

El Paso County Sportspark: 4/5u T-Ball Rules

El Paso County Sportspark will play under the rules of the current year United States Sports Specialty Association (USSSA) Official Rule Book. In addition, the El Paso County Sportspark has implemented additional rules that all coaches and umpires must follow (see Baseball League Guidelines). All coaches, team representatives, and umpires will complete the County of El Paso background check process.

General Rules

1. Time limit will be **1 (one) hour (1)**. If you start an inning, home team must also hit.
2. T-ball games will consist of 4 innings (3 and ½ if home team is ahead).
3. **Team can start with 9 but must have 11 players by the start of the second (2nd) inning.**
4. **Run rule:** 15 runs after 2 innings, 10 runs after 3 innings, or 8 runs after 4 innings.
5. Every player must play at least one inning (offense and defense). Violation will result in forfeit of that game, unless run rule is in effect.
6. Rule 5 only applies to complete games.
7. Each team must furnish one (1) new baseball per game. The baseball must be an official M-Ball. This game ball will be given to the umpire before the game starts and will be returned after the game.
8. Each team must provide a lineup, complete with first and last names of each player, to the umpire prior to the game. (No abbreviations or nicknames)
9. In a T-Ball game, a tie is a tie, only for regular season games.
10. No new inning shall start with 4 minutes or less on the clock. (Including during playoffs)
11. 5-minute grace period on the first game of the day only, with time running, in the regular season and in playoffs.
12. No runs count after last batter forces out at first base.

Batting Rules

1. Batters can only bat once per inning. No bunting allowed.
2. All bats must be T-ball and can be comprised of wood, composite, or half and half and include the USSSA hologram logo on it. No fast pitch bats are allowed.
3. Bats thrown completely outside the home plate diameter (circle) are an out. A bat partially out of the circle is not an out.
4. Each batter is allowed three (3) strikes for an out.
5. No intentional walks.

Base Running Rules

1. Tagging up is not allowed. Infield fly rule does not apply. Ball is live until umpire calls “time out” or “time”.
2. A base runner is out for leaving the base before the ball is hit. Stealing is not allowed.
3. Coaches that touch a runner while the ball is live will be charged with an out and the base runner removed from the base.
4. Sliding is not allowed at 1st Base. Each team will receive a warning at coaches meeting at plate, on the first violation will be an out. Slide rule is in effect. Runners must slide when a tag is evident or seek to avoid contact with fielder. Malicious contact shall suspend all obstruction penalties.
5. On a batted fair ball, all players will advance at their own risk. The runner that made the hit, plus the runners on base, may take as many bases as possible until the ball is returned to the interior infield or until the play is deemed complete as determined by the umpire.
6. Overthrows: **Alive and in play** - After the first overthrow or the first thrown ball which gets past a fielder covering a base, the base runners may advance one base beyond the base which they were traveling to at the time of the release of the throw. This advancement is at their own risk. Example: With a runner on first, the batter hits a ball to the shortstop that fields it and overthrows first base. The ball remains in play so the base runner from first advances at their own risk to third. The batter-base runner attempts to advance to second.
7. Out-of-Play: If a defensive overthrow goes out of play, bases will be awarded accordingly, based on umpire judgement, in which case a dead ball shall be called (**see rule 8**). The base runners are entitled to advance one base beyond the base they were traveling to at the time of release of the throw.
8. The following rules shall govern the “crash rule” (the situation involving contact between fielders and base runners at any base including home):

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- a. A base runner is not required to slide at any time. However, if a fielder clearly has possession of the ball and is waiting for the base runner, then it is the responsibility of the base runner to avoid contact with the fielder. If contact is made, it must be in an attempt to slide.
 - b. A fielder cannot block the base or baseline without clear possession of the ball. When waiting for a thrown ball, the fielder (including the catcher) must be positioned out of the baseline. Straddling the base is not out of the baseline. A fielder can move toward the base runner only when in clear possession of the ball.
 - c. Penalties:
 1. If a base runner contacts a fielder in clear possession of the ball other than in an attempt to slide, an immediate dead ball will be called. The base runner will be called out. If the base runner deliberately contacts the fielder with great force, the base runner is subject to ejection in addition to being called out. All other base runners are returned to the last base touched at the time of the dead ball.
 2. If a fielder is blocking the baseline and does not have clear possession of the ball, any contact (other than deliberate contact by either player) shall be ruled obstruction; and bases shall be granted accordingly.
 - d. When the fielder, base runner, and ball arrive simultaneously at a base, the umpire will rule on any illegal or unnecessary contact that may occur. In any case, no player may initiate deliberate contact without being subject to penalties.
9. No more halfway marks, i.e., "time will be called when lead runner stops or there is no play to be made at which point all runners shall return to the last legally touched base without being put out."
10. Out of Baseline goes into effect when runner goes beyond 3ft of established baseline.
 - a. Out of baseline shall only be enforced when an attempt by fielder is made on runner.
11. If the last batter safely makes it to base, then he/she shall be allowed to return to their designated base the following inning. This includes the 12th and only 11th depending on the lineup situation. Both the 11th & 12th may not return to run the bases, only the last batter.

Fielding Rules

1. The game must be played with 6 infielders and 5 outfielders. All must play assigned positions (no rovers).
2. All players on the field will play one position per inning and cannot switch to another position until the next inning.
 - a. Exception: Mid-inning substitution can be made if player needs to use restroom or at Umpires discretion on player safely.
3. During a play at home, the catcher must make the play inside home circle and not another position player.
4. Players must be 5 feet apart from each other and must play his or her designated position (or area). Hence, second base cannot play Shortstop or pitcher at the same time. (Umpire judgment)
5. The Middle infielders (shortstop and 2nd) may play no deeper than 3 yards or 9 feet (from the baseline) into the outfield and 1st & 3rd no deeper than 3 yards or 9 feet (from the baseline) into the outfield grass.
6. Pitchers must remain in the pitcher's circle until ball is hit. Pitchers can only be used as a backup for any player on a base and not at home plate.
 - a. If pitcher is outside of circle before ball is hit, any play fielder makes shall be called safe.

Game Tie Breakers:

In T-Ball, a regular season game ending in a tie is recorded as a tie.

In playoff games only, extra innings shall continue a game that is tied after regulation play or the time limit. The visiting team shall place the last out of the previous inning on second base. The same shall happen with home team.

Only the **head coach** will be allowed to approach the umpire to discuss a call.

On offense: only **3** coaches are allowed in the field.

On defense: only **4** coaches (or three coaches and scorekeeper) are allowed inside the dugout. A single defensive coach will be allowed in the outfield to direct fielders (coach must stand behind the outfielders) but the coach may not touch or physically position a player until ball is dead. No time outs will be allowed to position players.

Only two team representatives or managers other than coaches are allowed in the dugout.