

Welcome to the 2010 baseball season. A lot of exciting changes were made in the off-season that should benefit your players' enjoyment and growth in baseball. There were changes made at the Rookies, Minors, Majors 60' (formerly AAA) and Majors 70' (formerly Majors).

At the **Rookies** level the decision was made to do away with the pitching machines. The idea behind using pitching machines is that it gave the kids an opportunity to see consistent pitching and a little higher speed from the regular pitching distance. Unfortunately because of our wet weather that was not reality. We found the machines to be inconsistent in speeds and location, slow and cumbersome to adjust on the fly, and overall a huge burden for the coaches to carry around and work without much value being added by their use. Starting this year coaches will pitch to the kids from 40' – 46'. The benefits are that the game will move much faster giving more kids a chance to hit, coaches can "adjust" the speed to match the each individual player's skill level, and the kids will be able to better time their swing, making them more successful.

At the **Minors** level the decision was made to tighten up the age/grade eligibility for this level. This level is for 3rd and 4th graders. If a 2nd grader wants to "play up" and play in the Minors level they must meet all of these requirements: 1.) In writing they must notify the player agent and/or president by registration close of their intention to play up, 2.) They **MUST** attend the player evaluations, 3.) At the team draft meeting by a 70% majority vote the coaches and player agent must agree the player is "skilled" enough to be eligible for the draft, 4.) The player must be drafted before the final pick in the 4th round. If any one of these requirements is not met, the player will not be eligible for the Minors level and will be placed on a Rookies team with his peers.

At the **Majors 60'** level the decision was made to not allow 3rd graders to play at this level. We also changed the name of this level from AAA to more accurately reflect the skill level of the play.

The biggest change this year was made at the **Majors 70'** level. This is a new level for our league. At this new level pitchers will throw from 50' and the bases will be 70' apart. We felt the skill and size of the players and the technology advancements over the years has made the 60' field too small for our players. By moving the pitchers back 4 feet and extending the bases 10 more feet, this should help balance the offensive and defensive game. At 46' the game can become a pitcher dominated game, which isn't very fun for anyone but the pitcher; and 60' made the field too small for any offensive creativity (trying to stealing was basically a sure out). This change also gives the defense some time to throw guys out and turn double plays. It should really make the games more exciting and fun for the kids. The other rule changes aside from the dimensions of the field are: a.) Leading off is now allowed, b.) Stealing any time (you don't have to wait for the ball to get to the plate), c.) Since leading off is allowed pitchers need to hold runners on, which introduces

balks, 4.) In certain situations, the hitter can advance to 1st base on a dropped third strike. Also because the field dimensions have gotten bigger the decision was made that no 4th graders would play at this level.

Level	Eligibility	Information
T-Ball	<p>Must be baseball age 5 years old to play. This level is for Kindergarteners. Teams are put together by school and neighborhoods, as best as possible. A soft core baseball is used at this level.</p>	<p>T-ball is the level that kids are introduced to the game of baseball. Generally will have 1 – 2 practices a week and 1 – 2 games a week (on the field 2 – 3 times a week). Games are played during the week and one on Saturday. Practice and games are generally 1 hour. Field locations are Mary S. Young Park and Cedaroak Elementary. Non-competitive league. . no score is kept. No strikeouts.</p>
Sluggers	<p>This level is generally for 1st graders. Teams are put together by school and neighborhoods, as best as possible. A soft core baseball is used at this level.</p>	<p>Coaches pitch to the kids at this level. Usually the coach will “pitch” from one knee from a distance of 15 – 20 feet from home plate. The kids get five pitches and if unsuccessful in putting the ball in play a tee is brought out, so there are no strikeouts. Like T-ball the kids are on the field 2 – 3 days per week. Field locations are Cedaroak, Stafford, and Hammerle. No score is kept.</p>
Rookies	<p>This level is generally for 2nd graders. Teams are put together by school and neighborhoods, as best as possible. A soft core baseball is used at this level.</p>	<p><u>This year we are doing away with the pitching machines!!</u> Coaches will now pitch overhand from 40 – 46’ to the kids. Coaches, players, and fans have found the pitching machines to be a burden in the past. With wet balls they don’t throw well, inconsistent speeds, slows the game down, etc. so we have decided to let the coaches throw. This will speed up the game, allow the coach to adjust the speed of the pitch to match the skill level of the player, and increase the overall enjoyment of the games. This is the level that we introduce strikeouts, each player gets 5 “hittable” pitches and if unsuccessful at putting the ball in play is out. The kids are on the field 2 – 4 days per week. Field locations are Stafford, Hammerle, and Oppenlander. No score is kept</p>

League	Eligibility	Information
Minors	This level is for 9 and 10 year-olds (3 rd and 4 th graders). Teams are put together by a coach's draft.	This is the first year of kid pitch baseball. The players attend a player evaluation in February and coaches then draft teams. This allows us to have competitively balanced teams, as this is also the first year of keeping score. This is real baseball. . .kids pitching, stealing, bunting, umpires, etc., but no leading off. Kids are on the field 3 –5 days per week. Field locations are Hammerle and Oppenlander.
Majors 60' (formerly AAA)	This level is for 9, 10, and 11 year-olds (4 th and 5 th graders). 3 rd graders are not eligible for this level. Teams are put together by a coach's draft	This is the next level up from Minors. Basically the same rules as Minors level, including a draft. Kids are on the field 3 – 5 days per week. Field locations are Oppenlander, Fields Bridge, Athey Creek, and Sunset.
Majors 70' (formerly Majors)	This level is for 10, 11, and 12 year-olds (5 th and 6 th graders and young 7 th graders). 4 th graders are not eligible for this level. Teams are put together by a coach's draft.	We have changed the old Majors level. For several reasons, the decision was made to go to a bigger infield at this age group. Kids will now pitch from 50' and the base paths will be 70' apart. Runners will also be able to lead off. Batters can advance to 1 st base on a dropped 3 rd strike, and balks are part of the game. Kids are on the field 4 – 5 days per week. Field locations are Fields Bridge, Athey Creek, Oppenlander