

# **Pitching Rules**

***No victory is worth the price of having a young player damage his arm.***

**The primary goal of these rules is to protect the arms of pitchers. The secondary goals are to promote age-appropriate competitive balance for Recreation Baseball and age-appropriate pitcher's development for Travel Baseball.**

Below is an excerpt from an article in a great website: [www.qcbaseball.com](http://www.qcbaseball.com) - and it explains why we feel adherence to our rules are the best way we have of preventing harm to young and still growing arms.

## **Pitch Count - How Many Pitches or Innings Should I Allow My Player to Throw?**

*"This is a common question of a youth coach or parent of a young pitcher. The question is really pretty straight forward, but the answer actually involves many variables that need to be considered.*

*The first thing you must realize is that it's an important issue. We see kids falling and bouncing back up, they rarely seem to pull a muscle or have other aches and pains that we, as adults, have become used to. Kids seem to bounce back quickly from most everything, so does it really matter if their arm is a little sore from pitching? Yes, it does matter!*

*The pitching motion puts a large amount of strain on the throwing arm, particularly on the shoulder and elbow. I personally remember that 3 of the best pitchers from my little league never pitched in high school because they had hurt their arms before they ever reached that level. Now I don't know if it had anything to do with how many pitches they were allowed to throw or not, but the point is that young arms are developing and fragile and need to be taken care of. Kids will do pretty much what they are told, so it's up to parents and coaches to make sure that a pitcher's arm is taken care of."*

1. Pitch Counts

2.

<u>Age/Group</u>	<u>Game Limits</u>	<u>Weekly Limits</u>
7 - 8 Farm	50	50
9 -10 Minors	50	75
11-12 Majors	85	100
13-14 AAA	95	125

<u>Age/Group</u>	<u>1 Day Rest</u>	<u>2 Day Rest</u>	<u>3 Day Rest</u>	<u>4 Day Rest</u>
7 - 8 Farm	21 Pitches	36 Pitches	N/A	N/A
9-10 Minors	21 Pitches	36 Pitches	51 Pitches	66 Pitches
11-12 Majors	21 Pitches	36 Pitches	51 Pitches	66 Pitches
13-14 AAA	21 Pitches	36 Pitches	51 Pitches	66 Pitches

Pitch counts were based on a research from American Sports Medicine Institute (ASMI [WWW.ASMI.org](http://WWW.ASMI.org)) and Pitch Smart Guidelines <http://m.mlb.com/pitchsmart/> adhered to by Little League.

**Types of Pitches:** Fastball (2 or 4 seam), Change-Up, Cut Fastball, Curve, Slurve, Splitter, Forkball, Slider, Screwball, Palm ball, Sinker, Knuckleball, Knuckle Curve Ball

Click here to learn more about each:

[http://www.thecompletepitcher.com/different\\_baseball\\_pitches.htm](http://www.thecompletepitcher.com/different_baseball_pitches.htm)

**Recreation Permissions:**

Minors and Majors: Fastballs only

AAA: Fastballs and Change-Ups **only** (e.g.: pitches that go straight – no sharp breaks, cuts or fluttering)

3-Finger Change-Up Grip & Description (from a youngster who is 100% correct): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYsTj9Sz6dk>

**Penalties\*:**

1<sup>st</sup> infraction during game – warning from umpire

2nd infraction during same game - ejection from game by umpire (*umpire to notify Division Coordinator of the player ejected, who will then place pitcher on probation*)

Each subsequent infraction during probation – ejection from game by umpire

2<sup>nd</sup> infraction after probation (during regular season) – suspension from Playoffs & Championship

Any infraction during Playoffs & Championship by player on probation – suspension from remaining Playoff games.

*\*ALL EFFORTS MUST BE MADE by player's manager to prevent the pitcher from a 2<sup>nd</sup> infraction after his warning. If the manager feels the warning and subsequent ejection was unwarranted or due to a technical flaw in the pitcher's mechanics (versus a conscious effort to obtain a competitive advantage), he may appeal the ruling. The Division Coordinator will discuss the appeal with the Umpire and Managers of both teams before rendering a decision to uphold or repeal the Umpire's ruling. If one-on-one pitching training is required to correct a technical flaw that – if corrected – will eliminate the umpire's perception of that pitcher throwing a non-permissible pitch, it will be provided to the pitcher. Then upon completion of training, the pitcher's slate will be wiped clean.*

### **Travel Permissions:**

8U, 9U 10U Blue: Fastballs only

10U Gold, 11U, 12U, 13U Blue: Fastballs, Cut Fastballs and Change-Ups only

Cut Fastball Grip & Description:

[http://www.ehow.com/video\\_2350351\\_throw-cut-fastball-pitch.html](http://www.ehow.com/video_2350351_throw-cut-fastball-pitch.html)

13U and 14U Gold: Fastballs, Cut Fastballs, Change-Ups and Curve\*\*  
ONLY (NO OTHER PITCHES from the above list)

*\*\*For 13U and 14U Gold Pitchers to be permitted to throw a curve, his manager must 1<sup>st</sup> obtain written parent permission from both parents and then submit parents' permission to the Baseball Commissioner. Then the Commissioner must observe and certify – in writing - the pitcher's ability to properly and safely execute this pitch. The pitcher will then be permitted to throw a curve for their 13U or 14U Gold Team.*

Curve Grip & Description:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEq5xZvqGXc>

Regarding Enforcement: Since League Umpires preside over Travel games (unlike Recreation games) and are in no position to enforce pitching rules in Oakland Travel Baseball Games, it is incumbent upon Oakland Travel Managers to do so. If an Oakland parent sees his/her child either being taught in practice or actually throwing a non-permissible pitch during a game, that parent should 1<sup>st</sup> approach that Manager to stop that behavior. If that behavior continues, the parents should file a formal complaint with Travel Director Jeff Cohn or Baseball Commissioner Steve Saliani.

**Travel & Recreation Pitcher Development Process** (credit to Jeff Cohn – Travel Coordinator and Rec Managers from 2011 for building this together)

As a broader baseball program, our goal has always been to provide an opportunity for all to play both Rec and Travel. We also want to ensure we don't sacrifice one for the other. We want to provide a fair and balanced approach - especially when it comes to how we use our pitchers – especially those who play both. A way to achieve this is to provide an open opportunity for rec teams to use travel players to pitch, but to also allow them to be used by their respective travel team. In addition, what we hope this also allows for new opportunities for non travel players on rec teams to pitch and develop pitching skills. This was a collaborative process between recreation and travel leadership that we are proud to implement as of the 2011 season.

**Travel Managers to submit Pitcher designations and Pitch Counts by Sunday evening to the respective Rec Coordinator.**

**PITCHER DESIGNATIONS...**

**Primary:** Planned Travel Starter (looking to go 3+ innings)

**Secondary:** Planned Travel Reliever (looking for 1 – 2 innings of support)

**Available:** No plans on using in Travel

\*Travel managers please “designate” appropriately to help support the needed arms in both programs.

If tagged **Primary** then Rec Manager:

- Can use from Mon - Thur with a limit of 35 (OR)
- Can use Friday with a pitch limit of 20
- Can't use on Saturday

\*You can use on multiple days with required rest days but total pitch count not to exceed 35

If tagged **Secondary** then Rec Manager:

- Can use from Mon – Thurs with a pitch limit of 50 (OR)
- Can use on Friday with a pitch limit of 35 (OR)
- Can use on Saturday with a pitch limit of 20

\*You can use on multiple days with required rest days but total pitch count not to exceed 50

**Available**

- o Free use from Mon – Sat based on standard pitch count rules

**Note:** The above designations were built with the assumption of a weekly Sunday travel game schedule. As Saturday or Friday games are needed due to weather as well as a potential Memorial Day tournament; the expectation is that there is a cooperation between the respective managers to help support where needed.

**Rec Coordinator to Travel Team Alignments:**

Farm League:	Travel 8U
Minor League:	Travel 9U & 10U
Major League:	Travel 11U and 12U
AAA League:	Travel 13U and 14U

**Process Summary:**

1. Travel Managers to update “Pitcher Tracker” with Pitcher Designations by Sunday evening for the following week
2. Travel Managers to update pitch counts in the “Pitcher Tracker” after each game at the end of that day
3. Rec Team Managers to review “Pitch Tracker” for travel Pitch Count totals and Pitcher Designations by Monday at Noon to support planning the games for the week
4. Rec Team Managers to submit Travel Player pitch counts to respective Rec Coordinator by Friday EOD to support updating the “Pitcher Tracker”
5. Rec Team Managers to submit Travel Player pitch counts for any Saturday games as well to Rec Coordinator for “Pitcher Tracker” updates.

**Pitch Count Plus Other Factors**

Other factors to take into account as you determine, "How many pitches should I allow my player to pitch?"

**Some Additional ASMI Survey Conclusions:**

- Participation in multiple leagues, playing other positions, and practice should be considered when defining and regulating rest.
- Improper technique is a major factor in injury potential.
- Conditioning of the throwing arm and entire body can reduce a young pitcher's risk of injury.

- While the number of pitches should be limited, the young athlete should be encouraged to throw. This includes playing catch, playing other positions besides pitcher, and practicing pitching. When symptoms of arm discomfort or fatigue arise, longer periods of rest are recommended.

**You can find the complete ASMI research at:**

<http://www.asmi.org/SportsMed/youth/PITCHCNT.PDF>

Other Things to Consider:

- The guidelines are based on age, but kids develop at different ages. Adjust pitch count down if you have a pitcher that isn't as strong and developed as other kids his age.
- Make sure that pitchers have the proper amount of time to stretch and warm-up prior to entering a game.
- Err on the side of caution. If a pitcher looks tired, get another pitcher in. Don't wait until he complains about a sore arm.
- Constantly remind your players about the importance of taking care of their arms. Tell them that it's essential that they tell you if they have any soreness.
- Emphasize the importance of stretching and building arm strength throughout the season. Players of all ages need to play catch on a regular basis. Set expectations with players and parents that they will play catch at home, not just at practice and during games.
- Require pitchers to wear long sleeves and put a coat on between innings

ASMI suggests to limit pitch counts to less than recommendations:

- Early in the season.
- With a pitcher that hasn't pitched much.
- When a pitcher has poor mechanics.
- During cold weather.