

Dixie Youth Baseball Inc.
" OPEN BASE " Division Guidelines
The "O"-Zone

Welcome to the "O"-Zone! Effective in the year 2006, Dixie Youth Baseball state organizations may elect to allow franchised leagues within its state to participate in "Open Base" local league play and in District, State and World Series Tournaments using seventy feet (70') baselines and a pitching distance of fifty (50') feet.

The following guidelines will govern play in DYB's "O-ZONE Open Base" Division for participating franchised Dixie Youth 12 & under leagues:

All rules and regulations in the 2006 Dixie Youth Baseball Rule Book shall apply to regular season and tournament play for leagues participating in the DYB "O"-ZONE division except for the provisions listed below which shall replace the referenced rule or regulation in the DYB Rule Book.

TOURNAMENT RULES:

All Tournament Rules for the "O-ZONE" division will be governed, except as modified in the following Regulations and Rules, by the Official Dixie Youth Baseball Rule Book.

REGULATIONS:

1)-Each franchised league may elect to participate in the "Dixie Majors (11-12)" division using 60' feet baselines and a 46' pitching distance or it may elect to participate in the DYB "O-Zone (11-12)" division using 70' feet baselines and a 50' pitching distance.

LOCAL LEAGUE OPTION- In the "O-ZONE" division, leagues may play with a pitching distance of 46', 48', or 50' during local league play

2)-Each league must make an election to participate in the new "O-ZONE" (open base) division when applying for their annual DYB Franchise or before April 1st, whichever date is earliest (unless another date is specified by the state organization), to be eligible to participate in the "O-ZONE" open base tournament play.

3)-Each franchised DYB League may elect to send one tournament team to either the 60' Majors tournaments or the 70' base "O-Zone" tournaments, but not both.

4)-The "O" Zone division will not limit the "playing age" for 12 year olds to a maximum of eight (8) per team roster where there are returning players on the 2005 team roster who were league age 12 in 2005 and due to the age change will be league age 12 in 2006. Any team with more than eight age 12 year old players must be approved by the district director to maintain eligibility for tournament play.

OFFICIAL "O-ZONE" PLAYING RULES - "OPEN BASE" DIVISION ONLY"

1.00 OBJECTIVES OF THE GAME

1.04-THE PLAYING FIELD. The playing field shall be laid out as follows:

(a) Baselines shall be seventy feet (70') in length;

(b) The distance from the front side of the pitching slab to the point of home plate shall be fifty feet (50'). (*LOCAL LEAGUE OPTION*) Local leagues may use a 46', 48' or 50' pitching distance for local league play only.

The distance from the point of home plate to the center of second base and from first base to third base shall be ninety-nine feet (99'). The distance from the point of home plate to the backstop is recommended to be twenty-five feet (25'), but must be a minimum of twenty feet (20').

Rule 6.09 – THE BATTER BECOMES A RUNNER WHEN

(b) The third strike called by the umpires is not caught, providing (1) first base is unoccupied or (2) when first base is occupied with two outs. When a batter becomes a base runner on a third strike not caught by the catcher and starts for the dugout or his position, and then realizes his situation and attempts then to reach first base, he is not out unless he or first base is tagged before he reaches first base. If, however, he actually reaches the dugout or dugout steps, he may not then attempt to go to first base and shall be called out.

Rule 7.00 - THE RUNNER

7.13 - This rule shall not apply to the "O-ZONE" (open base) division play.

Rule 8.00 - THE PITCHER

8.01 Legal pitching delivery.

There are two legal pitching positions, the Windup Position and the Set Position, and either position may be used at any time. Pitchers may disengage the rubber after taking their signs but may not step quickly onto the rubber and pitch. This may be judged a quick pitch by the umpire. When the pitcher disengages the rubber, he must drop his hands to his sides. Pitchers will not be allowed to disengage the rubber after taking each sign.

- (a) **The Windup Position.** The pitcher shall stand facing the batter, his entire pivot foot on, or in front of and touching and not off the end of the pitcher's plate, and the other foot free. From this position any natural movement associated with his delivery of the ball to the batter commits him to the pitch without interruption or alteration. He shall not raise either foot from the ground, except that in his actual delivery of the ball to the batter, he may take one step backward, and one step forward with his free foot. When a pitcher holds the ball with both hands in front of his body, with his entire pivot foot on, or in front of and touching but not off the end of the pitcher's plate, and his other foot free, he will be considered in the Windup Position. The pitcher may have one foot, not the pivot foot, off the rubber and any distance he may desire back of a line which is an extension to the back edge of the pitcher's plate, but not at either side of the pitcher's plate. With his "free" foot the pitcher may take one step backward and one step forward, but under no circumstances, to either side that is to either the first base or third base side of the pitcher's rubber. If a pitcher holds the ball with both hands in front of his body, with his entire pivot foot on or in front of and touching but not off the end of the pitcher's plate, and his other foot free, he will be considered in a windup position. From this position he may: (1) deliver the ball to the batter, or (2) step and throw to a base in an attempt to pick off a runner, or (3) disengage the rubber (if he does he must drop his hand to his sides). In disengaging the rubber the pitcher must step off with his pivot foot and not his free foot first. He may not go into a set or stretch position if he does it is a balk.
- (b) **The Set Position.** Set Position shall be indicated by the pitcher when he stands facing the batter with his entire pivot foot on, or in front of, and in contact with, and not off the end of the pitcher's plate, and his other foot in front of the pitcher's plate, holding the ball in both hands in front of his body and coming to a complete stop. From such Set Position he may deliver the ball to the batter, throw to a base or step backward off the pitcher's plate with

his pivot foot. Before assuming Set Position, the pitcher may elect to make any natural preliminary motion such as that known as "the stretch." But if he so elects, he shall come to Set Position before delivering the ball to the batter.

After assuming Set Position, any natural motion associated with his delivery of the ball to the batter commits him to the pitch without alteration or interruption. Preparatory to coming to a set position, the pitcher shall have one hand on his side; from this position he shall go to his set position as defined in Rule 8.01 (b) without interruption and in one continuous motion. The whole width of the foot in contact with the rubber must be on the rubber. A pitcher cannot pitch from off the end of the rubber with just the side of his foot touching the rubber.

The pitcher, following his stretch, must (a) hold the ball in both hands in front of his body and (b) come to a complete stop. This must be enforced. Umpires should watch this closely. Pitchers are constantly attempting to "beat the rule" in their efforts to hold runners on bases and in cases where the pitcher fails to make a complete "stop" called for in the rules, the umpire should immediately call a "Balk." (c) At any time during the pitcher's preliminary movements and until his natural pitching motion commits him to the pitch, he may throw to any base provided he steps directly toward such base before making the throw. The pitcher shall step "ahead of the throw." A snap throw followed by the step directly toward the base is a balk. (d) If the pitcher makes an illegal pitch with the bases unoccupied, it shall be called a ball unless the batter reaches first base on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batter or otherwise. A ball that slips out of a pitcher's hand and crosses the foul line shall be called a ball; otherwise it will be called no pitch. This would be a balk with men on base. (e) If the pitcher removes his pivot foot from contact with the pitcher's plate by stepping backward with that foot, he thereby becomes an infielder and if he makes a wild throw from that position, it shall be considered the same as a wild throw by any other infielder. The pitcher, while off the rubber, may throw to any base. If he makes a wild throw, such throw is the throw of an infielder and what follows is governed by the rules covering a ball thrown by a fielder.

8.05 - If there is a runner, or runners, it is a balk when —

- (a) The pitcher, while touching his plate, makes any motion naturally associated with his pitch and fails to make such delivery; If a left-handed or right-handed pitcher swings his free foot past the back edge of the pitcher's rubber, he is required to pitch to the batter except to throw to second base on a pick off play.
- (b) The pitcher, while touching his plate, feints a throw to first base and fails to complete the throw.
- (c) The pitcher, while touching his plate, fails to step directly toward a base before throwing to that base; requires the pitcher, while touching his plate, to step directly toward a base before throwing to that base. If a pitcher turns or spins off of his free foot without actually stepping or if he turns his body and throws before stepping, it is a balk. A pitcher is to step directly toward a base before throwing to that base but does not require him to throw (except to first base only) because he steps. It is possible, with runners on first and third, for the pitcher to step toward third and not throw, merely to bluff the runner back to third; then seeing the runner on first start for second, turn and step toward and throw to first base. This is legal. However, if, with runners on first and third, the pitcher, while in contact with the rubber, steps toward third and then immediately and in practically the same motion "wheels" and throws to first base, it is obviously an attempt to deceive the runner at first base, and in such a move it is practically impossible to step directly toward first base before the throw to first base, and such a move shall be called a balk. Of course, if the pitcher steps off the rubber and then makes such a move, it is not a balk.
- (d) The pitcher, while touching his plate, throws, or feints a throw to an unoccupied

base, except for the purpose of making a play.

- (e) The pitcher makes an illegal pitch; a quick pitch is an illegal pitch. Umpires will judge a quick pitch as one delivered before the batter is reasonably set in the batter's box. With runners on base the penalty is a balk; with no runners on base, it is a ball. The quick pitch is dangerous and should not be permitted.
- (f) The pitcher delivers the ball to the batter while he is not facing the batter.
- (g) The pitcher makes any motion naturally associated with his pitch while he is not touching the pitcher's plate.
- (h) The pitcher unnecessarily delays the game.
- (i) The pitcher, without having the ball, stands on or astride the pitcher's plate or while off the plate, he feints a pitch.
- (j) The pitcher, after coming to a legal pitching position, removes one hand from the ball other than in an actual pitch, or in throwing to a base.
- (k) The pitcher, while touching his plate, accidentally or intentionally drops the ball.
- (l) The pitcher, while giving an intentional base on balls, pitches when the catcher is not in the catcher's box.
- (m) The pitcher delivers the pitch from Set Position without coming to a stop.
PENALTY: The ball is dead, and each runner shall advance one base without liability to be put out, unless the batter reaches first on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batter, or otherwise, and all other runners advance at least one base, in which case the play proceeds without reference to the balk. **APPROVED RULING:** In cases where a pitcher balks and throws wild, either to a base or to home plate, a runner or runners may advance beyond the base to which he is entitled at his own risk. **APPROVED RULING:** A runner who misses the first base to which he is advancing and who is called out on appeal shall be considered as having advanced one base for the purpose of this rule. Umpires should bear in mind that the purpose of the balk rule is to prevent the pitcher from deliberately deceiving the base runner. If there is doubt in the umpire's mind, the "intent" of the pitcher should govern. However, certain specifics should be borne in mind: (a) straddling the pitcher's rubber without the ball is to be interpreted as intent to deceive and ruled a balk. (b) With a runner on first base the pitcher may make a complete turn, without hesitating toward first, and throw to second. This is not to be interpreted as throwing to an unoccupied base.

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