



Update to Pitching Rules

This document's purpose is to explain the revisions to the league pitching rules. On the backside, you will find some best practices as it comes to arm care.

Reminder: The mission of East Valley Baseball is educational and developmental in nature. While it's fun to win, the most important job of all EV volunteers is to provide a safe environment for kids to learn and grow.

In keeping with our mission, and given that this Spring many divisions will feature games on Saturdays AND Sundays, it was necessary to update our rules in order to safeguard the health of players' throwing arms. After multiple conversations, the league has amended Playing Rule #44 to read as follows:

44. For all divisions Pinto and above, pitch limits are regulated in accordance with MLB's Pitch SMART guidelines. For simplicity, we utilize innings limits. For every inning pitched, the player must rest 1 day (i.e. if he pitches 2 innings on a Saturday, he may not pitch on Sunday or Monday and may return to the mound on Tuesday). Just as with defensive rotation rules, a single pitch delivered equals having pitched 1 inning. Managers are responsible for contacting other managers within their division to determine who is ineligible to pitch. If a manager is found to have pitched an ineligible player, the team will receive a forfeit for the game in question. *Multiple violations will result in further sanctions from the league BOD.*

The per day innings limits remain unchanged:

- Pinto thru Bronco = 2 innings pitched
- Pony & Colt = 3 innings pitched

Because we are an all-volunteer league, we do not have the infrastructure to track actual pitches. To keep the process simple and manageable, and in keeping with general PitchSMART guidelines, we have chosen the formula that every inning pitched requires one full day of rest.

That means that if you have games back to back on a Saturday and a Sunday, no one who pitches during the Saturday game may pitch at all during the Sunday game... as a single inning pitched requires a full day of rest. This means that all coaches will need to lean into our league mission and develop more pitchers.

It is recommended that all managers in each division share a text thread where a manager can inquire about opponents who played/pitched recently. If it is discovered that a child has pitched on a day when they were supposed to be resting (due to having pitched on a previous day), that team will receive a forfeit for the game in which the ineligible pitcher pitched. Should it happen more than one time, the East Valley Baseball Board of Directors reserves the right to further sanction the manager and coaches, up to and including possible expulsion. No single youth baseball game is worth ruining a kid's arm.



Arm Care Best Practices

There are a number of existing resources on the internet, from very basic:

https://cdn1.sportngin.com/attachments/document/0143/5037/BASIC_ARM_CARE_FOR_BASEBALL_PLAYERS.pdf

...to incredibly involved:

<https://www.drivelinebaseball.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Driveline-Youth-Arm-Care-Program.pdf>

Here are some key points to remember:

- If a player complains of arm pain or arm discomfort, have them STOP THROWING immediately. (If they are pitching, remove them from the mound—never ask a kid to “get this one last guy out.”)
- If a player repeatedly complains of arm pain/discomfort even after periods of rest, recommend that the parent take them to see a professional.
- Always have players warm-up. For any child who is going to pitch, have them warm up in the bullpen the half inning before.
- Create a simple bullpen routine for pitchers to follow that consists of 10-15 throws.
- Avoid moving a player from the mound to behind the plate with no break. Catchers throw just as much as pitchers (though admittedly not as strenuously). Given our defensive rotation rules, it should be easy to give a player an inning on the bench or in the outfield prior to having them pitch/catch.
- Talk to parents and be aware of any other teams on which a kid might play/pitch. If a kid just pitched for a travel or school team, do not have them pitch at EV without proper days of rest.

Practice/Pre-Game Tips

- Teach players basic dynamic stretching to engage & loosen
- Ensure all players warm up their arms (especially those arriving late)
- Let players know that they must tell you if they feel pain and that you will not be upset with them (related: do not act frustrated if a child tells you their arm hurts)
- Work a limited amount of long-toss into all practice routines to help strengthen arms, while also being aware how much you are asking them to throw during a practice

In-Game Tips:

- Make sure all pitchers are properly warmed up (create a simple bullpen routine)
- Give players an inning break between catching & pitching (also observe combined limits)
- Pay close attention to pitcher mechanics. Sloppy mechanics are a sign of fatigue, and can lead to potentially catastrophic injury. Tired arms need to be rested, not pushed.

Post-Game Tips:

- Have players ice their entire throwing arm after pitching.
- Light throwing only on the day following pitching.
- Check in with your pitchers. Ask them how their arms are doing. Be open.