**Fort Atkinson Youth Baseball**

**Coach’s Manual**

**Rules and Policies**

– Fort Youth Baseball Mission Statement-

♦ Fort Atkinson Youth Baseball provides youths, in grades 2-9, an opportunity to learn and develop baseball skills in a supervised, competitive team environment. Decisions made or guidelines developed will reflect the needs and interests of a majority of the players, families, and coaches, and the health and safety of all participants.

**Table Of Contents**

**Topic Page**

**Important Dates 2**

**Board of Directors 2**

**Levels of Play 3**

**Game Policies 3**

**General Policies 4**

**Practice Guidelines 5**

**Suggested Drills 6**

**Suggested Video Links 8**

**Game Management 9**

**Batting cage guidelines 10**

**Important Dates to Remember**

♦– Practices may begin the week of April 23.

♦– Opening Day! All teams will play. Opening day is Saturday, May 16.

♦– Regular Season schedule should be available by May 4.

**Board of Directors**

There will be a board member at each league game. Any questions about umpires not showing up, or disagreements that cannot be settled can be brought to the Directors attention. Also, the Directors may deal with any unruly spectators.

Name

Don Neste 920-650-1878 fortyouthbaseball@gmail.com

Joel Winn

Jason Hartman Mark Riggs

Aaron Underwood

Adam Larson

Ellen Narkis

Brian Maxwell

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**Levels of Play**

**Age/Grade Program Who runs it**

9th, 8th, & 7th, Major League Fort Youth Baseball

6th & 5th Minor League Fort Youth Baseball

4th & 3rd grade AAA Fort Youth Baseball

2ND GRADE 2ND GRADE Fort Youth Baseball

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**Fort Youth Baseball Policies**

**Game Policies**

***Visitor Team***

1. Visitors will be listed second on the schedule.
2. Visitors will occupy the first base dugout.

3. Visitors for the first game will take warm-up from 5:00-5:10
4. Visitors for the second game will not get any warm-up on the infield
5. Visitors for the last game should turn off the lights to their field

6. Please clean up the dugout area after each practice or game.

7. VISITORS team for the first game should get the scoreboard console from the coach’s room.

**8.** VISITORS team for the last game should return the scoreboard console to the coach’s room.

***Home Team***

1. Home team will be listed first on the schedule.

2. Home team will occupy the third base dugout

3. Home team for the first game will take warm-up from 5:10-5:20 and stay on the field

4. Home team for the second game will not get any warm-up on the infield

5. Home team is the official scorer for all games.

6. IF VISITORS TEAM IS FROM OUT OF TOWN for the first game should get the scoreboard console from the coach’s room.

**7. IF** VISITORS TEAM IS FROM OUT OF TOWN team for the last game should return the scoreboard console to the coach’s room.

8. Please clean up the dugout area after each practice or game.

##### Game Summary

1. Each team is responsible for turning in their own game summary, including score to **fortyouthbaseball@gmailcom within 24 hours of the game.** If not turned in they may be considered a tie or loss.

***Official Score***1. The Home Team will be official scorer. All disputes that cannot be worked out between the two coaches will result in the home book standing as the correct version.

***Scoreboard***1. Scoreboards should be run by an adult
2. Visitors team will be in charge of finding an adult to run the scoreboard
3. Visitors team for the first game should get the scoreboard console from the concession stand.
4. Visitors team for the last game should return the scoreboard console to the concession stand.

**5.\*\*\* Unless visiting team is from out of town then all duties go to the home team\***

***Warming –Up***1. All players and teams must use the designated warm-up areas beyond the outfield fence to warm-up. Whiffle balls must be used if hitting is taking place. There is no playing catch where spectators are.
2**. There will be no hitting into the fence with baseballs for batting** **practice**.
3. There may be no time for warm-up for the second game so plan accordingly. Start of the second game will not be delayed for warm-ups on the field.
4. First game of the night – Visitors should take the field for warm-up from 5:00-5:10. The home team will take the field for warm-up from 5:10-5:20 and stay out there for the start of the game.

***On-Deck Hitters -***

1. On-Deck hitters must be near the dugout which would be behind the hitter. For Right Handed Batter – the on-deck hitter would be located near the 3rd base dugout. For Left Handed Batters – the on-deck hitter would be located near the 1st base dugout.

2. Failure to comply with this rule will result in losing the on-deck hitter.

##### Umpires

1. The home plate umpire (AAA) and home plate and base umpire (Minor and Major) are assigned by the league and gets paid.

2. AAA – the umpire will call balls and strikes from behind the plate.

**General Policies**

##### Concession Stand

1. Hours of the concession stand are 5:15-9:00 p.m.

##### Discipline / Sportsmanship

1. All coaches are expected to promote good sportsmanship. It is felt that coaches are setting an example to the players by their conduct good or bad. Failure to comply with proper conduct will result in a review by the Fort Youth Baseball Board.

2. All players, coaches, and spectators will be required to show good sportsmanship at all times.

3. Profanity of any kind will not be allowed. Violations may result in the player or coach being ejected.

4. Any player or coach ejected from the game will automatically become ineligible to participate in their team’s next game. A second ejection will result in a season long suspension.

5. Disrespect toward any employees or Fort Youth Baseball Board Members will not be allowed. Suspensions will be issued as cases warrant.

***End of Year Awards***

1. Each team that finishes in first place of their league will get trophies.

2. If there is a play-off game to decide this, there will be medals for the 2nd place team. These will be given out the night of the play-off game. If there is no play-off game, no medals for the second place team will be handed out.

3. A coach may want to make certificates for their players.

##### Insurance/Injuries

1. Fort Youth Baseball is not responsible for injuries received by participants which are incidental to the activity.
2. All participants should be covered by adequate health insurance before participating in the activity.
3. The official scorer for the game should document any injuries suffered in a game
4. Any injuries suffered in a practice, should be documented by the coach and turned in to the coach’s room during the week.

##### Lights

1. The three boxes to turn on the field lights are on the outside wall behind the concession stand. The key to open the padlock on each switch is hanging in the coach’s room or on the diamond key ring. Please return the key immediately*. Please remember to turn the lights off after use, including game nights* *(Home team duty)*

***Picture Nights***

1. Pictures date is on opening day you will be assigned a time and your team is expected to participate.

2. Payments are made directly to the photo studio; coaches do not handle collecting the money.

***Rain Policy and Make-Up Games***

1. Rain outs will be made up on the dates listed on the schedule.
2. In case of excessive rain, games may simply be dropped from the schedule to avoid extending the season any longer. This is a last resort.

3. Fort Youth Baseball Directors will determine if games will be played. That decision will be made at 4:30 and then posted on our wedsite fortyouthbaseball.com and on Facebook. After 5:00, the decision will be up to the board of director member on duty at the park that night.

# ***Uniform & Equipment***

1. Each player will receive a hat.

2. Uniforms will be issued prior to the first game. Coaches should keep track of who has each number, and make sure all uniforms are turned in.

3. Uniform tops must be turned in immediately after the final game.

4. Metal spikes may only be worn at the Major League Level.

5. 2nd Grade will receive a hat and a game shirt to keep.

**Practice Guidelines**

1. Practices should last 90 minutes. You can get enough drills in and even a little scrimmage in during that time frame. Anything more than that, and you will lose the kids attention.

2. Pre-season practice will be scheduled as follows on Monday-Wed, Fri-Sun 4:00-5:30, 5:30-7:00, or 7:00-8:30

3. All leagues may practice twice a week before the games begin.

4. All leagues may practice once a week after the games begins.

# Before Practice Checklist

1. Arrive at the site about 10 minutes before practice if possible. Kids will get dropped off around that time.
2. Turn on the field lights if needed. These lights usually take 5-10 minutes to become fully lit, which is another good reason to get there early.

3. Get all necessary equipment ready for practice.

4. Go over your practice plan once more to see if you need to modify it (due to numbers, weather, field conditions…)

5. Greet each kid before practice begins. Hold a small conversation with some if possible.

# After Practice Checklist

1. MOST IMPORTANT – Pick up all your equipment. It is a good idea to keep your baseballs in a bucket and count them before and after each practice. Make the kids run laps if they lose any balls during practice. Each summer our guy that mows the fields easily picks up a bucket worth of baseballs (about 4 dozen at $31/dozen adds up)
2. Put back any of the equipment you may have used.
3. **Wait until all kids are picked up.** If parents are late, don’t be afraid to remind them to be on time next time.
4. Go over your practice plans. Make notes on what worked and what didn’t. Make notes on any drills that may need to be repeated, or redone, or re-taught.

# 7 Principles for Technical Skill Practice

**#1 – Have players practice the right technique** – Analyze the drills you use. Do they help the players learn what is needed?

**#2 – Have players practice the technique in gamelike conditions asap** – When drills are overused and simulations are few, the players will not be prepared to make choices in changing game conditions. Practice your pregame warm-up. Make sure they understand the on-deck hitter, what the base coaches do, how you will be substituting. Have them understand what they should have at a game, when to be there beforehand. Make sure they understand the batting order, how to hustle on and off the field and be prepared to start the next inning.

**#3 – Keep practices short and frequent when teaching new techniques** – Players are likely to make mistakes and tire quickly when they first learn a technique. Spread out teaching new fundamentals in your practice.

**#4 – Use practice time efficiently** – Keep explanations and demonstrations short, use a practice plan, and establish routines for changing activities (no walking on the field – run off and on).

**#5 – Make optimal use of facilities and equipment** – one hitter and 10 fielders on a field is not a good way to work on hitting – use cage and have 4 people hit at one time – 1 cage, 3 kids per station (1 hitter, 2 feeders), 1 on-deck hitter.

**#6 – Make sure players experience a reasonable amount of success at each practice** – Constantly work on proper throwing mechanics and everyone will have success at least part of the time throwing.

**#7 – Perfect practice makes perfect—**Expect that your team does things the right way, regardless of the situation. Instill in them good habits, and squash bad ones quickly. Hustle, concentration and pride and constant improvement are great qualities to have at an early age.

**#7 – Make practice fun** – Use variety around a specific theme in practice. Be enthusiastic. Mini competitions.

*I believe baseball practices should include the 4 Fs; they should be fun, fast-moving, loaded with instruction on the fundamentals & use the entire field whenever possible. In order to accomplish these things, I suggest practices include stations so that multiple things can go on at the same time, position-specific as well as team-wide skill development, and contests where players can compete with each other on a wide variety of batting & fielding skills.*

 *John Blissenbach, Author of The Well-Prepared Coach: 25 Youth Baseball Practice Plans*

Baseball Hitting Drills

Determine dominant eye

Hands relaxed and proper grip (pray position)

Feet shoulder width apart – knees inside feet

Head still

Athletic stance

***Soft Tap***

Hit a whiffle/tennis ball with knob of bat – thrower is at a 45° angle, incorporate lower half into the swing

***Fence Drill***

Arm length away from the fence – swing with the knob of the bat leading

***Fence Drill***

Back foot next to fence – swing with the knob of the bat leading

***Chair / Bucket Drill***

Upper body drill – more advanced

***Behind Soft Toss*** – throw from behind hitter, the hitter uses peripheral vision to catch the flight of the ball and swing (develops bat speed)

***Power Bat Drill***

Semi Flat Soccer or Basketball may need the use of the plunger to support the ball – develops power in the swing

***Shadow Drill***

Put golf ball in the middle of your head and see if you are moving your head during the swing. (Good drill if kids are swing too hard and missing the ball a lot).

***Curve Ball Drill with whiffles***

Lob the whiffle into the batter. Works on keeping hands back and not lunging at the ball.

***Standard Tee***

High – Low – move the tee up and down to get use to different locations. (keep tee in front of the plate)

***One Hand Tee***

Upper hand – short to contact and arm strength (choke up)

Lower hand – short to contact and arm strength (choke up)

***Tee – Inside / Outside***

Place tee on the inside corner or the outside corner of the plate and slightly out in front. Learn to hit where the ball is at.

***Cross Over and Step Tee***

Works on shifting weight and staying balanced

***Soft Toss***

45°and 90° degree angles

***Soft Toss – Hit to All Fields***

The tosser calls out the field (right, left, center) as the ball is about to be tossed. If the batter hits the ball to the wrong field or pops up the ball, the players switch.

***Two Balls At The Same Time***

Top/bottom or white/yellow – person calls which one to hit.

***Chuck-it***

Teaches short to contact and long through the hitting zone. Use tennis balls.

***Bat Throw***

Teaches the follow through should be back at the pitcher. Throw your hands after bat goes through the zone.

***Thunder stick***

Use with whiffle golf ball to generate concentration.

***Ax handle***

Use whiffle golf or standard whiffles. Reinforces the correct hand position on the bat (pray position/power position)

***Weight Back Drill***

Use tennis balls – 20 feet away – pitcher bounces the ball so the ball ends up in the strike zone. Hitters tends to lunge at the ball, forces batter to stay back and wait (make sure hands stay back)

***Butter Top Frisbee Hitting***

You can throw all types of pitches. Good concentration drill.

***Pop Bottle Drill***

Golf balls are caught in the pop bottle. Good bunting drill for receiving the ball and concentration drill.

***Colored Ball on the Circle***

Concentration drills – call out a color, call out ring/ball, flip it sideways or vertical, etc.

***Colored Horseshoe on Baseball***

The batter picks up the spin as quickly as possible – calls out the pitch and watches the ball into the catcher’s mitt (do not hit the ball)

***Release Drill***

Pick up the pitch at the release point. The batter calls out the number of fingers (1-5) the pitcher throws at the batter – the batter swings (can add a tee to the drill).

**Suggested Video Links**

<http://www.infosports.com/videos/baseball/>

Over 50 youth baseball instructional videos

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBjPq_R6wbI>

Fielding Ground Balls

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVdzqmpB6ls>

“Rapid Fire” hitting drill

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtjQurDuMC0>

“Towel Drill” for young pitchers

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98nYdcKaSsM>

Throwing drill

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlnUPSFiNKY&feature=related>

2 ball soft toss hitting drill

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1a_T1SKqzM&feature=related>

Batting stance drill

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEYtYKN8-3M&feature=related>

Outfield drill

**Game Management Guidelines**

# Before

1. Figure out how long you want to hold warm-up activities. Arrive at the field 10 minutes early than that.
2. Meet your team at a prearranged spot, by the dugouts, concessions stand, bleachers…
3. Take a quick attendance to make sure everyone is there.
4. **If you are taking hitting practice behind the outfield fence, whiffle balls must be used**
5. If you have the first game, visiting team should take their infield warm-ups no later than 5:10 and be done by 5:20. Home team should take their pre-game warm-ups no later than 5:20 and be done by 5:30
6. If you have the late game, give those teams time to shake hands and clear their stuff out of the dugout.
7. Exchange line-ups with the opposing coach. Home Team – make sure to get first and last names and write them in your book.

# During the Game

1. The only shouting should be of encouragement.
2. When your team is at-bat…make sure you tell who is going to be a pitcher (in case if they need to warm-up and throw) and who is going to be the catcher (make sure he keeps the majority of his gear on unless he is going to bat…this is a great way to speed up the games).
3. Pitchers will get a maximum of 4 warm-up pitches each half inning.
4. Either when the team comes in from defense or right away after the third out, tell any replacements they are in and at what position.
5. If possible have 3 coaches at the game. This helps when hitting you can have 2 coaches doing the bases and one monitoring the kids in the dugout.
6. Try to keep extra people out of the dugout. Parents not coaching, siblings or friends do not belong in or behind the dugout during the game.
7. Try to have a sheet with your substitutions on it. This way, you will know that every player has had the minimum playing time. It is a lot easier to figure this out beforehand than it is during the course of the game. Another option is to tell the kids where they are playing while everyone is in the dugout to hit. Don’t wait to tell them until it is time to go in the field.

# After the Game

1. Hold a quick team meeting, after the handshake. Try not to do this on your bench since the next team will be looking at settling in. Have the meeting in the outfield, bleachers, or wherever you may find room. Keep this meeting short. Bring up the good things the kids did in the game. Any negative thoughts should be kept to yourself, until you have a chance to rethink about those, and then address it at the next practice, if necessary.
2. Consider giving away the game ball.
3. Final words should be a reminder about next practice day and time or next game time. End with a team cheer.

**Batting Cage Guidelines**

**Green cage**

# Practice

1. Diamond 1 practice will get the cage the first half hour of practice.

2. Diamond 2 practice will get the cage the last half hour

3. Diamond 3 practice will get the cage the middle half hour

4. Saturday & Sunday practices will follow the same format.

5. Use the L-Screen for protection whenever there is a hitter hitting live in the cage.

6. Only coaches can feed the pitching machine. No players should do the feeding.

7. All hitters have to wear a helmet in the batting cage when pitches are being thrown (from a coach or pitching machine).

8. Whoever is last to use the batting cage must lock the cage up. (Failure to do so may result in suspension of your team’s use of the cage.) If in doubt, lock it up.

9. No metal cleats allowed in the batting cages.

10. Please treat the pitching machine with care.

11. Communicate with each other and be flexible and fair in the use of the cage during practice.