

# NEZ 9U SENIOR ROOKIE

## Rules and Guidelines

Senior Rookie is a developmental baseball league where the focus is on learning the fundamentals of baseball. The league is intended to develop batting skills using a pitching machine in games and in practice since a machine will deliver a ball with more consistent velocity and location compared to a pitched ball.

The objective of the hitting experience in Senior Rookie is for all players to make contact with the ball. The focus of development at this level should be on hitting and fielding. Base running is a part of the game of baseball but we must not exploit the lack of skills of the defensive players by trying to take extra bases. Base runners can only be advanced when hitters make contact with the baseball as opposed to advancing via errors or any other actions. While the league provides an introduction to the concepts of strikes, outs and scoring runs, *emphasis must be on skill development above all.*

- 1) Diamond setup:
  - a. Bases set at 55 feet apart. The pitching machine is set at 28-32 feet from tip at the back of home plate to the front bar of the pitching machine.
  - b. Speed of machine set at 30-32 MPH. Machine will be calibrated at the start of the year at the coaches meeting. All machines are slightly different in their setting. Below is a guide.
  - c. **Machine settings are Micro Adjust 4-Release Block 3-Power lever 2.**
  - d. Cones will be placed at the positions in the field with a number on the cone indication the number of the position, eg. Pitcher is #1, so the cone with a number one one it will be placed near the pitching machine. Short Stop is #6. A cone with the number six will be placed approximately where the short stop starts the play.
  - e. Home team is responsible for setting up the diamond as well as providing the pitching machine.
  
- 2) Each batter will receive 5 pitches to hit a fair ball.
  - a. For the first half of the season, if a fair ball is not hit after the 5<sup>th</sup> pitch, the batter will hit the 6<sup>th</sup> ball off the tee.
  - b. For the second half of the season, if a fair ball is not hit after the 5<sup>th</sup> pitch, the batter will be declared out. A foul ball on the pitches 1 through 4 will count as a "pitched" ball. A foul ball on the 5<sup>th</sup> or any subsequent pitch will not be counted and another pitch will be thrown.

- 3) Base runners may only advance on a fair hit ball. Hitters may advance as many bases as they can before the ball is returned to the infield. For example:
  - a. If the ball is hit into the infield, all runners may only advance a maximum of one base regardless of any overthrows.
  - b. If the ball is hit through the infield whether by a hit or a fielding error, runners may advance until the ball is returned to the infield. This does not require the ball to be in control within a defending player's glove. The play is considered dead as soon as it arrives in the infield and no further advancement of runners may occur.
- 4) Base runners may not leave their base until contact has been made with the ball. Lead offs and stolen bases are not allowed.
- 5) Participants will rotate one defensive position after every 2 batters, with the exception of the catcher. This position will not rotate every 2 batters, the participant will be the catcher for the complete half of their defensive inning. Eg. 1 will go to 3, 3 to 4, 4 to 5, etc.
- 6) The catching position is optional and does not need to be filled. The team may choose to play with 4 outfielders instead.
- 7) Fielders must assume correct fielding positions, regardless of the strength of the hitters or the likelihood of a batted ball reaching the outfield. If applicable, the extra (10<sup>th</sup>) player must take a defensive position in the outfield.
- 8) The player playing the pitcher's position must be positioned within 5 ft. of the pitching machine, on either side but not ahead of the machine. If there are only 7 or 8 players available, eliminate the catching and/or pitching positions.
- 9) Listed below is the format that the coaches are expected to follow for the season. It allows for a balance of skill development and the opportunity to use those skills in a game setting:
  - 6:00 – 6:15pm: Players Arrive / Equipment set-up (bases, etc.)
  - 6:15 – 6:30pm: Warm-up activities. Throwing progression.
  - 6:30 – 8:00pm: Game. Maximum of 5 innings.
- 10) 6 runs or 3 outs will end each half inning.

- 11) The team at bat will have two base coaches who will also act as umpires to determine closeplays on the bases. The machine operator may also assist on a decision if required.
- 12) All safety equipment must be worn including full catchers equipment, double earflap battinghelmets with chin straps for batters, base runners and on deck batter. Athletic cup is also required for boys and girls.
- 13) Teams are encouraged to hold a practice once a week for 1 HR outside of the game nights. Skill development is important at this age, and only focusing on game time is limiting to player Long Term Development
- 14) No metal cleats are permitted.
- 15) All coaches, parents, players and spectators are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct andthe Fair play agreement.

