

# 2012 Pitch Count Limit Rule for The Central Ohio Youth Baseball League

COYBL has decided to continue with a pitch count/limit rule for this upcoming season. COYBL has developed as precise a program as realistically possible to ensure the long-term safety of our players.

We are asking coaches to forward this information to their team's parents so they can also be aware of the dangers of over-pitching young players. Because we have no ability or authority to police activities outside the regular COYBL season, our goal is to educate coaches, parents, and players so pitchers will remain safe from arm injury through-out their entire career.

## **Procedure:**

Because the purpose of a pitch count limit rule is to protect young pitchers and prevent coaches from practicing a win at any cost mentality; the following procedures have been adopted by COYBL. It is vital that coaches follow these procedures precisely and with the player's safety in mind. This rule is for COYBL league play only.

1. Prior to the start of each game, communicate with the opposing team as to who is eligible to pitch and how many pitches each pitcher has available to throw. This information will be written on the line-up card and exchanged before the game starts. Inaccurate or false information given to an opposing coach can lead to disciplinary actions by COYBL
2. Each pitch thrown in the game counts towards the pitch count total. Warm-up pitches and a throw over to a base do not count toward the pitch count total. *A guide to as if a pitch should count toward the pitch count total is if an umpire makes a call on the pitch then it should count toward the total of pitches thrown{ball, strike, foul ball, fair ball, ball four, hit batter, foul tip, etc.}.*
3. Per Nations Baseball rule IX, section C, #14, an intentional walk is granted upon request. Since a pitch is not thrown, although a ball is called by the umpire, the 4 balls called by the umpire during the intentional walk do not count toward the pitch count total.
4. Pitch count totals will be tallied on the official COYBL pitch count log form. It is suggested the count be maintained by an assistant coach, the score keeper, or a parent. *The log forms can be downloaded and printed from the COYBL web site. There is room for information to be documented on each sheet for ten pitchers. There is a black line dividing the sheet into two halves. The top half of the form for one team and the bottom half for the other team. If needed more than one form can be used per game.*

5. Pitch count totals will be compared and verified accurate after each completed inning. The home team will be responsible for keeping the official count. If a difference in the pitch count total is recognized, try to resolve the difference in a civil non-confrontational manner. If an inconsistency of pitch counting is repeated inning after inning or a person becomes confrontational, the home plate umpire will be notified along with the league director. A protest can be filed following COYBL league Protest Procedures found in our rule book.

The league director will monitor teams who are consistently reported for having disputed pitch count totals during a game or have a pattern of being confrontational. The league director can institute a ruling and assess a penalty, if the director feels a pattern of confrontational behavior or disputed counts are in bad faith and are an attempt to cheat the pitch count limit rule.

6. As a pitcher approaches his maximum daily pitch count limit, insure the opposing team and home plate umpire are made aware of the fact. When the maximum daily pitch count limit is reached, announce that the limit has been reached. At that time the pitcher will be removed from the game. *Coaches are encouraged to know when a pitcher is close to reaching his maximum daily pitch count limit so another pitcher can be properly warmed-up.*

EXCEPTION RULE: If a pitcher reaches his maximum daily pitch count limit while actively pitching to a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch to that batter until any one of the following conditions occurs: a.) The batter reaches base, b.) The batter is put out, c.) The third out is made to complete the half-inning. *This exception will cause the pitcher to exceed the pitch count limit by most likely a few pitches. This exception will most likely be the norm rather than an exception.*

7. A pitcher may be removed from a game at any time prior to reaching his maximum daily pitch count limit. The pitcher's total pitch count for that game will then be used to determine his pitching eligibility for the coming days. *If a coach wants to limit a pitcher's total pitch count so that the pitcher can be used in future games, the situation may arise when a pitcher needs to be removed from a game while actively facing a batter and not finishing that at bat.*

8. Pitchers, of all ages, may only pitch two consecutive days. To be eligible to pitch a second consecutive day, the pitcher is limited to 25 or fewer pitches the first day. The following day that same pitcher has a maximum daily pitch count limit 40 pitches for U9 to U12 and 45 pitches for U13 and u14.

In all cases, a pitcher who throws two consecutive days must rest two days before his next appearance.

EXCEPTION RULE: The exception rule in #6 applies to the second consecutive day's maximum daily pitch count limit of 40 pitches for U9 to U12 and 45 pitches for U13 and u14.

9. At the conclusion of every game, teams are to compare and verify the accuracy of the pitch count totals for each pitcher. A coach from each team will sign both teams' pitch count limit log sheet confirming the accuracy of the totals. It is the responsibility of each team to immediately report the pitch count totals for their team's pitchers to the COYBL web site. Failure to post the pitch count totals within 24 hours of the game's completion will result in disciplinary actions by COYBL as described in the penalties section of this rule.

10. It is the responsibility of both teams to verify the accuracy of the score and the pitch count totals entered by the opposing team and report any discrepancies to the league director.

11. Once a player is removed from the mound he may not return to the pitcher position in that game.

12. A pitcher may pitch in more than one game in a day as long as the maximum daily pitch count limit is not exceeded. If pitching in both games of a double header, the pitch count total from the first will be added to the pitches thrown in the second game to total the daily pitch count.

13. Pitches delivered in a game declared a "Suspended Game" shall be charged against the pitcher's eligibility. The pitch count of the suspended game must be reported to the COYBL website as described in # 9. No matter the day the suspended game is resumed, the pitch count/limit chart shall be followed to determine a pitcher's eligibility. If the pitcher that was pitching when a game was declared a suspended game is now ineligible to pitch due to the pitch count limit rule, a different pitcher will need to be inserted to finish the suspended game.

*\* Research has shown that a player which has been removed from the pitcher position should not play the catcher position in the same day. This is a recommendation, **not a COYBL rule.***

#### **PENALTY FOR RULES VIOLATION:**

Violation of any rule listed above will be dealt with by COYBL in the most serious manner. Following the above listed rules is not an option. They are mandatory so that we ensure the safety of our players. COYBL is encouraging all coaches, parents, and umpires to work together in understanding and interpreting these rules. If the penalties appear to be severe, they are purposely designed that way to discourage any thought of breaking a pitch count limit rule. It is COYBL's hope that we will never have to hand down a penalty to any coach or team. We would like to say at the end of every season that no team has been penalized for breaking a pitch count limit rule because the safety of our players is our biggest responsibility.

#### Penalty Progression Scale:

Head coaches are ultimately responsible for accurate and timely reporting of their team's pitch count totals to COYBL as described in the procedure section.

**1<sup>st</sup> Offense:** If a head coach is found to have exceeded a pitcher's limit through late or inaccurate reporting, he will be notified that his actions have been recorded by the league and a warning will be given.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Offense:** If a head coach is found to have exceeded a pitcher's limit through late or inaccurate reporting for a second time, the team will forfeit their two most recent wins. If a team does not have two wins at the time of the infraction, the team will forfeit their wins as they occur to total two games.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Offense:** If a head coach is found to have exceeded a pitcher's limit through late or inaccurate reporting for a third time, the team will forfeit two games in the manner described above and the team will not be eligible to win their division or league. Plus the head coach will be given a two game suspension to be served per league rules.

**4<sup>th</sup> Offense:** If the head coach is found to have exceeded a pitcher's limit through late or inaccurate reporting for a fourth time, the coach will be suspended for the remainder of the season and serve a one year league suspension from the time of the fourth offense. Re-instatement into COYBL will be at the league's discretion.