**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.

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**Important Dates to Remember**

♦– Practices may begin the week of April 22.

♦– Opening Day! All teams will play. Opening day is Saturday, May 19.

♦– 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.

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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 will be posted You 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. No additional or duplicate uniforms will be issued unless approved by the FYB President.

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. Have practice plan for the day ready.
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*

 **Catching**

**3rd-4th Grade-**

**Stance: Primary stance- right hand positioned behind right calf. Feet shoulder width apart.**

* Bunts - round your approach left side to the ball and press ball to ground for tight grip.
* 7 Ball drill
* Catcher in stance, soft toss ball to catcher no glove throw low and funnel ball to stomach.
* Practice tags at home plate using both hands to secure ball. Throwing balls to catcher. Throws to 2nd also on receiving ball.
* Hips square when blocking ball. Shoulder pointing in. That keeps ball in front of you. Throw ball in dirt.

**5th-9th**

* **Signal stance- Primary stance – Secondary stance**
* Signal stance-giving signals to pitcher. Primary stance no body on base. Secondary stance runners on base.
* Catching position- right hand behind right calf not behind the back
* With 2 strikes or somebody on base right hand behind mitt for quick transfer
* Bunts - round your approach left side to the ball and press ball to ground for tight grip.
* 7 BallDrill
* Wide athletic stance (Primary Stance) for your catching position- framing balls funnel inwards about 1 inch
* Catching elbow stays outside of knee slight bend in arm.
* Signal stance- Squat down, glove hand extension of knee, signal hand by cup arm tight to body. Chest up good posture.
* Hips square when blocking ball. Shoulder pointing in. That keeps ball in front of you.Throw ball in dirt.
* Practice tags at home plate using both hands to secure ball. Hitting balls to catcher. Throws to 2nd also on receiving ball.
* Quick feet drill. Pop ups. Shuffle both feet at same time. Right foot replaces left. Square up to 2nd base. Good stance, pop time, accurate throw to 2nd
* Drill- Standing hop, right foot replaces left. Practice quick feet. Both feet move at the same time. Right foot down asap. Work on pop time.
* Catcher in stance, soft toss ball to catcher no glove throw low and funnel ball to stomach.
* Drill- While standing throw ball to catcher move feet in a throwing position to 2nd and toss ball to side move forward throw again repeat throw again and throw to 2nd.

 **1st Base**

**3rd-4th Grade**

* Around the world pick. 1st baseman stands on first coach throws ball from right to left to glove. Work on footwork. Start with foot middle edge of bag.
* Stride to catch- stride after infield release. Need to see ball direction before stride. Practice throws to first to practice stride to catch. left, right and straight on throws

**5th-9th Grade**

* Stride to catch- stride after infield release. Need to see ball direction before stride. Practice throws to first to practice stride to catch. left, right and straight on throws
* First base lighting- First base glove up like to receive ball from pitcher. Coach yells pitch 1st baseman shuffles off first to play defense. Coach yells balls hit-first baseman goes back to first to receive ball. Stride to catch position.
* Around the world pick. 1st baseman stands on first coach throws ball from right to left to glove. Work on footwork. Start with foot middle edge of bag.
* Throws to first with ball in dirt short hops and long hops.

 **2nd Base**

**3rd-4th Grade**

* Receiving ground balls left foot slightly ahead of right foot due to proper angle to first
* Arm angle when throwing 3/4
* Right, left, down receive ball funnel glove to chest while knees bent don’t stand up before you bring glove up. This keeps your arms up for better transition. Keep knees bent. Strong throws to 1st and follows through.

**5th-9th Grade**

* Ready position walk forward during pitch. Receiving ground balls left foot slightly ahead of right foot due to proper angle to first
* Arm angle when throwing 3/4
* Turning double play receiving ball from shortstop left foot on bag.
* Field the ball with feet and eyes not glove
* Stay on balls of feet- glove out front
* Right, left, down receive ball funnel glove to chest while knees bent don’t stand up before you bring glove up. This keeps your arms up for better transition. Keep knees bent. Strong throws to 1st and follow through.
* Underhand and backhand flip to SS for double plays. Keep knees bent. Follow through with ball

 **Shortstop**

**3rd-4th Grade**

* Ready position walk forward during pitch receive ball glove down right hand above glove knees bent left foot slightly ahead of right glove to chest knees still bent right step than left step throw like a pitcher at that point . Step thru or crow hop. While moving glove to chest body moving towards 1st.
* Side shuffles no glove. Coach rolls ball and side shuffle left to right receive ball with glove hand and roll back to coach.
* Turning double play show glove and right foot on bag.
* Underhand toss to 2nd base. Keep knees bent.

 **3rd Base**

**3rd-4th Grade**

* Keep ball in front right left glove down receive and funnel glove to center of body square shoulders to first make throw follow throw. Faster runner quicker feet
* Snap and tag-around the world 4people 20 feet away different angle throw to 3rd slap tag and throw back work in circle
* Throws to second and home

**5th-9th Grade**

* Keep ball in front right left glove down receive and funnel glove to center of body square shoulders to first make throw follow throw. Faster runner quicker feet
* Snap and tag-around the world 4people 20 feet away different angle throw to 3rd slap tag and throw back work in circle
* Pick and tag- same thing now bounce ball and apply tag. Use players for throws.
* Throws to second and home

 **Outfield**

**3rd-4th Grade**

* No false steps. Bat on ground. Have fielder move forward during pitch right step left step set. Right foot big wide step back turn throw ball over shoulder retrieve ball. No shuffle steps to go b Hit bouncers in outfield for them to run up and crow hop and throw
* Hit grounders to outfield for them to run up and crow hop and throw
* Move forward, drop step back left, right vertical left vertical right. Horizontal left and right
* Cut-off drills

**5th-9th Grade**

* No false steps. Bat on ground. Have fielder move forward during pitch right step left step set. Right foot big wide step back turn throw ball over shoulder retrieve ball. No shuffle steps to go back. Also called drop steps.
* Fence drill- throw ball against fence have player run to ball push down on ball to pick up weight on right foot pick and throw no steps
* Move forward drop step back left, right vertical left vertical right. Horizontal left and right
* Zig Zag back flip your hips set up 5 cones and zig zag back
* Catching- working from behind up meaning moving forward when catching than crow hop and throw
* Hit grounders to outfield for them to run up and crow hop and throw
* Cut off drills

 **Hitting**

**3rd-9th Grade**

Before getting into batter’s box you need to be relaxed, focus, hands loose, comfortable in your stance. You’re always thinking you’re going to hit the ball.

Front leg keep straight on landing. A bend means lunge. Drive back knee down. Have back leg with a bend on swing.

**7 points of hitting**

1. Front leg lands with slight bend on swing leg straightens
2. Back foot twist on impact. Important keep straight during swing.
3. Head even with right knee on impact
4. Hands above barrel
5. Eyes on ball
6. Left forearm in line with bat
7. Right shoulder and right forearm L shape

**3 important things-**

* Load- Weight shift towards back leg
* Stride- Weight shift forward to front foot- Hands go straight back
* Swing- Keep hands in front of feet. Land on ball of foot, soft landing

 **Base Running**

**3rd-9th Grade**

* Running to first- 1. Straight through 2. Fish hook turn 3. Banana turn

**5th-9th grade**

* Running to first- 1. Straight through 2. Fish hook turn 3. Banana turn
* pitcher on mound players lead off practice steal off pitcher
* primary and secondary lead
* Right foot angled towards SS/3b. Line up to back of base.
* Lead off right left right turn towards catcher. Shuffle,shuffle
* Look at heels of pitcher to steal

**6 “Fs” of fielding**

1. Feet- Left foot land offset towards 1st momentum to 1st
2. Field- Working down to up
3. Funnel
4. Footwork
5. Fire the ball to first- short arm action both arms go up
6. Follow through

**Arm strength drill**

* Outfielders and pitchers- ball in glove left leg up balance point hop 2 times and push off right foot strong throw.
* Wide stance front foot 45 degree angle. Rock forward back lift left leg up and lunge forward and make throw.

**Progression throws**

1. One knee down-
2. Wrist throw, Left hand on wrist snap throw. No glove
3. Elbow throw, left hand on elbow and throw
4. Regular throw. Twist hip and throw
5. Standing-
6. toes even hips straight and throw
7. Toes even rotate hips and throw
8. Reverse throws. Standing sideways rotate hips and square up and throw.
9. Go back farther.
10. Rocker throws
11. Step and throw
12. Crow hop

**Tee drills/soft toss**

* Soft toss straight toss, Curve ball flip lob in with high arch, behind hitter toss.
* Put toilet bowel in tee to hit bigger ball (soccer)
* Small bat top hand bottom hand tuck palm up on swing, bottom hand top hand tuck. One hand swings. Back foot stays straight on stride and turns on swing.
* Tee- checkpoints on swing 1. Palm up palm down. 2. Eyes down. 3. Chin on back shoulder. 4. Barrel of bat below hands.
* Knee drill- kneel on left knee and go through swing
* Pulling head- no-no hands behind body. Keep good spine angle, head down, glove on head drill. Keeping hands in line with ball plane.
* Keep hands in front of toe line. Knees bent
* Forward shoulder tilt. Front shoulder higher than back shoulder on contact.
* Ball on tee- easy release through swing keeping good form. Ramp up to full swings.
* Hitting through the ball- 2 tees one in front of the other. Good swing should contact both balls on swing. Tells you that your swing is in ball plane longer.
* At swing middle stomach should be facing where second baseman stands. Inside pitch stomach facing SS. Outside pitch stomach facing where second baseball stands.

**When things go bad**

1. Recover energy towards the future. Flush it out forget about it. Can’t change outcome.
2. Hustle play hard with energy. Always run between the lines going onto the field and coming off the field.
3. Be a good teammate- Bunt, sacrifice cheer on team do what you have to do to try to win.
4. Have a release- go to dugout sit by yourself 30 sec. Think about what happened how to fix it. Than release it. Refocus
5. Trust the process. Keep doing what you do in practice. Can’t be perfect
6. Have fun! - Enjoy being with the guys. Your still learning
7. **Pitching**
8. Mentally tough-Short memory-Mentally tough on every pitch-confidence-1st pitch strike
9. Want hitter to hit the ball, keep ball around strike zone, hit your pitch.

**Practice plans**

1. Be organized
2. Structured practice
3. Confidence and positive attitude
4. Know your players
5. Know the rules
6. Communication (Players and Parents)
7. Your representing Fort Youth Baseball act professional
8. Kids having fun learning the game

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**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.