game once sufficiently recovered.

RULE 10 – PITCHING

The pitcher must throw the ball to the batter in a controlled and safe manner.

In the School Baseball Classic, safety takes priority over pitching speed.

The following are not permitted:

- Deliberately throwing extremely hard at inexperienced batters
- Intentionally throwing at a batter's body
- Intimidation pitches
- Unnecessarily dangerous pitches

A pitcher does not have to throw at maximum speed.

A controlled pitch appropriate to the skill level of the batters is expressly encouraged.

RULE 11 – PITCHER REST AND PITCHER SUBSTITUTIONS

A pitcher may be replaced at any time if:

- the pitcher becomes tired,
- the pitcher is experiencing pain,
- the coach is concerned about overuse,
- the pitches can no longer be controlled safely,
- the player personally requests a break.

A coach should not force a tired player to continue pitching.

Principle

Safety comes before the result of the game.

There is no obligation to use a player as a pitcher if doing so creates an increased risk of injury.

RULE 12 – COACH PITCH

If a team does not have a suitable pitcher available, a **Coach Pitch** may be used.

Coach Pitch is also permitted when:

- the team does not have an experienced pitcher,
- the available pitcher is tired,
- the pitcher needs a break,
- the pitcher cannot continue pitching due to an injury,
- there is no suitable player available for the pitching position,
- the coach decides for safety reasons that Coach Pitch is necessary.

Procedure

A coach from the team takes over pitching to his or her own batter.

The coach stands at the pitching position designated for the tournament or at a safe position determined by the umpire.

The coach should throw the ball so that the batter can hit it in a controlled manner.

Purpose

Coach Pitch is not intended to create a competitive advantage.

Its primary purpose is to ensure that a team can continue participating in the game despite not having an available or rested pitcher.

RULE 13 – COACH PITCH AND FAIRNESS

A coach must not deliberately give his or her own batters an advantage by throwing particularly easy pitches.

The pitch should be delivered as consistently and predictably as possible.

The umpire may ask a coach to adjust the pitching speed or distance if this is necessary for safety or fairness.

No Coach Pitch as a Tactical Advantage

A team should not use Coach Pitch solely to obtain an easier or stronger offensive advantage.

Coach Pitch is primarily a **safety and beginner rule**.

RULE 14 – CATCHER

The catcher is positioned behind home plate.

Because the catcher position is particularly demanding and safety-sensitive, a player does not have to remain at catcher throughout the game.

Catcher Substitutions

A catcher may be replaced if:

- the catcher becomes tired,
- a break is needed,
- the catcher is experiencing pain,
- the catcher no longer feels safe,
- the coach identifies signs of overuse.

No Available Catcher

If a team does not have a suitable catcher available, the tournament organizer may allow a simplified solution.

For example, a team may play without a regular catcher if this has been agreed with the umpire before the game begins.

RULE 15 – PITCHER AND CATCHER ARE NOT REQUIRED POSITIONS

No team is required to use the same player continuously or simultaneously as pitcher or catcher.

Especially with young or inexperienced players, these positions should be rotated regularly.

A coach may remove a player from either position at any time if the coach identifies signs of overuse or an increased risk of injury.

RULE 16 – FIELDING POSITIONS

The defense generally consists of:

- Catcher
- Pitcher
- First Baseman
- Second Baseman
- Third Baseman
- Shortstop
- Left Fielder
- Center Fielder
- Right Fielder



For smaller teams, the tournament organizer may reduce the number of defensive players.

The final number of defensive players will be announced before the tournament.

RULE 17 – RUNNING THE BASES

Runners must advance around the bases in the following order:

First Base → Second Base → Third Base → Home Plate

The bases must generally be touched.

A runner may slightly alter his or her running path when necessary to avoid a collision.

RULE 18 – COLLISIONS

Collisions should be avoided whenever possible.

Runners may not deliberately run into fielders.

Fielders may not deliberately obstruct runners when they do not have possession of the ball or are not directly involved in the play.

No Aggressive Sliding

For the School Baseball Classic, **aggressive sliding is generally not recommended.**

The tournament organizer may prohibit sliding entirely if this is considered appropriate based on the age, experience level, or condition of the playing field.

RULE 19 – HELMET REQUIREMENT

Every batter must wear an appropriate baseball helmet.

Every runner must wear a helmet while running between bases.

A helmet may not be deliberately removed.

RULE 20 – PLAYER EQUIPMENT

Each player should wear a jersey or shirt with a clearly visible number.

Baseball pants are not mandatory.

Normal sports clothing is sufficient.

The Offenbach Twins may, where possible, provide the following equipment:

- Baseball gloves
- Baseball bats
- Baseball helmets
- Other necessary baseball equipment

RULE 21 – SHOES

Normal athletic shoes are permitted.

The following are not permitted:

- Metal cleats
- Shoes with sharp metal spikes
- Shoes that present an increased risk of injury

Normal athletic shoes or baseball shoes with molded plastic cleats are recommended.

RULE 22 – FAIR PLAY

All players must respect the decisions of the umpires.

Insults, deliberate provocation, and unsportsmanlike conduct are not permitted.

This applies to:

- Players
- Coaches
- Team staff
- Team members
- Spectators

RULE 23 – SAFETY TAKES PRIORITY OVER A RULE ADVANTAGE

If a game situation creates an immediate risk of injury, the umpire may stop the game immediately.

The umpire may:

- Call “Time”
- Stop a play
- Return runners to their previous bases
- Require a player to be substituted for safety reasons
- Prohibit dangerous play

Player safety takes priority over any potential competitive advantage.

RULE 24 – INJURIES

If a player is injured, the game shall be stopped immediately when necessary.

An injured player does not have to continue playing.

The coach or umpire, together with the player, determines whether the player can continue playing.

If a serious injury is suspected, the player must not be pressured to continue playing.

RULE 25 – WEATHER AND SUSPENSION OF PLAY

In the event of lightning, heavy rain, dangerous field conditions, or other hazards, the umpire or tournament organizer may suspend or terminate the game.

In the event of lightning, the playing field must be left immediately.

RULE 26 – UMPIRE DECISIONS

The umpire makes decisions concerning game situations.

With beginner teams, the umpire should briefly explain difficult situations whenever possible.

Umpire decisions must be respected during the game.

RULE 27 – UNCLEAR SITUATIONS

Not every possible game situation can be described in these rules.

If a situation is not specifically covered by these rules, the umpire shall make a decision based on:

1. Safety
2. Fairness
3. The basic principles of baseball
4. The rules of the School Baseball Classic

RULE 28 – PURPOSE OF THE GAME

The School Baseball Classic is intended to give teams the opportunity to learn and experience baseball regardless of their level of experience.

Therefore:

An inexperienced player should not be excluded from the game because of a mistake.

The rules are intended to keep the game understandable, safe, and fair.

RULE 29 – PRINCIPLE FOR COACHES

Coaches have a special responsibility for the safety of their players.

Coaches should pay particular attention to signs of fatigue in pitchers and catchers.

A coach may say at any time:

“We are changing the pitcher.”

or

“We are changing the catcher.”

if the coach considers this necessary for the player's safety.

Likewise, a coach may request **Coach Pitch** if the team does not have a suitable or rested pitcher available.

For safety reasons, the umpire should generally support such a substitution.

RULE 30 – RECOMMENDED TOURNAMENT FORMAT

For a beginner-level tournament, the following format is recommended:

Game time: 90 minutes

Maximum innings: 7

Maximum batters per half-inning: 10

Batting order: Continuous Batting Order

Pitcher: Player or Coach Pitch

Catcher: Player or simplified catcher rule when using Coach Pitch

Sliding: Not recommended or subject to tournament organizer rules

Metal cleats: Prohibited

Helmet: Mandatory for batters and runners

Pitching: Controlled and safe; speed is not the deciding factor

Substitutions: May be made at any time for safety reasons

RULE 31 – FINAL PROVISION

These rules are a simplified version of the rules of baseball and were developed specifically for the School Baseball Classic.

They are not a complete official baseball rulebook.

The objectives of the School Baseball Classic are:

LEARN BASEBALL

PLAY TOGETHER

PLAY FAIR

PLAY SAFELY

HAVE FUN PLAYING SPORTS

In the event of any conflict between these rules and a tournament rule expressly announced before the tournament begins, the current tournament rule shall take precedence.

“School Baseball Classic” is a designation that has been used and claimed by **Offenbach Twins Baseball Club e. V.** since 2014 for a baseball event.

Offenbach Twins Baseball Club e. V.