

My apology to everyone that I did not publish a Week #2 update. My work schedule had me out of town and like many of you I was balancing a pretty hectic schedule at home. Nonetheless, I have some information to update all of you on for Week #3.

Game Schedule: The game schedule for Sunday, October 2nd will be the same - game time is at 12:30pm. On October 9th the schedule will change to 10am game time for the 10U divisions as the Howell Hawks 9U team will be coming in to scrimmage our 10U teams. Both 10U teams should report and one will play the Hawks first and then practice as a team while the 2nd team plays the Hawks and vice-versa. The team I was hoping to scrimmage at the 12U level fell through but I am working to find a couple more. 12U teams should be ready to play at 2pm on October 9th.

Michigan Sports Academy Clinics: The clinics have been set for the next three Mondays - October 3rd, 10th, and 17th. All of the clinics will be held from 6pm - 7:30pm. Both the 10U and the 12U teams will be participating in the clinics at the same time. I know that some of the participants have football, cross country, or other sports that will conflict with the clinics but I hope that you are finding value in the fall league even if you can't participate in the MSA portion of our program. The clinic on October 3rd will be held at the Michigan Sports Academy (www.msa-livingston.com). The clinics on October 10th and 17th will be held at the FJBA Fields. A map for the Michigan Sports Academy is provided at the bottom of this email.

Weekly Talking Points: I love that I get to talk with parents about the experiences they have watching their kids play baseball. Sometimes they share the good things and sometimes they share the struggles they encounter watching or trying to help their children learn the game of baseball. Often the perspectives we have as parents are very different than what the players experience on the field. In these younger age groups the players can't always visualize their actions and so in their minds they are keeping their elbow up when they throw, their hind-end down when they field grounders, or they are swinging the bat level. From our adult perspective they are not.

Something you can do to help align these perspectives is to pull out your video camera (or video phone) and take your son out into the yard or to the field and tape them throwing, or fielding grounders, or swinging the bat. You don't need to have fancy equipment for this, just have fun with it. Bring the tape back to the house and watch it. Talk about what you see on the video and let your son talk about what he sees. I do suggest that you establish a focus point before you tape - such as keeping an elbow up when throwing - so that your son knows what he should focus on and what to be looking for on the video. Then, take some video of game situations and bring that home and watch it as well. Have the same conversation. Keep this as a positive experience and make sure you introduce lots of compliments about what you see he is doing well.

Let me know how your video experiences go...and if you need some suggested focus points or tips on mechanics, just let me or your coach know.

On a different subject, many of the boys will be playing in leagues that follow the "Dropped 3rd Strike" rule (aka: Uncaught 3rd strike). I thought I would share this bit of information from QCBaseball.com which is a pretty good Q&A regarding this rule:

Dropped Third Strike

When does it matter?

A dropped third strike only matters when first base is unoccupied OR there are two outs. If there is a runner on first base and less than two outs, then a dropped third strike doesn't matter and the batter is out.

What can the batter Do?

Once a batter either looks at strike three or swings and misses at strike three and the ball is either not caught or dropped by the catcher, the batter becomes a runner and can attempt to make it to first base before either being tagged by the catcher or thrown out at first base.

What if the pitch bounces?

99.99% of the time it is not a legal catch and the catcher (even if he fields the bounced pitch cleanly) must tag out the runner or throw him out at first base. Rule 6.05 specifies that a batter is out when a third strike is **legally caught** by the catcher and goes on to state that this must occur **before the ball hits the ground**.

0.01% of the time (and no these are not official calculations) the bounced pitch that is fielded by the catcher **would be** considered a legal catch. This can happen if the hitter swings and fouls off the pitch into the catcher's glove after the pitch has bounced. It is considered a legal catch at that point and the batter is out.

What if the runner at first is stealing?

If there are less than two outs, it doesn't matter. Even on an attempted steal, first base is considered occupied and the batter is out.

What happens when there are two outs?

When there are two outs the same rule applies with the addition that first base can be occupied. In this situation a force play can be created on other bases in addition to either tagging out the batter or throwing him out at first.

Example: Bases loaded, two outs. Catcher drops the third strike. A force play has now been created at all bases as all runners must try to advance. Catcher can simply step on home plate for the force at home and third out. He doesn't have to make the out on the batter.

What if a runner crosses the plate before the batter is thrown out at first or tagged?

The run does not count. Example: Runner on third, two outs. Catcher drops the third strike, while he is picking it up and throwing to first, the runner from third crosses home plate. As long as the catcher throws out the runner at first, the run doesn't count. The force play at first is the same as if a ground ball was hit to another infielder. The run doesn't count.

Michigan Sports Academy - Livingston

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