

Apache Junction Parks and Recreation

T-Ball Rules, Guidelines, and Philosophy

Ages

This program is open to boys and girls ages four (4) and five (5) years old.

Philosophy of the League

The Apache Junction Parks and Recreation Department created its youth sports programs for the fun and enjoyment of everyone involved. We stress programs that emphasize maximum participation, maximum fun, and maximum learning opportunities. Volunteer coaches have a key role in promoting the above goals of our youth sports programs. We believe that every participant should walk away from this season with newly improved skills, a sense of team and sportsmanship, as well as the desire to continue making sports and recreation a positive part of their lives.

Every child will receive an opportunity to participate in this program. Rotating the batting order & defensive positions will insure every child in the program will have the opportunity to experience the game, learn fundamentals and develop skills needed as they get older.

The youth t-ball program should be a fun and enjoyable experience for the child, volunteers and parents. The program is constantly being developed and improved and is open to idea and suggestions on how to improve its quality and value. This is a non-competitive sports program designed to introduce four and five-year olds to the game, instruct and teach proper fundamentals, good sportsmanship and have maximum participation.

About the Program

There are two parts to the t-ball program: practices and league-style games. The practices will occur over the first week of the program and then mixed in throughout the league. Players will go through drills to teach them the fundamentals of the game (catching, throwing, fielding, hitting and running the bases). During the games, players will continue to be instructed and coaches will make sure all players have the same opportunities to play.

Uniforms

T-shirts will be distributed prior to the first game. All other clothing (hats, pants, shoes, baseball glove, etc.) must be furnished by the parents. The pants do not have to be official baseball pants. Comfortable shorts or sweatpants will be sufficient. Any type of soft-soled baseball shoe or tennis shoe will be acceptable as footwear. Metal cleats, sandals, open-toe shoes, dress shoes or boots will not be allowed.

League Equipment

Each dugout will have a storage container with equipment. The container will contain bats, 9" incrediballs and helmets. Each site will have extra gloves in case a player forgets their glove for the day. The coaches are responsible for making sure all of the equipment is returned at the end of the day to the container. Players are allowed to use their own bats (foam only) but players and parents are solely responsible for keeping track of their own equipment. Tees for the players to hit from will also be left with the storage container.

League Rules

◆ Games will be 50 minutes in duration. Once the time limit has expired, a new inning will not start. We will finish any inning in progress. No new innings will be started with less than 10 minutes to go. An airhorn (when available) will blow with 10 minutes left and again at the end. When not available, staff will notify the coaches.

◆ Games will start at 6 p.m. sharp! Players are expected to arrive at the field 15 minutes early to warm up and so coaches know who is available to play. Coaches should not wait for their entire team because the children who arrived on time are penalized by having to wait on others.

◆ Each batter will be allowed to swing until they hit the ball off the tee. Coaches may assist a player who is struggling.

◆ A 10-foot chalk line will be placed in an arc in front of home plate. A ball must be hit past this line to be considered a fair ball. Any ball which falls short of this line or a ball which is hit outside the foul lines will be considered a foul ball.

◆ All players on a team will be assigned a defensive position each inning (even if a team has more than 10 players on a team.) Coaches are expected to rotate their defenses each inning, so every child gets the opportunity to experience playing all different positions.

◆ A rotating batting order will be used the entire season. Before the first league game, the coach will make one lineup and will use the same one throughout the league. The order will rotate from game to game. The purpose of this is to insure all children receive approximately the same number of opportunities to bat.

◆ The entire lineup will bat each inning.

◆ Leading off and/or stealing is prohibited. Coaches should not call a runner out for leaving too early however. They should explain proper base running skills and rules for t-ball.

◆ Players should be encouraged to throw the ball to the correct base in an attempt to get the runner out. Coaches should try to hold runners to one base in the event of an overthrow. We are trying to teach kids the correct way to play the game. In other leagues, kids are simply taught to throw the ball home or back to the pitcher to prevent runners from advancing. We want to encourage the players to throw the ball to the correct bases and to learn the right way to play the game.

◆ Players will be allowed to hit the ball and run for singles and doubles. All players will be allowed to reach base regardless of whether the defense gets them out (make sure to praise the defense when they make the proper play to get an "out"). The last player in the order will be allowed to run all the way around the bases and all players in front of them on the base paths will be allowed to run all the way home.

◆ All players not at bat or in the on deck circle should sit in the dugout behind the fence. Coaches are responsible for the behavior of the players on the bench. It is recommended that coaches get parent volunteers to help with controlling the dugout.

◆ Each coach should ask moms/dads to assist in some of the non-field related duties (should be another player's parent who will be able to be at majority games). This person will be responsible for keeping track of the batting order, defensive rotation and the snack list. Feel free to use more than one parent if they are available to help.

◆ Each coach should also recruit parents to stand at each base to make sure the players know where and when to run. These parents can also be used to help out when your team is on defense to tell the players when to throw the ball and to which base.

Tobacco/Alcohol/Drug Policy

Apache Junction Parks and Recreation promotes a tobacco-free, alcohol-free and drug-free environment for the children participating in our leagues. All tobacco, alcohol and illegal drug products are prohibited at the sites. Any person found in violation of this policy will be asked to leave the premises. Anyone who is found in repeated violation of this policy may be barred from attending future practices and games.

PLEASE REMEMBER: We are attempting to develop a fun program which allows every child the opportunity to play. We want the children to enjoy themselves so they will continue in athletics and stay active. Fun is the main goal in a program for this age group. With everyone's cooperation and help, we can run a successful program.