

Shadow Creek T-ball & Baseball – Parent & Coach Guidelines

Welcome to Shadow Creek T-ball & Baseball. The league is focused learning the skills of hitting, catching, and playing the game. It will be instructive and fun for both kids and parents. You will find our league very relaxed and easy going.

“A large part of how your child improves is your responsibility. The difference for kids at this level is the amount of repetition that they get. This goes with pitching, hitting and fielding. As a parent, you can help out tremendously by playing catch, throwing, batting practice, hitting ground balls. The more of this your kids can get, the better.”

Practice Days

T-ball – the league has set a practice limit of once a week for approximately one hour. This is partly because the goal of Shadow Creek T-ball is to allow kids to participate in other sports and other after school activities besides committing their life to T-ball. While missing many practices won't help with learning and enjoying the game, practices are not mandatory for game time. In T-ball, everybody bats each inning and everybody plays in the outfield.

In some rare cases two days may be needed to accommodate practice availability, but we don't want to pressure parents to attend twice a week.

Baseball – you are free to hold a 2nd practice. Regardless of practice participation, each baseball player must play at least 3 innings per game. With coach-pitch all players play outfield/infield so all players will be the entire game even if your team has 10 players. All 10 are placed in the batting line up as well.

Since this is a developmental league, we are flexible with rules for Kid Pitch—a normal outfield has 9 players, but if one team has a 10th player, it is allowable for all 10 to play while pitching.

Setting Your Practice Time

We found the easiest way to communicate and negotiate a practice time is for one parent to take the initiative to send out an email to all team parents with a table showing each player's name with practice days. Each parent replies to everyone and enters available practice time. Each parent needs to enter “all” times available.

Player	M	T	W	Th	Fr	Sun
Player 1 name	5:30-7	No	6 – 7	5:30-7	5:30-7	2 – 6
Player 2						
Player 3						
Player 4						
Player 5						
Player 6						
Player 7						
Player 8						

T-ball Competition Level: fun, bat around, outs but batter stays on base, no score keeping. More details below.

Coach Pitch Competition Level: outs but no strikes. One base advance after overthrow.

Kid Pitch Competition Level: baseball rules—strikes and outs. One base advance after overthrow. More details below.

Parent Coaches

A parent with knowledge of baseball technique may take the lead during practices and games, but with T-ball every parent is a coach, and Coach pitch needs as many parents helping as well. We will need your help tossing and catching the ball during practices, so get a comfortable adult glove. Especially with T-ball, some of the players can throw with each other, but most need an adult to help with basic throwing and to just keep the attention focused.

A 1st and 2nd base coach is sufficient during the games to help the kids run the bases at the right time and in the right direction.

Baseball Coaches & Managers

With baseball (coach pitch and kid pitch) the more parent-coaches the better, but the team manager is the one who determines field positions and batting line up.

Safety

Safety helmets with a full face make are required when batting and running bases for tball and coach pitch. Kid Pitch must at least wear a C-flap, but a face guard is recommended.

If you already have a helmet without a mask, Academy or other stores have an add on mask that can connect to your helmet.

Parents and coaches need to instruct players never to swing their bat except when practicing at the batting tee or taking pitches. Other players must stand away from the batting area.

Fun T-ball

To maximize learning and fun, the best T-ball leagues play “Bat Around” where each player gets to bat during an inning. This means there are unlimited outs per inning so each player can bat. While kids are welcome to count the score, there are no official scores, wins, or losses because the objective is instruction and fun, not winning.

Coaches and parents should emphasize skill development, good plays, and good teamwork.

Fun Baseball

We want to keep it fun, so parents have to keep all comments positive. Parents also need to practice with their players. Players will have a tough time enjoying the game if they don't learn the rules and practice some throwing, catching, and hitting outside of practice.

Player / Parent Behavior

Players and parents should not make comments about other players, teams, or about the umpire. They should let the umpire make the calls and let the team manager address problems. It's the responsibility of the team manager to deal with improper player and parent comments.

Managers and Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players and spectators. Umpires have the option of removing any manager, coach, player, or spectator. Anyone ejected from a game must either leave the park entirely or remain in the parking lot for the remainder of that game and the next game.

Positive Comments

The most enjoyable youth sport leagues are those where 100% of comments from parents and players are positive. Congratulate success and give a positive spin on mistakes so they become learning opportunities.

T-ball

Game Location: York Elementary

Game times: Saturday afternoons 4:30 pm

Coaches: Team parents. At least two parent coaches are needed to run an efficient practice. Best if every parent throws with player.

Practice rule: 1 practice per week. 60 minute max (45 minutes ideal)

Practice days: Decided by team parents.

Practice fields: NO practices at York. South Gate Park (south from Aldi), Sunrise Creek (backstop), retention pond field (backstop field across from tennis courts), Nolan Ryan (backstop-note this portion of the field is not school property but HOA), any shadow creek field you can find without soccer practice, Westside event center, and any public field in Pearland that is not reserved.

Baseball (coach & kid pitch)

Game Location: Shadow Creek Sports Park

Coach Pitch Game times: Thursday 6 or 7:30 pm

Kid Pitch Game times: Wednesday 7 pm

Manager: 1 team parent.

Coaches: Team parents.

Practice days: 1 to 2 practices per week. Recommended 5 or 6 pm Saturday afternoons. Decided by team parents.

Practice fields: one practice day per week can be reserved at Shadow Creek Baseball Park for coach and kid pitch teams. An online signup file link will be sent to all before season start.

Other fields for T-ball: Wilder, Shirley Brothers, South Gate Park (south from Aldi), Sunrise Creek (backstop), retention pond field (backstop field across from tennis courts), Nolan Ryan (backstop), any shadow creek field you can find, Westside event center, and any public field in Pearland or surrounding area that is not reserved.

Equipment provided (baseball)

- catcher's kit: Helmet with mask, chest protector, shingaurds (Kid-Pitch)
- large equipment bag (Kid Pitch)
- 12 official leather little league baseballs

Safety: Our main concern is for safety.

If other teams/sports are playing nearby on the same field, hit AWAY from them. If it's very crowded do not play baseball on that field. An errant throw or foul ball could hit someone in the head and cause permanent brain damage. If baseball, find a field where no one is close by. No practices at York Field.

Practice Help - can be used for any age

There are a few important items for practice to be a success:

- 1) Parents are needed to help instruct and guide the players during each practice.
- 2) Keep kids active--no standing in line.
- 3) Teach fundamentals by showing not telling. No Lectures or long explanations.
- 4) Focus on technique – not strategy. Coach & Kid Pitch can integrate strategy.

Practice Warm up: Do a different one each practice. Even with the older coach pitch and kid pitch teams you can run bases and play a tag game.

Tag with towel or vest (within a circle of parent coaches)

- each player tagged is frozen. After all frozen, towel or vest is given to another player.
- 2nd version: any player that is tagged is not it.

Volley ball circle (say "I got it")

<http://www.littleleagueu.org/article/2016/12/05/Tee+Ball+Drills%3A+Beach+Volleyball+Circle>

Run the bases (call out base number 1,2,3, home)

<http://www.littleleagueu.org/article/2016/12/05/Tee+Ball+Drills%3A+Run+the+Bases>

Beginner Catching Practice Tricks

- Most t-ball kids and many older coach pitch kids don't catch correctly.
- Try a simple catching drill at home and at practice.
- Tennis ball catch with hand (standing)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mRuWPJS64E>
- Switch to glove while standing (use tennis ball and then transition to heavier t-ball)
- Tennis ball catch with glove while laying down
 - This drill teaches how to open glove at chest level and squeeze to catch.

Circuits

Keeping the kids active and not standing in line will require breaking the team up into at least two different activities. Best to have 2 or 3 stations with parent coaches directing each station. 8-10 minutes at each station with a final game for 12-15 minutes and that's a great 45 minute practice with one or two 60 second water breaks. Be efficient.

- Group 1: Fielding ground balls and throwing back. 2-4 players
 - Each player has own coach.
 - Demonstrate proper glove position in front of body.
 - Transition to players rolling ground balls to each other and catching.
- Group 2: Throwing & Catching. 2-4 players
 - Remaining players work in pairs.
 - Throwing and catching: direct throw, underhand toss high in air
 - 1 parent coach to help coach technique.
- Group 3: hitting
 - As many parent available to supervise—1 parent for each player for safety.
 - Use “Tee” and wiffle balls so you don't have to pitch or chase
 - Spread players out away from field – all hit same direction.
 - Transition to coach-pitch wiffle ball.

Note on wiffle ball: a real baseball is not needed to work on batting form. Wiffle helps with lots of repetition and is SAFE.

Final 12 minute Game (20 minutes for older teams)

- One player bats with 2nd waiting. Rest of the team on bases, short stop and outfielders. Rotate. 3rd base goes to line, 2nd to 3rd, 1st to 2nd, batter to outfield. After each player hits, before ending practice try another fun warmup like running bases or tag.

Equipment

- Safety helmets with full face mask must be worn when batting and running bases.
 - Example: Academy Rawlings Youth T-ball batting helmet.
- Bats: any Tball or USSSA stamped bat. Warning: 1) softball bats are NOT allowed, and 2) make sure you get the right size (length) for your player.
- TBall - Softer than a standard baseball. Molded core or sponge rubber center.
- Gloves – try them all to find the most comfortable.
- Tee - adjustable, flexible tube on a moveable base.
- Shoes? Cleats will work, although most young kids do fine with turf trainer shoes or a running shoe that has extra tread. Or use any running shoes you already have.

T-ball Format / Rules

- -Duration of game is four innings or 50 minutes, whichever comes first.
- -Every player bats and plays in the field.
- -Bat Around = each player gets to bat at each inning.
- -Unlimited outs per inning.
- -An inning is over when all the players have batted once.
- -Two parents need to be base coaches, one at 1st and one at 2rd. 3rd base works too.
- -Runners can only advance one base per at bat.

- -The last batter for each team will be the “home run” hitter and can advance all the way to home plate if he or she does not get out

- -The ball is hit off a batting tee; there is no pitching.
- -No walks or strikeouts.
- -The ball must travel 10 feet or it's a foul.

- -No stealing. Player stays on the base until the ball is hit.
- -No score keeping or standings, but kids are free to count

Coach-pitch Format / Rules

- Safety helmets with full face mask must be worn when batting and running bases.
- No strikes just outs.
- 5 pitches. Batter is out if no hit after 5 pitches. Can swing all 5 times. A 6th pitch is allowed if coach throws several really bad pitches.
- Over throw rule Coach-pitch: one base advance after an over throw. Example. Short stop over throws to first. Batter can advance to 2nd base. 1st base to 3rd, and 2nd base runner to home.
- 3 yard rule: ball must be hit over 3 yards or ball is foul.
- Teams can play all 9 or 10 players defensively but must have at least 4 outfielders. The outfielders must be in the grass behind the base line.
- A half inning will be over when a team scores 5 runs or 3 outs are recorded.
- The game will end after 5 innings or 75 minutes, whichever is first. A full inning must be completed to end the game.
- Two adult coaches are allowed on the field, with a maximum of 4 coaches in the dugout at any time. At least one adult must be in the dugout at all times.
- Continuous batting order meaning everyone present will be in the lineup. If a player has to leave early due to circumstances beyond his control, his name will be skipped when it is his turn to bat. However, a player that is ejected will be called out when it is his turn to bat.
- The pitchers rubber will be set at 40 feet. The defensive pitcher must stay behind the pitcher's rubber until the ball is batted.
- If the ball hits the adult pitcher, the ball will become automatically dead and the batter will be awarded first base. Any runner that is forced to do so, will advance one base. If in the judgment of umpire the coach intentionally let the ball hit himself, the batter will be called out and the coach warned. If there is a second occurrence, the coach will be ejected.
- The ball will become dead once the lead runner is contained and play has stopped. Upon recognition, the umpire will call time-out at this time.
- There is NO infield warm-up before games. Warm-ups should be in the outfield.
- Only players listed on the official team roster will be eligible to play.

Kid-Pitch Rules

Equipment Rules:

- Helmets must be worn when batting and running bases, and must have either a Full Face Guard or a C-Flap. A chin strap is not required.
- Bats: any USA or USSSA stamped bat is allowed. This includes 2 1/4", 2 5/8", and 2 3/4" barrel size bats. Note: Fastpitch/Softball bats are NOT allowed.
- Catchers must wear a protective cup when playing the catcher position.

Game Play Rules:

1. Continuous batting order must be used in all divisions (all eligible players on the roster present at the game must bat). You may have free substitution of players in the field. Late arrivals must assume the last position in the batting order provided no one has batted twice.

2. Teams may use a courtesy runner for the current pitcher and catcher (not prospective) at any time, but it is mandatory to substitute for the catcher in the case of 2 outs. The courtesy runner must be the player that recorded the last out.....when there are 2 outs and the catcher gets ON BASE, he must be replaced with the player who made the last (2nd) out. This allows the catcher to get in the dugout and get suited up with catchers gear ready to play defense.

3. Each player must play a minimum of 2 innings per game. If the minimum required play time is not met the game will result in a forfeit.

4. Two adult coaches are allowed on the field, with a maximum of 4 coaches in the dugout at any time. At least one adult must be in the dugout at all times.

5. Coaches will be allowed to warm-up pitchers, at any time, before or during a game and in between innings.

6. All coaches are to remain INSIDE the dugout while their team is not at bat. When at bat, only the first and third base coaches are allowed on the field and only in the coach's boxes. Sitting on a bucket outside the dugout entrance is not considered in the dugout. Any coach entering the field for any reason, other than when time is requested (and granted) by the umpires may be removed from the game.

7. There is no limit to the number of innings a player can play the position of catcher. (A player who catches for any number of innings can still pitch, subject only to the pitching rules.)

8. The infield fly rule is in effect, and will be decided and called by the Umpire.

9. Pitching divisions will be closed bases – a player cannot lead off a base, and cannot steal to the next base until the ball crosses the home plate when pitched. Stealing to home on a passed ball is prohibited.

10. A maximum five run rule per inning is in effect for all divisions; however, in the case of an over-the-fence Home Run, all runs count.

11. Game balls are provided in the coach's equipment bag.

12. Managers and Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players and spectators. Umpires have the option of removing any manager, coach, player, or spectator. Anyone ejected from a game must either leave the park entirely or remain in the parking lot for the remainder of that game and the next game.

13. Line-up cards may be provided to the home plate umpire, opposing team, and to the scorekeeper upon request.

14. There is NO infield warm-up before games. Warm-ups should be in the outfield.

15. All teams must be ready to play at game time or the late team will forfeit the game.

16. Only players listed on the official team roster will be eligible to play.

17. Overthrow Rule: In the case of an overthrow, players can advance only 1 base. (Example. Short stop over throws to First: Batter can advance to 2nd base, 2nd base to 3rd, and 3rd base runner to home.)

18. Official Game time limit will be 1 hour and 30 minutes, OR after the conclusion of 6 innings, whichever comes first. At the end of 1:30...

...if home team is batting and ahead in score, game over; or

...if home team is batting and behind, they can finish the inning then game over; or

...if visitor is batting, game time will be extended to allow visitor to finish and home team to have last bat for that inning, then game over.

19. 10-Run "Mercy" rule: After 4 innings, if one team has a lead of ten (10) runs or more, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent. NOTE: If the visiting team has a lead of ten (10) runs or more, the home team must bat in its half of the inning.

However, the game can continue to the full official time of 1 hour and 30 minutes, or 6 full innings, and the manager of the leading team will put less-skilled players in new positions (infield, pitcher, etc) they wouldn't usually play, to give them learning opportunities.

Pitching Rules

Note: in our Shadow Creek League, pitchers will not be playing multiple games per week, so the maximum pitch count rules will not apply. Recommended to use at least 2 pitchers per game though. A 3rd pitcher is needed just in case your back up is not at the game.