



Springfield Minor Baseball Association

2015 Grand Slam Coaches Handbook
(Former Rookie Program)

Long-Term Athlete Development

Baseball Canada has been engaged in a major review of programs to develop an athlete-centered system. This will ensure we provide the optimal training, competition and recovery programs for athletes at each stage of their development. This program is sport-science based, developmentally appropriate, driven by our coaches and strongly supported by our administrators. The plan is also supported by many of Canada's High-Performance baseball players, including Colorado Rockies pitcher **Jeff Francis** and former Anaheim Angel **Jason Dickson**. The initial report to Baseball Canada by the project team can be found at <http://www.baseball.ca/files/ltad.pdf>. General sport science information is available at www.ltad.ca.

Grand Slam

The LTAD plan identifies 7 stages in respect to the athletes physical, mental, and emotional development. Rookie aged baseball players are in stage 2, which is the fundamentals stage of the LTAD plan. Coaches are reminded that children at this level need to participate in activities that develop basic skills. These activities need to maintain a focus on fun, and formal competition should only be minimally introduced.

Grand Slam Baseball

The rules were developed using Manitoba Baseball Rookie Rules and the Baseball Canada Rally Cap format along with suggestions made in the Baseball Canada Long Term Athlete Development Plan. The CMBA felt the rules would increase skill development, improve player involvement, and increase the amount of children participating in Baseball in our area. Baseball Canada developed a format called Grand Slam.

Grand Slam Rules

1. The suggested amount of players in the field is six. One per infield position. It is suggested to change positions each inning. A team is allowed more players in the field if they wish.

Purpose: This should allow each player more chances to play the ball and players focus will improve because of the increased action.

2. The inning is considered complete when all batters have come to the plate. **If a team has more than 6 players, a maximum of 8 may bat each inning.** The batting order should be changed each inning. The amount of players called out in an inning has no relevance on when the inning is considered complete. When the final at bat of the inning is over, players are encouraged to be in position to start the next inning within 30 seconds.

Purpose: Will provide routine to the length of inning to allow kids to remain focused in the field. Takes pressure off kids worried about “getting out”. Encourages hustle off and on the field.

3. Each batter will receive a standard baseball count from the pitcher (coach). (4 balls or 3 strikes) If either a walk or a strikeout occurs a tee is brought to home plate and the batter hits off the tee. It is very important to not keep pitching to the batter once they have reached their limit. This causes the game to slow down for all the other players causing boredom and loss of attention.

Purpose: Will remove disappointment of striking out and walking back to the dugout. Will allow coaches to “pitch to the ability” of the player without the worry of striking the batter out. Will keep the game going at a quick pace to maintain focus for players.

TEE PLACEMENT- Most Tees are made incorrectly, with the ball in the middle of the plate. The ball should be placed on the front of homeplate, so the batters are hitting the ball out in front of the plate.

4. Defensive outs are not tallied as all batters bat each inning, but players that are put out must return to their dugout.

Purpose: To teach players what an out is (defensive strategy) and proper baserunning.

5. Baserunners do not advance on overthrows.

Purpose: Will promote players to throw to the correct base. Players will learn defensive strategy not “throw it back to the pitcher”. Will also teach baserunning skills as the players are not just running wildly around the bases.

6. The score may be recorded if desired, but results will not be sent in to the league and standings will not be kept.

7. The game has a time limit of 1 hour. The game is considered complete when the first half inning is completed after the one hour limit. Ex. The game started 6:45. The top of the 4th

is completed at 7:50. The game is considered over.

Purpose: There is no need for the bottom of the inning, as the score is not being recorded. This keeps the game time in line with the suggested levels for kids this age and allows the opposing team to return home at a decent time.

8. Coaches pitch to players (it is suggested to throw overhand from a one knee down position). Distance from the batter can vary dependant on batter ability.
9. Coaches may be in the field of play for organizational purposes. A coach behind the umpire would be beneficial, (to speed the game up), as there are many pastballs at this level.
10. Defensive changes are unlimited. Coaches are encouraged to have their players play a different position in each inning of play. Players may change every batter if preferred (not the catcher). Catchers should be dressed and ready to be on the field as soon as their team is done hitting.(have your catcher bat first in the inning before he goes in the field to speed things up)
11. The game is played with a softer version of a baseball. Ex. Diamond Flexball
12. Infield fly rule is not used. (Grand Slam aged players would not understand the concept of the infield fly rule. Therefore, teach kids to run when the ball is on the ground and stay when a ball is caught in the air.)
13. No bunting or stealing. (If players attempts either, explain the rule to them. (An out or a strike should not be recorded for these infractions.)
14. Scores do not need to be sent to the convenor after games as standings are not kept at this level.
15. All games will start at 6:45. The schedule will consist of 1 league game per week (ideally Wednesday). Coaches are strongly suggested to have at least one other night a week schedule for practice. Coaches are welcome to schedule their own exhibition games.
16. The CMBA Rookie Jamboree (Tourney) will be held on June ??? in . Please contact the convernor by June 1st if you do not plan on attending.
17. The Tournament is based on participation. This is not a true championship as teams are placed in pools and there is no championship game. The CMBA representative for the MBA rookie Jamboree will be randomly selected.
18. All coaches and managers should review the summary of the Baseball Canada Long Term Athlete Development plan in the handbook.

