

# Wheaton Ball League

## T-Ball Guidelines and Rules

**2022 Season**

**Version 1.6**

### **Table of Contents**

Introduction.....	Page 1
Contact Information.....	Page 1
Revision History .....	Page 2
Apparel Guidelines .....	Page 3
Practice Field Prep Guidelines.....	Page 4
Practice Rules .....	Page 5
Game Field Prep Guidelines .....	Page 6 – 7
Game Rules .....	Page 8 – 10
Tournaments .....	Page 10
T-Ball Skills to Focus On.....	Page 11 – 12
Coaching the Team .....	Page 13 – 14

**Motto: Where ball is all about the kids!**

### **Introduction**

T-ball is the introductory level for playing baseball. Coaches should take great care to teach fundamentals of ball handling and the basics of game play. It is very important at this level that coaches capture and encourage the fact that this is a game and is “played” to have fun. Practices should be varied and focused. Essentially, the kids should be taught fundamentals of the game; however, also allowed to have fun!

### **Wheaton Ball League Contact Information**

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                  715-563-3882 or 715-874-6414

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                          Elk Mound, WI

Website:      <https://www.townofwheaton.com/wheaton-ball-league/>

Email:      [wheaton.ball@hotmail.com](mailto:wheaton.ball@hotmail.com)

Facebook:      [Wheaton Ball](#)

Schedules:      Wheaton Ball Google Calendar  
<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=qh2uqhsp8urskbfhguj59am0dg@group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America/Chicago>

## **Revision History**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Source of Change</b>
1.1	4/9/2017	Added notation about roster books being provided to head coaches on request.  Game Rules #31 and #32 regarding the pitcher were added to better align t-ball with instructional.  Game Rules #35 and #36 regarding the catcher were added to better align t-ball with instructional.	T-Ball Coach's Meeting
1.2	4/11/2017	Game Rule #13 regarding the on-deck batter was separated from Game Rule #12 and expanded for safety reasons.	Wheaton Ball Organizers
1.3	4/7/2018	Expanded on animals/pets in the park.	Wheaton Ball Organizers
1.4	4/7/2019	Placed 10' diameter (5' radius) circle around 2 <sup>nd</sup> base for field lining to assist kids in when to throw the ball versus run to the base.  Game Rule #5 changed from 6 runs to 5 runs per half inning to allow for more batting/fielding rotations and game innings.  Game Rule # 25 added notation about coaches using discretion with overhand versus under hand throws for safety reasons.	T-Ball Coach's Meeting
1.5	4/7/2019	Added notation about tournaments including upper league levels (Instructional, Minors, Majors, and Ponys).	Wheaton Ball Organizers
1.6	4/21/2022	Updated dates for 2022 and minor wordsmithing changes.	Wheaton Ball Organizers

## **Apparel Guidelines**

1. Wheaton Ball League has the following items available for players to use.
  - Bats
  - Helmets
  - Spare Ball Gloves
  - Balls
2. Helmets are required while practice swinging, batting, or running the bases. Catchers must always also wear a helmet.
3. Baseball pants are suggested; however, are not required.
4. Cleats are not expected at this level of play; however, can be worn. (Molded cleats only!)
5. Batting gloves are not required; however older kids tend to like them.

## **Practice Field Prep Guidelines**

1. Unlock the bathrooms.
2. We DO NOT chalk the fields for practices.
3. Grab at least 6 helmets as batters and catchers will need to wear helmets always. Please place the helmets on the helmet hangers in the dugouts. This keeps our helmets in good condition!
4. Grab any ball league bats needed from the equipment sheds.
5. We ask you only use at most 2 Ts for your practice so if another T ball team is practicing there is at least 1 T available for them.
6. Set 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases. Metal plates are removed and stored outside the infield fence to avoid kids meeting them.
7. After your practice is completed make sure ALL garbage is removed from the dugouts and put in the proper receptacles.
8. Return the helmets, bats, and T to the equipment sheds. If there is a T ball practice right after your practice, feel free to ask the coach if they would like to use the equipment you have out.
  - a. Put the 6 helmets used in the equipment sheds. These should go in the tool cabinet marked helmets to keep them from getting dirty.
  - b. Grab any ball league bats used and put in the equipment sheds. These should go on the bottom shelf where it is labeled bats.
  - c. Put batting T in the equipment sheds. These go under the garden hose hangers.
9. If you are the last practice for the day, please complete the following tasks:
  - a. Remove 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases and return to equipment sheds. Make sure you put them in the right place as bases only work on one field. If they go on wrong field, you can end up causing issues with the base foundation and creating more work for the league. Metal plates should be put back in place to prevent water from getting into the base pipes.
  - b. Using hand rakes, you must rake around all the bases and pitcher's mound.
  - c. Using gator, you must drag the entire field. Here are couple reminders for safe operations of the gator.
    - i. **Absolutely NO KIDS on the gator! No exceptions!! We prefer just the coaches drive the gator.**
    - ii. Check oil and gas before use
      - i. There is a choke (if needed) under the driver's seat on the gator
      - iii. Make sure the gator is in neutral when you go to start it otherwise it won't start
      - iv. Once started make sure the drag is raised all the way up and emergency brake is off. IMPORTANT: If the drag is not all the way up when you back out of the equipment shed you can damage the drag!
      - v. When returning the gator to equipment shed, leave the drag in the up position and key in the ignition after turning off the gator.
10. Make sure all field gates are closed
11. **DOUBLE CHECK THE BUILDINGS FOR KIDS BEFORE LOCKING. THERE IS NO WAY-OUT ONCE DOORS ARE LOCKED!!!!**
12. Make sure equipment sheds and bathrooms are picked up and locked for the night!
13. If more gator gas is needed, please notify [wheaton.ball@hotmail.com](mailto:wheaton.ball@hotmail.com) or call/text 715-563-3882.

## **Practice Rules**

1. Practices can be scheduled by coaches during any available field times. Please check Wheaton Ball League google calendar for up-to-date field times. All field scheduling is handled by emailing [wheaton.ball@hotmail.com](mailto:wheaton.ball@hotmail.com) or call/text 715-563-3882. If there is a field/time conflict, feel free to reach out to the other coach to see if it is possible to share a field.
2. Practices may start right after the official coach's meeting for that season provided the weather is favorable and the fields are approved for use by the Wheaton Ball League. Wheaton Ball League will send out an email to all coaches when the fields are approved for use.
3. Each team is allowed a total of 4 practices before the first game.
4. All practices are dependent on field conditions.
5. Practices should be no more than one hour and focus on a few primary skills (batting, running the bases, stopping the ball, catching the ball, and throwing the ball).
6. At this level of play, the focus is on learning the game. Please take every opportunity to help teach your players during practice and games and assist with players on other teams.

## **Game Field Prep Guidelines**

1. Early game coaches are responsible for prepping their field before the game. Here are the required tasks.
  - a. Put 6 helmets in each dug out
  - b. Grab any bats needed and hang in bat holders
  - c. Put batting T on home plate
  - d. Game balls are provided by the league and can be found in the concession stand
  - e. Set 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases. Metal plates are removed and stored outside the infield fence to avoid kids coming in contact with them during a game.
  - f. Using chalk machine in the equipment sheds (check to make sure at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  full) chalk the following lines:



- i. Batter's box on both sides of home plate, which measures 5 ft. long x 3 ft. wide and is centered on the plate. We have a metal frame in the equipment sheds hanging up that you can use to draw the batter's box with the end of a bat then remove the metal frame and chalk.



- ii. Out of bounds line from home plate to 1<sup>st</sup> base.
- iii. Rover line (halfway between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> base) so kids know where to stand.
- iv. Place a 10' diameter (5' radius) circle around 2<sup>nd</sup> base so kids know when to throw the ball versus run to the base.
- v. Short stop line (halfway between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base) so kids know where to stand.
- vi. Out of bounds line from 3<sup>rd</sup> base to home plate.
- vii. Next-up batter's box for both teams.
- viii. Lastly make the foul strike line by measuring 10 ft. out from home plate on each out of bounds line and mark. Then connect your marks with a crescent chalk line.

- ix. Return the chalk machine and metal frame to their positions in the equipment sheds.
2. We would recommend having one coach prep the field while the other coach warms up the kids for the game so that games start on time and kids can get home!
  3. Late game coaches are responsible for cleaning up their field before leaving the park. Here are the required tasks.
    - a. Make sure ALL garbage is removed from the dugouts and put in the proper receptacles.
    - b. Put the 6 helmets from each dugout in the equipment sheds. These should go in the tool cabinet marked helmets to keep them from getting dirty.
    - c. Grab any ball league bats used and put in the equipment sheds. These should go on the bottom shelf where it is labeled bats.
    - d. Put batting T in the equipment sheds. These go under the garden hose hangers.
    - e. Remove 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases and return to equipment sheds. Make sure you put them in the right place as bases only work on one field. If they go on wrong field, you can end up causing issues with the base foundation and creating more work for the league. Metal plates should be put back in place to prevent water from getting into the base pipes.
    - f. Using hand rakes, you must rake around all the bases and pitcher's mound.
    - g. Using gator, you must drag the entire field. Here are couple reminders for safe operations of the gator.
      - i. **Absolutely NO KIDS on the gator! No exceptions!! We prefer just the coaches drive the gator.**
      - ii. Check oil and gas before use
      - iii. There is a choke (if needed) under the driver's seat on the gator
      - iv. Make sure the gator is in neutral when you go to start it otherwise it won't start
      - v. Once started make sure the drag is raised all the way up and emergency brake is off. **IMPORTANT:** If the drag is not all the way up when you back out of the equipment shed you can damage the drag!
      - vi. When returning the gator to equipment shed, leave the drag in the up position and key in the ignition after turning off the gator.
    - h. Make sure all field gates are closed
    - i. **DOUBLE CHECK THE BUILDINGS FOR KIDS BEFORE LOCKING. THERE IS NO WAY-OUT ONCE DOORS ARE LOCKED!!!!**
    - j. Make sure equipment sheds, concession stands, and bathrooms are picked up and locked for the night!
  4. If more chalk or gator gas is needed, please notify [wheaton.ball@hotmail.com](mailto:wheaton.ball@hotmail.com) or call/text 715-563-3882.
  5. If only one game is being played on the field in a night, the coaches are responsible for set-up and clean-up of the field.

## **Game Rules**

1. All games must start at their scheduled start time. Please be prompt. Please Note: Wheaton Ball League shares the fields with Chippewa Falls Youth Ball and there are games scheduled right after T-ball games so please stick to the schedule.
2. Games starting at 5:30 PM will be completed by 6:30 PM so next game can start right away!!
  - a. Games will last 2 – 3 innings.
  - b. If there is no game scheduled at 6:30 PM it is up to both coaches if they want to finish out the remaining innings.
  - c. If 5:30 PM game will not be completed by 6:30 PM it is up to both coaches to decide before the start of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning if they want to start a 3<sup>rd</sup> inning knowing one team may not get a time up to bat. Since the Wheaton Ball League is all about the kids having fun playing ball there should be no issues here!!
3. Please tell your families to have their kids at the fields at least 20 minutes prior to game start time. This allows kids to get warmed up and ready for the game without using game time.
4. During games we do NOT keep an official score; however, many coaches find a team roster book helpful in keeping track of their team's rosters, lineups, plays made, etc. These are provided to head coaches on request.
5. There are 3 outs and/or 5 runs max per half inning.
6. Soft-core style youth baseballs are used.
7. Full uniforms (hat and team shirt provided by the league) are expected to be worn during games.
8. No child is to play in the same position more than once in a game. Please make sure to set a team lineup and keep the order the same all year. This will help the kids know which position is next for them during a game and should save time between innings. You should rotate through this lineup every game.

**REMINDER:** Although these are T-ball kids they still remember very quickly who plays what positions and how long it has been since they played pitcher or 1<sup>st</sup> base (These 2 positions are the most desired positions in T-ball). It is vital that you rotate kids into every position. If Wheaton Ball League finds a coach playing the same players in the same positions all 3 innings or in back-to-back games the ball league reserves the right to step in and ensure the kids are having a fun time!

9. All players bat (not necessarily in one inning). Players will bat in order from first to last. Batting orders are to be rotated during the season so that all players experience batting at each portion of the lineup. This simply means that the order is to remain the same. It does not mean the same child is to lead off every game. Every player must bat in the batting order every game. We suggest starting your next games batting lineup where the previous game ended.
10. Players should be fielded at Pitcher, Catcher, 1B, 2B, 3B, SS, Rover, Left Field, Center Field, and Right Field. Extra players can roam the outfield so that all players can be on the field.
11. Coaches are the umpires. There are no independent umps. Primary calls by the batting team Coach at home plate as he/she is in the typical Umpire position. Coaches should use discretion to get assistance from opposing team coaches in the field if not in position to call.

### **Batters**

12. Any batter or on deck batter must be wearing a helmet while on the field.
13. The on-deck batter should remain in the warmup circle until the batter has hit and the play is over.
14. Batters throwing the bat after swinging will get TWO warnings. After that they can be called out for any remaining at bat where they throw or endanger other players by not leaving the bat at the batter's box.
15. The ball must travel 10 feet or it's a foul strike (batting coach should make this call immediately to avoid confusion for players on the field. Field should be marked with chalked foul strike line, so plays are clear to everyone).
16. No walks or strike outs

### **Runners**

17. Bases are the same as the instructional distance.
18. Tie always goes to the runner.
19. No base stealing. The runner cannot start to run until the ball is hit.
20. No advancing on overthrows. If a runner is beyond the halfway point to the next base prior to an overthrow, they can advance to the next base.
21. First and second base runners cannot advance on a home play.
22. Players can take extra bases if hit well enough to the outfield. However, once the ball is on its way back towards the Tee, or there is a play at a base, advancing runners should hold up.
23. No propelling, pushing, pulling, or holding runners by a base coach or base player.

### **Fielding**

24. All plays at first base MUST be made by the first base player. Examples: They catch the ball from the hit, they field the ball and touch the bag/runner, or they are thrown the ball by another fielder.
25. All balls must be thrown overhand unless at coach's discretion the kid throwing the ball is too close to the kid catching the ball then an under-hand throw can be used for safety reasons.
26. Infield positions are to remain at their positions until the ball is hit.
27. Play is over when the ball is on its way to the tee.
28. Players are to play normal fielding positions with exception of the outfield and optional rover.

### **Pitcher**

29. Pitcher must stay on pitcher's mound until the ball is hit.
- 30. The pitcher MUST THROW the ball OVERHAND to first base – NO running down and tagging runner going to first.**
- 31. The pitcher can pick-up a ball going between the pitcher's mound and 3<sup>rd</sup> base line and tag the runner going home. An out will not be called if the pitcher tags home plate.**
- 32. The catcher is the only player who can make a play at home plate. The pitcher MUST THROW the ball to the catcher at home plate (UNDER HAND IS ALLOWED DUE TO DISTANCE BETWEEN THE PITCHER AND CATCHER) – The pitcher cannot tag home plate.**

### **Catcher**

- 33. The catcher must wear a helmet. This doesn't need to be a "catcher's mask".**
- 34. The catcher should stand next to the backstop fence until the ball is put into play.**

- 35. If the ball is hit just past the foul strike line the catcher can retrieve the ball and touch home plate to get the runner coming from 3<sup>rd</sup> base out.**
- 36. If the catcher is making a play at home plate, we suggest the catcher be out in front of home plate.**

### **Coaches**

37. Determine first-up with coin toss and select 1 – 2 kids from your team to be a part of it. You will be surprised how excited they get and how many just want to bat first ☺
38. Six players on the team must start the game to make it a legal game. You may pick up the rest of the players from other teams to make up a full team. Players must be approved by opposing coach. The best a team can do using substitute players is a tie. You may substitute players in the tournament; however, upon doing so your team forfeits the game.
39. Coaches cannot add players to their team without prior approval from the league organizer. All forms and payment must be accounted for prior to the player's participation.
40. Batting Team coach should adjust the Tee for the batter and help the catcher T the ball.
41. Coaches are allowed (and encouraged) on the field during game play with the players.
42. Any misconduct, foul language, disrespect, or poor sportsmanship displayed by players will result in removal from the game and suspension for one full day (not game).
43. Any profanity, physical or verbal abuse, disrespect, misconduct, poor sportsmanship, or uncooperative attitudes by any coach or assistant coach will result in immediate dismissal from the Wheaton Ball League.
44. Coaches and parents must remember that T-ball is for the kids. We are to teach them the fundamentals of baseball and etiquette of good sportsmanship. We are to foster positive self-esteem. We are, above all, having fun!!

### **Tournaments**

1. Each team will play 2 games during tournaments.
2. Each team is responsible for providing their own announcer that will introduce the batters as they come up to bat.
3. Concession buyout is NOT applicable to tournament concessions.
4. Representatives from each team need to assist with tournament setup AND tear down.
5. All game field prep guidelines and game rules apply to tournaments.
6. Please Note: Upper league levels (Instructional, Minors, Majors, and Pony) will also be playing in the tournaments, dependent on team availability, if you wanted to watch what happens after t-ball!

## **T-Ball Skills to Focus On**

### **WARM-UP**

1. Pre-game what to do, warm up throwing, and running

### **HITTING**

1. Batting -- the stance, swing and follow-through
  - a. Adjust the tee with ball set even to the hitter's waist.
  - b. Face tee with feet spread shoulder-width apart.
  - c. Bend knees, body in slight crouch.
  - d. Weight on balls of feet.
  - e. Grip bat; hands together above knob.
  - f. Hold bat firmly; don't squeeze.
  - g. Bring bat up and away from the body.
  - h. Keep shoulders level; bat and head steady.
  - i. Eyes on the ball.
  - j. Short step with the front foot at start of swing.
  - k. Swing level and bring the bat through the center of the ball.
  - l. Watch bat hit ball; keep head down.
  - m. Weight shifts to front foot; back foot stays on the ground.
  - n. Extend arms and follow through, swing around.
  - o. Drop the bat; do not throw it

**Key points:** Eyes on the ball, no cross-handed hold, position of feet, stride [weight shift], rotation, the swing

### **CATCHING**

1. Two hands, Eyes on the ball, Ball above the waist glove up, Ball below the waist glove down.

### **FIELDING**

1. Ready Position
  - a. Always watch the batter when batting. Pay attention to where the ball is.
  - b. Eyes on the ball. Watch the ball go into the glove. Cover the ball with the other hand
2. Ground Ball
  - a. (Ready position) Stand legs apart, shoulder-width or wider. Bend knees. Get low. Lean forward.
  - b. Run to the ball. Keep body in front of ball. Glove low to the ground. Scoop or catch the ball and cover it.
3. Fly Ball
  - a. Run to where the ball is going.
  - b. Call for the ball: "I've got it."
  - c. Stop and wait for the ball.
  - d. Hands together, fingers up, shoulder high or over the head.
  - e. Watch ball into the glove and cover.
4. Thrown Ball

- a. Bend knees slightly. Watch the ball.
- b. On a ball thrown to player above the waist: Hands together facing out; thumbs up. Catch and cover.
- c. On a ball thrown below the waist: Hands together facing down; little fingers touching. Catch and cover.

## THROWING

1. Grip and Motion
  - a. Thumb under the ball. Two or three fingers on top.
  - b. Don't worry about the seams. Eyes on the target.
  - c. Legs apart; foot on throwing arm side behind the body.
  - d. Arm back and up, front shoulder turned toward target.
  - e. Step toward target with foot opposite the throwing arm. (Right-hander with left foot; left-hander with right foot).
  - f. Push off on back foot as throw begins, end with weight on forward foot.
  - g. Release the ball in front of body and follow through.

## RUNNING

1. Base Running
  - a. Run on the balls of the feet. Pump arms back and forth.
  - b. Run after the ball is hit.
  - c. Run behind the tee, unless batting left-handed.
  - d. Look at first base, not where the ball has gone.
  - e. Run outside the foul line.
  - f. Run straight through first base; don't jump on it or slow down.
2. Watch and listen to coach for instructions.
3. When on base the player must keep one foot touching the base until the next batter hits the ball.
4. Lean forward; when ball is hit, push off base.
  - a. Know where the ball is.
  - b. When passing a base, try to touch it on the side without stopping.

## **Coaching the Team**

### **First Base**

1. Show where 1st baseperson is to stand when no runner is on base and when one is on the base.
2. Practice fielding plays where the ball is thrown to 1B by infielders.

### **Second Base**

1. Position player in place, anticipating action. Practice fielding plays; such as, tagging a runner out.

### **Shortstops**

1. Show positions: one between 1B and 2B; the other between 2B and 3B. Practice action; such as, fielding balls and throwing to 1B or 2B for an out.

### **Third Base**

1. Show position, anticipating action. Practice action; such as, player diving to knock down ball.

### **Pitcher**

1. Stands in pitcher's area however acts as an infielder. Practice action; such as, fielding ball and throwing to 1B.

### **Catcher**

1. Stands behind and away from home plate until ball is hit.
2. Demonstrate: after ball is hit, adult removes tee and bat; catcher moves up to cover plate. Practice actions: catcher tagging base runner out, catcher throwing to 1B.

### **General Infield Activity**

1. Staying behind Playing Line until the ball is hit. Catching short fly balls. Field balls and throwing to a base or to home plate. Tagging runners on the base path. Relaying a ball from an outfielder to a base; to the catcher at home plate.
2. Outfielders [there may be five or more]: Position players. Practice catching fly balls in a crowd. "I've got it." Practice catching ground balls and throwing to infield. Have one outfielder receive relay from another and throwing to an infielder.
3. Batter: Give basic hitting instructions. Practice hitting ball, then dropping bat properly and running to first.
4. Base Runners: Instruct actions at 1B [Coach at 1B signals to run past base or to turn and go on to 2B] Instruct that forced runner on base must advance. Non-forced runner can hold position on base. Player on base watches what next batter does; where the ball goes.
5. Instruct sliding.
6. Bench Team sits in batting order, encouraging the batter. Coach talks to team: Listen for instructions. Play fair; follow the rules.
7. Have fun.

### **Coach Talking to Team, After the Game**

1. Summarize team's activity. Specifics, not generalities. Recognize progress. Note any humorous thing that happened.
2. No public criticism; as necessary, take player aside. What's next practice at home, next team practice, and game schedule; tell parents. Other comments, as appropriate.

### **For Parents**

1. Exhibit exceptionally good behavior at practice sessions and games.
2. See that your children – the players – have the proper equipment.
3. See that your children arrive and are picked up at the stated times.
4. Applaud all good efforts and good plays – including those of the opposing team – or remain silent.
5. Allow the coaches to coach without outside interference or influence.
6. See that your children receive ample positive encouragement and hugs regardless of the outcome of their game
7. Allow your children to play without negative pressure, verbal or physical.
8. Support the coaches in what they want the players to learn.
9. Treat the coaches, league leaders, and game umpires with dignity and respect.
10. See that your children do not intentionally injure other players.
11. Smoking is not permitted at Wheaton Park.
12. Parents/Family Members/Friends are asked to leave animals/pets at home during Wheaton Ball events.
13. If spectators/parents exhibit any of the following – during the course of a game, as a result of a ‘bad call’, or are in any way aimed at the players, coaches, or league organizers – it will result in their child’s immediate dismissal from the Wheaton Ball League: profanity, physical or verbal abuse, disrespect, misconduct, poor sportsmanship, uncooperative attitudes, or other behavior deemed inappropriate.