

Pitch Count Questions and Answers

These are commonly asked questions that apply to Baseball Ontario Open, Provincial, and Elimination tournament pitching regulations (pitch count). The new pitch count regulation (P2-10 f-m) will be printed in the 2008 Rule Book. The Playing Rules are now posted.

1. Why has Baseball Ontario changed the pitching regulation for some of their divisions?

Recently, researchers and medical professionals in the field of sports medicine have determined that the actual number of pitches thrown (i.e., pitch count) is a safer way to regulate pitching in youth baseball. As one of Canada's largest organized youth sports program, Baseball Ontario is again taking a leadership position in youth sports safety.

2. What are the pitch count limits?

Listed below is the maximum amount of pitches per calendar day:

1. Minor & Major Mosquito – 70 pitches
2. Minor & Major Peewee – 80 pitches
3. Minor & Major Bantam – 90 pitches
4. Minor & Major Midget, Women – 100 pitches

(NOTE: If the pitcher reaches this limit while facing a batter, the pitcher may complete pitching to that batter).

Listed below is the maximum amount of pitches per day without requiring two nights rest:

- Minor & Major Mosquito – 45 pitches
- Minor & Major Peewee – 55 pitches
- Minor & Major Bantam – 65 pitches
- Minor & Major Midget, Women – 75 pitches

3. How will a team determine who is responsible for counting the pitches?

Selecting the person responsible for counting pitches will be a decision of the home team / official scorekeeper. That person's pitch count will be the officially recognized pitch count for the game.

Each pitcher's pitch count is computed by adding the number of balls and strikes, the number of foul balls hit with two strikes, pitches thrown when balks are called, and the number of fair batted balls.

Other teams might assign a separate person who simply keeps track of every pitch on a piece of paper. Baseball Ontario will provide local leagues with a suggested form for this in the coming months. Leagues also can use any of the various digital or mechanical pitch counting tools that are available commercially.

4. What is the penalty for violating the pitch count regulation?

Violating the pitch count regulation will result in the offending team forfeiting the game. A second violation by a team will result in the manager / head coach's indefinite suspension (Rule P2-10 m).

5. Can the same pitcher throw in consecutive games?

Depending on the number of pitches thrown and the nights of rest required, the same pitcher could pitch in consecutive games. However, the pitcher cumulative total of pitches thrown for the day will dictate the amount of rest required.

6. If a pitcher is pitching a perfect game or no hitter and reaches his or her maximum pitch count, does he or she have to be removed as a pitcher, or can he/she continue until the perfect game or no hitter is lost?

Any pitcher, without regard to his/her effectiveness, must be removed when he or she reaches the limit prescribed in the regulation. Remember, no game is more important than protecting pitchers' arms.

7. What if all of your players have maximized their daily pitch count limits during a game?

If a team has no remaining players eligible to pitch in a game, the opposing coach may designate a player who has yet to pitch in that game. This pitcher may not throw more than 30 pitches.

8. Is the pitch count regulation mandatory in all divisions?

The regulation applies to the Minor Mosquito through to and including Midget. It does not apply to the Junior and Senior divisions.

9. Are warm up pitches calculated in the pitch count for a pitcher?

No. As always, however, umpires should be mindful that the rules permit a pitcher to have eight preparatory pitches.

10. Do pick off attempts at bases count as thrown pitches?

No. The only pitches that count towards a pitchers pitch count total are ones that are thrown to a batter.

11. Are there any other Leagues and / or Associations currently using a pitch count regulation?

In 2007 both Little League International and Baseball Alberta implemented a pitch count rule. In 2008 Baseball Canada will also implement a pitch count rule at the Canadian Peewee Championships.

12. Will local leagues have the ability to continue to provide feedback to Baseball Ontario regarding the new pitch count regulation?

Absolutely. As with any rule or regulation of Baseball Ontario, local league administrators, umpires, and coaches are encouraged to provide feedback through their affiliate representative on Baseball Ontario's Rules Committee. This feedback is valuable in determining what, if any, changes need to be made.