# SOUTHERN HILLS WARRIORS

## MACHINE PITCH – PLAYER DEVELOPMENT & COMPETITION GUIDELINES

**DEVELOP PLAYERS • SHARE OPPORTUNITIES • BUILD CONFIDENCE • HAVE FUN**

## Our Machine Pitch Focus

- Machine Pitch is about learning the game, building skills and giving every player opportunities to develop.
- Players should be encouraged to experience different fielding positions throughout the season.
- Sharing positions helps players learn the game from different parts of the field and builds confidence across the team.
- The aim is to develop players rather than have the same players permanently assigned to the same positions.
- If a player is nervous about a position, use training as the opportunity to teach, encourage and build confidence.

The rules below are the Baseball WA Junior Bylaws requirements for Little League Minor – Machine Pitch. These requirements cannot be changed by Southern Hills. The Southern Hills focus is on how we encourage and support players within those rules.

## 1. Participation & Position Rotation

- Players are to rotate fielding positions every defensive inning. The catcher position is exempt from this rotation, subject to the maximum 2 catching innings per game.
- Coaches are to provide a fielding position roster for the game in advance to the scorers.
- No player may sit on the bench for 2 or more consecutive defensive innings.
- Players must wear the full baseball uniform – shorts are not permitted.

### Encouraging Position Sharing

- Use the position roster as a development tool – give players opportunities to learn different positions.
- Where practical, avoid having a player permanently identified with one position when the rules allow rotation.
- Encourage players to have a go at positions they may not have played before.
- Support players who are unsure by giving them clear instructions and encouragement before the inning starts.

## 2. Catching

- No player may play in the catching position for more than 2 defensive innings per game.
- Catchers must wear the required catching attire: skull cap and mask (including dangling-type throat guard), chest plate and leggings. Protectors are mandatory for all male catchers.
- The skull cap and mask must remain on while a batter is attempting to hit a pitched ball and may only be removed once the batter has hit the ball.
- A team may elect to use a non-suited-up catcher. This player must start each play safely behind the back net and may only enter the field if the ball is missed by the hitter and needs to be retrieved, or the ball is put in play.

## 3. Game Duration

- Games are played for 1 hour and a maximum of 6 innings, with a minimum of 3 innings.
- The inning in progress at the end of the 60th minute is the final inning unless the minimum innings requirement has not been met.
- There is no reverting back to even innings.

## 4. Machine Pitch

- Games are machine pitched using a Louisville Slugger Blue Flame (UPM45) machine.
- The machine settings are agreed to by both coaches before the game.
- The machine is positioned with the front T Bar 42 feet from home plate for MP60 and 50 feet for MP70.
- A coach or responsible person from the batting team operates the machine.
- For the first 3 games of the season only, if a batter cannot put the ball into play after 3 strikes, the coach shall soft toss from the opposite batter's box until the ball is batted in play.

## 5. Playing Rules

- The fielder playing the pitcher position must stand to the side or diagonally behind the pitching machine and may not stand closer to home plate than the T Bar.
- No bunting.
- No Infield Fly rule.
- No stealing of bases.
- No warm-up pitches for the catcher.
- On a batted ball, runners may advance until the ball is in possession of the pitcher and the pitcher is inside the infield diamond.
- On an overthrow that passes the 1st or 3rd base foul line, runners may advance until the ball rolls dead and are awarded the base they were approaching when the ball went dead. At home plate, the ball remains in play on an overthrow if it rebounds off the backstop into fair territory.
- Runners do not advance on errant pitches by the machine or errors by the catcher in attempting to catch the pitched ball.
- A dropped 3rd strike by the catcher is an automatic out.
- A caught foul tip is an out only when caught by the catcher and the ball has gone above the height of the batter's shoulder. A foul tip deflected into the catcher's mitt is not an out except on the 3rd strike.
- A fair ball hit beyond the outfield cones on the full is a home run.
- A fair ball hit beyond the outfield cones on the bounce advances the batter and all runners 2 bases.
- If a batted ball hits the pitching machine or umpire unassisted, it is a dead ball and the count reverts to what it was before that pitch.
- Change of innings must take no more than 60 seconds.
- Official baseballs must be used. They do not need to be new, provided they are clean, in good condition and approved by the umpire.

## 6. Scoring

- Games are scored exactly as a Major League Little League game.

## 7. Scorebooks & Match Information

- Scorebooks are still to be completed accurately and submitted after each game.
- The scorebook should contain all required game information and clearly record player participation and fielding positions.
- The scorebook is a useful development tool for coaches to see how opportunities and positions are being shared across the team.
- The Southern Hills Competitions Manager may review scorebooks to support player development and ensure the participation requirements are being followed.
- A copy of the completed scorebook must be submitted to the Southern Hills Competitions Manager by 5:00pm Tuesday following the Monday game.

### Scorebook Reminder

**Please make sure the scorebook is complete, clear and submitted on time.**

The focus is on participation, development and keeping an accurate record of the game.

## 8. Results

- Match reports are to be forwarded to the Operations Support Manager (OSM) in the manner requested by the OSM.

## Our Coaching Approach

- Give every player a chance to learn.
- Share fielding positions and encourage players to experience different parts of the field.
- Use training to teach and build confidence in positions a player may be unsure about.
- Celebrate effort, learning and improvement – not just the result.
- Remember that mistakes are part of learning the game.
- Work together with players and families to make Machine Pitch a positive development experience.

**OUR FOCUS**

**Every player learning. Every player developing. Every player having a go.**