



A brief summary of the rules and equipment specifications recommended by the T•BALL USA ASSOCIATION are listed below. Is there more than one way to play? Yes. There are several rule variations and they are marked with an asterisk (*).

RECOMMENDED RULES OF PLAY

- Players' ages are four to eight.
- Players on a team – 12 minimum, 20 maximum
Note: more than 15 players on the field or batting is not advised.
- 50 feet between the bases.
- A real or imaginary playing line is between first base and third base or an arc 40 feet from home plate.
- Every player bats and plays in the field.
- The ball is hit off a batting tee; there is no pitching.*
- There are no walks or strikeouts.
- The ball must travel 10 feet or it is a foul.
- No fielder may cross the playing line until the ball is hit.
- No stealing. Player stays on the base until the ball is hit.
- An inning is over when all the players have batted once.*
- Standard game is four innings.
- Scores are not kept for the younger players.*
- Safety helmets must be worn.
- Bats - 25"/26" long, 2¼" diameter, max. 17 to 20 ounces.
- Ball - 9" to 9½" around; 4 to 5 ounces. Softer than a standard baseball. Molded core or sponge rubber center.
- Gloves - 12" long, max.
- Tee - adjustable, flexible tube on a moveable base.
- Athletic footwear.

The major differences in play concern winning / losing and what constitutes an inning. As children play to win in other games and view competitive sports on TV, many tee ball leagues sanction scoring and winning for the older and / or more mature players (usually six years and up). This also permits another level of play; specifically, tournaments and other competitive events. Otherwise, tee ball can be positioned as a skill-building, learning experience, where the score is not the focus of the game. Some leagues prefer to consider an inning to be the traditional three outs but the majority of play is "bat around" where an inning is over after every player has batted one time.

COACH-PITCH is a modification of the game usually reserved for older players or for younger players whose batting skills have advanced. A coach (adult or mature teen-ager) throws the ball to the batter. Underhand pitches can be thrown with an arc to reduce speed. Overhand pitches can be thrown from one knee on the ground to put the pitcher at the same level as the batter. If the player is unable to hit the pitched ball after a pre-determined number of throws -- usually, four to seven -- the ball is placed on a tee and the player's turn continues. All other rules are the same. T-BALL USA recognizes the benefits provided by coach-pitch and endorses its use; especially, after the youngest of players have gained confidence in the batting situation.

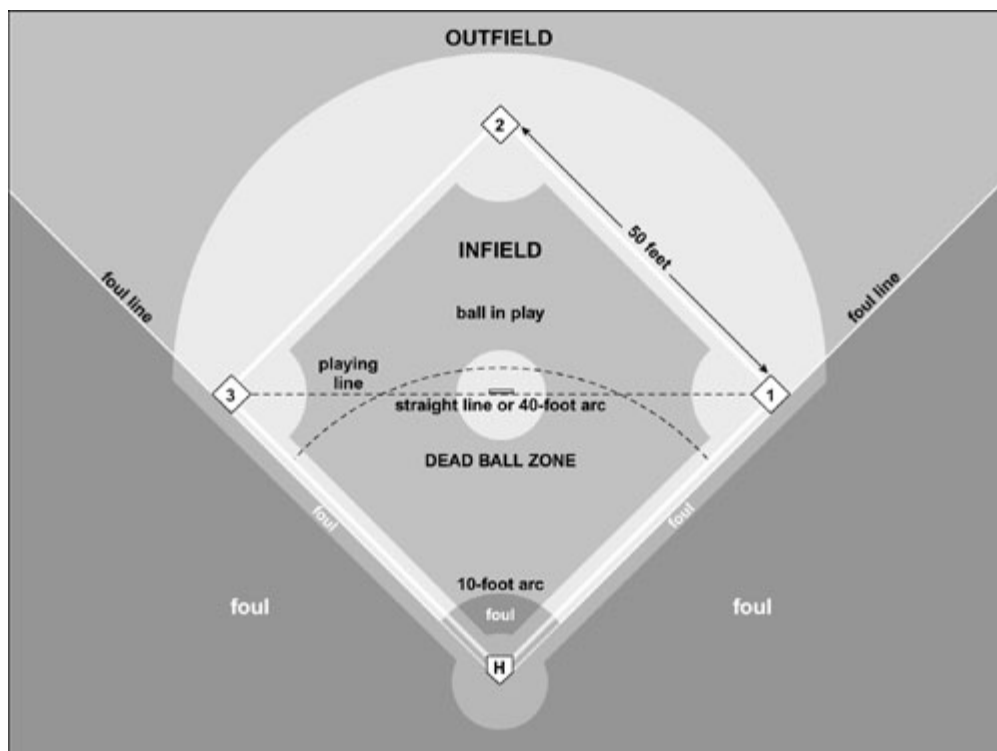
Perhaps the greatest contributing factor to the growth and popularity of the game is that the final decision as to procedure or certain rules is made at the local level, based on the judgment of the administrators as to which format best serves their community program.

The Playing Field

The field of play is shared by an infield and an outfield and is separated into fair and foul territory.

- The field is similar to dimensions of a youth baseball / Little League type field but with only 50 feet between the bases.
- The diamond is a square with a base at each corner.
- The bases include first, second, and third base. They are made of canvas, soft, 15 inches square and appx. 2½ inches thick and may be fastened in place.
- The playing line is an imaginary line running between first base and third base. It can also be an arc, a curved circle extending out 40 feet from the point of home plate.
- Home plate is made of white rubber, is five-sided and is set flush with the ground. It is 17 inches wide across the edge facing the infield, 8½ inches long on each side and 12 inches long on the sides of the point facing the catcher.
- The center of the pitcher's area is 38 feet from the point of home plate.
- The batter's boxes are to be 5 feet long by 3 feet wide. The batting tee is placed on home plate, 2 feet from the front edge of the boxes and 3 feet from their rear border.
- The outfield is the wide area of the playing field beyond the diamond and most distant from home plate.
- If there are any outfield fences, they shall be 115 to 125 feet from the batting tee, with the maximum distance used by the 7 and 8 year old players.
- The foul lines extend from home plate past first and third bases. Fair territory is the playing field within and including the foul lines; foul territory is the area outside the foul lines.
- A foul strike area is within an imaginary or drawn arc between the baselines, 10 feet out from the batting tee.

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TEE BALL DRILLS AND GAMES

T•BALL USA has gathered effective drills from successful programs around the country. Given the ages and attention spans of the participants, it is important that these activities also have fun content. Here are 15 to consider. They cover defense [catching, fielding ground and fly balls, throwing] and running. The best drill for hitting is batting practice, practice, practice.

Bounce to the Bucket. Large basket or cooler put on a base. Outfielders try to throw and bounce the ball into the open container.. Can be done as a game with 10 points for getting the ball in, 5 for hitting the bucket and 1 point for the nearest bounce, no matter where the ball ends up. This drill/game teaches throwing from the outfield to a base.

Catch. Two or more players play catch. Keep score of the number of successful catches.

Catching Contest. Players are in pairs and throw the ball back and forth between each other. Last pair that has not dropped a ball wins.

Catching Flies. Hit or throw fly balls to fielders by using a soft baseball, rubber ball or tennis ball. Repetition and practice are the key to success.

Catch the Coach. Coach runs from home plate to first base. After a few steps, couch shouts "tag me" to a player holding a ball, who runs after the coach and tries to tag him out. Coach to decide where/when/if the runner is successful.

Catch the Players. Coach starts four or more players about 10 seconds apart from home plate to circle the bases. Coach starts last, trying to tag the players [alternate: snatch off their caps.]

Crab Drill. Player is in basic fielding set position stance, crouched forward with glove open and down. Player takes three or four steps as coach rolls the ball.

Crow Hop. Classic throwing drill. Player takes a short step and a hop in the direction of the intended throw.

Distraction. Coach rolls the ball to a fielder, but another player runs in front of the fielder and tries to break the fielder's concentration on catching the ball.

Dive. Coach throws or hits ball to one side or the other of a fielder, who has to dive to make the catch. Then, throw to 1st base.

Just Block It. Coach hits ball directly to a fielder. Emphasis is on stopping the ball from getting through to the outfield. OK to just block the ball; [better, of course, to catch it.] Can be a game with a point scored from every block, two for a catch and zero if the ball is not stopped

One and Two. Two players play catch. Thrower scores 2 points if ball is caught at or above the shoulders. 1 point if caught between waist and shoulders. No points if caught below the waist or not caught. First player to score 10 points wins.

Run Down. Two fielders and a runner, who tries to run from one base to another without getting tagged out. Participants rotate positions.

Scoop or Pick-up. Two players [or two rows of players] line up about 10 feet apart. From kneeling position, one player rolls the ball to the other. Repeat 10 to 15 times.

Track Meet. Two players at home plate. At the "start", one runs to 3rd base, the other to 1st base. They continue running [in opposite directions] around the bases. First one to return to home plate wins.

Note: to avoid collisions, instruct the runner that begins via 1st base to touch 2nd base from the outside corner; the other runner, coming from 3rd base, touches the inside corner of 2nd base.

Remember -- have fun and be a good team player.

COACHING TEE BALL TEAMS - A CHECKLIST



One of the most frequently asked questions that we receive by phone or e-mail is: "I am a new coach. Can you help me teach my players what to do." The following checklist outlines instructional actions by position that should be repeated in practice sessions during the tee ball season. It is equally valid as a reference for experienced coaches.

First base

Show where 1st basemen is to stand when no runner is on base and when one is on the base. Practice fielding plays; ball thrown to 1B by infielders.

Second base

Position player in place, anticipating action. Practice fielding plays; such as, tagging a runner out.

Shortstop

Show positions: one between 1B and 2B; the other between 2B and 3B. Practice action; such as, fielding balls and throwing to 1B or 2B for an out.

Third base

Show position, anticipating action. Practice action; such as, player diving to knock down ball.

Pitcher

[Stands in pitcher's area but acts as an infielder.] Practice action; such as, fielding ball and throwing to 1B.

Catcher

[Stands behind and away from home plate until ball is hit] Demonstrate: after ball is hit, adult removes tee and bat; catcher moves up to cover plate. Practice actions: catcher tagging baserunner out, catcher throwing to 1B.

General infield activity

Staying behind Playing Line until the ball is hit. Catching short fly balls. Field balls and throwing to a base or to home plate. Tagging runners on the basepath. Relaying a ball from an outfielder to a base; to the catcher at home plate

Outfielders [there may be five or more]

Position players. Practice catching fly balls in a crowd. "I've got it" Practice catching ground balls and throwing to infield. Have one outfielder receive relay from another and throwing to an infielder.

Batter

Give basic hitting instructions. Practice hitting ball, then dropping bat properly and running to first.

Base Runners

Instruct actions at 1B [Coach at 1B signals to run past base or to turn and go on to 2B]
Instruct that forced runner on base must advance. non-forced runner can hold position on base. player on base watch what next batter does; where the ball goes. Instruct sliding.

Bench

Team sits in batting order, encouraging the batter. Coach talks to team: Listen for instructions. Play fair; follow the rules. Have fun.

Coach talking to team, after the game

Summarize team's activity. Specifics, not generalities. Recognize progress. Note any humorous thing that happened. No public criticism; as necessary, take player aside. What's next [practice at home, next team practice and game schedule; tell parents] Other comments, as appropriate.

COACHING TEE BALL SKILLS - A CHECKLIST

T•BALL USA receives many requests from coaches for a concise and convenient reference of key points to be covered in the instruction of basic skills: hitting, fielding, throwing and running. This outline was developed as a reminder for experienced coaches and as a guide for coaches new to the sport. The actions listed are equally important for boys and girls beginning tee ball and for those wanting/needing to improve their existing skills. The suggested components come, in part, from the *T•BALL USA Family Guide to Tee Ball*, from experienced coaches, youth sports administrators and other sources.

HITTING

Batting -- the stance, swing and follow-through

- Adjust the tee with ball set even to the hitter's waist.
- Face tee with feet spread shoulder-width apart.
- Bend knees, body in slight crouch.
- Weight on balls of feet.
- Grip bat; hands together above knob.
- Hold bat firmly; don't squeeze.
- Bring bat up and away from the body.
- Keep shoulders level; bat and head steady.
- Eyes on the ball.
- Short step with the front foot at start of swing.
- Swing level and bring the bat through the center of the ball.
- Watch bat hit ball; keep head down.
- Weight shifts to front foot; back foot stays on the ground.
- Extend arms and follow through; swing around.

Drop the bat; do not throw it

Key points:

- eyes on the ball
- no cross-handed hold
- position of feet
- stride [weight shift]
- rotation
- the swing

FIELDING

Eyes on the ball. Watch the ball go into the glove. Cover the ball with the other hand

Ground Ball

Stand legs apart, shoulder-width or wider. Bend knees. Get low. Lean forward. Run to the ball. Keep body in front of ball. Glove low to the ground. Scoop or catch the ball and cover it.

Fly Ball

Run to where the ball is going. Call for the ball: "I've got it." Stop and wait for the ball. Hands together, fingers up, shoulder high or over the head. Watch ball into the glove and cover.

Thrown Ball

Bend knees slightly. Watch the ball. On a ball thrown to player above the waist: Hands together facing out; thumbs up. Catch and cover. On a ball thrown below the waist: Hands together facing down; little fingers touching. Catch and cover.

THROWING

Grip and motion

Thumb under the ball. Two or three fingers on top. Don't worry about the seams. Eyes on the target. Legs apart; foot on throwing arm side behind the body. Arm back and up, front shoulder turned toward target. Step toward target with foot opposite the throwing arm. Right-hander with left foot; left-hander with right foot. Push off on back foot as throw begins; end with weight on forward foot. Release the ball in front of body and follow through.

RUNNING

Base running

Run on the balls of the feet. Pump arms back and forth. After the ball is hit Run behind the tee, unless left-handed. Look at first base, not where the ball has gone. Run outside the foul line. Run straight through first base; don't jump on it or slow down. Watch and listen to coach for instructions. When on base Keep one foot touching the base until the next batter hits the ball. Lean forward; when ball is hit, push off base. Know where the ball is. When passing a base, try to touch it on the side without stopping.

Sliding

[not recommended for the youngest players] Start about four to five feet from the base. Arms up, fingers bent, chin down. Bend one leg under the other. Lower leg hits the ground, then the butt and back. Top leg [the extended one] touches the base. No head-first sliding.

for kids

Tee ball is a baseball game for young boys and girls. It is a way to have fun while learning how to play. Here are some important things to know:

- The ball is not pitched. It is hit off a batting tee.
- Every player bats and plays in the field.
- There are no strikeouts or walks (bases on balls).
- There is a real or pretend playing line between first base and third or curved 40 feet out from home plate.
- No fielder can cross the playing line until the ball is hit.
- The ball must be hit 10 feet or is a foul.
- When the ball is hit, don't throw the bat.
- Runners must stay on base until the ball is hit. There is no stealing.
- The inning is over when all players have batted once.
- Safety helmets must be worn when at bat or on base.

Listen to the coaches. Your league may have some different rules, like keeping score or having a coach pitch to the batter. That's part of the game, too.



Remember -- have fun and be a good team player.

CONDUCT GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

- Exhibit exceptionally good behavior at practice sessions and games.
- See that your children – the players – have the proper equipment.
- See that your children arrive and are picked up at the stated times.
- Applaud all good efforts and good plays or remain silent.
- Allow the coaches to coach without outside interference or influence.
- See that your children receive ample positive encouragement and hugs regardless of the outcome of their games.
- Allow your children to play without negative pressure, verbal or physical.
- Support the coaches in what they want the players to learn.
- Treat the coaches, league leaders and game umpires with dignity and respect.
- See that your children do not intentionally injure other players.

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