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## Squirt Division Rules

revised April 22, 2017

### GOALS

Our ultimate goal of the Halton Hills Minor Baseball Association (HHMBA) is for each player to have an enjoyable season, while enhancing their development, have fun, increase their physical fitness level and engage in new friendships through the sport of baseball. *The Squirt division is a developmental league, where the emphasis is on FUN, ACTION and POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE, where players are gaining the necessary skills to take part in the older ranks of the HHMBA and the adult game of baseball.*

By the season-end, HHMBA strives for the following developmental accomplishments for players participating in the Squirt Division:

#### Offensive:

- To be able to hit the ball from a “coach pitch” or equivalent pitching machine within 5 pitches with a square follow through swing.
- To understand the concept of base running with the understanding of the goal to safely reach “Home”.

#### Defensive:

- To be able to locate all positions within the infield and assume their assigned position in a timely manner.
- To be able to catch a tossed ball and field ground balls at an increased distance from that of the HHMBA’s TBall division.
- To be able to throw a ball with the fundamentals of throwing a ball (Point, Step, Throw) as per the Rally Cap Program.
- To understand the concept of throwing a fielded ball to first base upon receiving a ball and basic ability at throwing the ball to first base.

### WHAT EACH WEEK LOOKS LIKE

Please arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start time so the players can warm up and the coaches can complete the lineup. Each evening begins each evening with a 30 minute practice, based on an infield and an outfield Rally Cap drill. The HHMBA encourages Parent Involvement during this activity. At the completion of the practice drill, players are brought together on the diamond and they participate in a 75 minute game. during the 75 minute game, two defensive coaches are allowed on the field during the inning, and an extra offensive coach is allowed, in addition to the 1st and 3rd base coaches.

***The season is divided into two sections. The first section will be an introduction to Squirt and the Rally Cap program, where safety balls will be used and the first section of the Rally Cap program. A safety ball will be used and the players will hit from a tee. The week after the House League tournament, will be the culminating point of the first part of the season and will be summarized with testing for the first cap level.***

***The second part of the season will see the league move to a “more formal” foundation of skills for players to be able to be called up for and moved into the Rookie Ball program. The new session will involve the introduction of regular baseballs and coach delivered pitches. This second session will continue to the House League Day of Champs, when players will be evaluated for their second cap, as part of the Rally Cap program.***

### **Official Playing Rules**

1. All House League games shall be played in accordance with Official Rules of Baseball, as set forth by Baseball Canada, except where modified by the rules contained in this document, Rules and Regulations of Central Ontario Baseball Association (COBA) or Ontario Baseball Association (OBA).

### **Squirt Division at a Glance**

Rally Cap Drill Practice start time	6:00 p.m.
Game start time	6:30 p.m.
No new inning time	7:30 p.m.
Drop dead time/Evening concludes	8:00 p.m.
Number of innings per mini game (* then change teams)	4
Minimum number of innings of play per player	Every player plays every inning.
Maximum number of innings at a position per evening	1
Pitching distance (* Pitchers Helper’s line)	40 feet
Base distance	50 feet

## Equipment

1. Uniforms: Players must wear the uniform issued by their respective Association for all league games and finals. Players showing up for a game wearing a different shirt, pants or different coloured cap of their own choosing WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PLAY. The coaches will ensure that all of their players are wearing proper uniforms. Players losing any part of their issued uniform must arrange with their coach to purchase a replacement.
2. Compression sleeves: Players may wear a compression sleeve on one or both arms, however the sleeves cannot be grey, white or distracting in nature. (The same rule applies to clothing worn underneath the uniform for warmth, ie sweatshirt, or for any other reason).
3. Bases: a white and orange SAFETY bag will be used at first base, with the orange portion resting in foul territory.
4. Gloves: We recommend a leather glove, as balls tend to bounce out of plastic gloves.
5. Balls to be used are provided by the Association.
6. Helmets: A batting helmet with flaps on both ears shall be worn when baserunning. Chinstraps on batting helmets are required.
7. Players may wear running shoes or non-metal cleats. Athletic protection (jock/jill) must be worn by all players. Coaches are strongly encouraged to ensure that their players are wearing protection.
8. Pitcher's Helper Equipment: A pitcher's helper shall wear a helmet with face guard.
9. Catcher's Equipment: A catcher shall wear shin-guards, a chest-protector and helmet with removable mask or a goalie style catcher's mask – both with attached throat guards. A catcher's glove is optional and not required.

## Teams

1. Each team shall have a starting lineup of at least 6 players. A maximum of 9 players can be fielded defensively. All players will be placed in the batting lineup and will take their turn to bat.
2. There shall be no penalty for players arriving late to the game. He/she shall be added to the bottom of the batting order at any point of the game.
3. No player shall sit out a defensive inning barring injury.
4. In Squirt, no player shall play the same position twice in the same game or evening, where possible by number(s) of players present on their respective team
5. In Squirt, no player can play a second inning of outfield until he/she has played one inning the infield. Pitching and catching are considered infield positions. The turn in the infield should be a complete inning, barring injury.
6. In Squirt, an outfielder cannot make the primary play on an infield play or chance.
7. In Squirt, the outfielders should be positioned 20 feet outside the base path.
8. Barring injury, there should be no changing of positions on the field during an inning.
9. Offensively, all players shall be included in the line-up and take their turn at bat.
10. In Squirt, the entire batting order will take a turn hitting in a given inning, but a player can be put out. 3 outs will not end an inning.

11. If a team has fewer players than their opponent, they will bat extra players such as to make it the same number of batters as the other team in a given inning. Every inning the 'extra' batter(s) must be a different player.
12. The final batter in the order shall be retired, and the inning will end, when either that player is tagged out as a batter/runner or when home plate is touched by a defensive player in possession of the ball.
13. Only the manager or coaches of the offensive team shall be permitted in the coaches boxes at the 1st and 3rd place. Any person occupying the coaches box, who is under eighteen (18) years of age, must wear a coaching helmet.

#### **Game:**

1. In Squirt, players will utilize a hitting tee for the first half of the baseball calendar season
2. At the ½ way point of the schedule, coaches will begin incorporating 'coach pitched' baseballs, with 5 underhand pitches for each batter.
3. If a batter is unable to hit those 5 pitches, the batting tee will immediately be used for pitch #6 and play shall continue, no exceptions.
4. In Squirt there is no stealing.
5. On a hit, a batter-runner may attempt to advance beyond first, subject to their being put out by being tagged.
6. To stop play, a fielder must return the ball to the infield if it goes to the outfield, and the ball must be picked up and in control of an infielder. The umpire shall call "TIME" to stop play when the infielder is in possession of the baseball, and in the umpire's judgement, there is no attempt to make a play on any base runner or if the ball enters and comes to rest in the dead ball area. If a play is being attempted at a base for a put out/tag, then the ball remains 'alive' until that play is complete.
7. Alternatively, after an infield play is made, simply return the ball to the coach doing the pitching and play will stop and the ball will be 'dead'.
8. Base runners shall not leave their base until the batter strikes the ball. If the base runner leaves the base, he/she will be warned once, and subsequently called out. One warning per player, per evening.
9. A play at an infield base, must involve a baseball play to the base (ie. thrown ball), with an exception of a play at first base by the first baseman or play at another base, by a player covering the base or attempting a double play. At no time should a player be running to a base to avoid a throw to the base.
10. When a ball is fielded by the pitcher's helper, they may not put out a runner at first base by running and touching that base – they must attempt a throw to first.
11. There will be no infield fly calls in Squirt.
12. A base runner can advance no more than one base on a live ball error, with the umpire having full discretion over where runners were positioned and what base obtained at the time of the error.
13. Bunting is not permitted in Squirt.
14. Baserunners must try to avoid tags by sliding or evading the defensive player,
15. otherwise the offensive player will be called out, even if the runner reaches the bag safely (re: no charging or attempting to have the ball jostled loose by contact, deliberate or unintentional).

#### **Umpires**

***Through the regular season, there are no umpires at the diamonds. Games are self-umped. During Day of Champs, umpires are placed on the diamond for game play.***

### **Weather Conditions**

1. Unless notified prior to the start of the game of a cancellation due to weather, please show up to all scheduled games with the anticipation of playing.
2. Please check the website, Facebook and Twitter, as we will try to post cancellations on bad weather days.
3. Lightning/Thunder: Please remember the baseball season is a prime time for thunderstorms, so be aware of lightning/thunder:
  - Determine the threat of lightning or thunder in your area.
  - **SEEK SHELTER IMMEDIATELY.**
  - After the last lightning flash/roar of thunder, wait **30 minutes** before leaving shelter. Half of all lightning deaths occur after the storm passes. Stay in a safe area until you are sure the threat has passed.