

INAUGURAL WHIFFLE BLAST

Rules and Regulations

PINE TRAILS PARK • SATURDAY, JANUARY 21, 2017

1.0 TOURNAMENT FORMAT

1.1 Tournament Field. The tournament field will consist of forty (40) teams divided into eight (8) divisions of five (5) teams each.

1.1.1 Teams. Each team may consist of a minimum of five (5) and a maximum of (7) players. There is no age minimum for players but each team is encouraged to use good common sense judgment as to the appropriateness of younger participants as it relates to his or her athletic ability, given the competitive nature of many of the teams.

1.1.2 Rosters. All rosters must be finalized and submitted no later than 72 hours prior to the date of the tournament.

1.1.3 Start of Play. A minimum of five (5) roster players must be present no later than five (5) minutes prior to the scheduled game time in order to start a game. Failure of a team to produce the minimum number of players by the deadline will result in a forfeit for that team and an automatic victory for the opponent with a score of 7-0. The available players can still play the game for fun if they choose but the results will not be recorded.

1.2 Tournament Structure. Each team is guaranteed a minimum of four (4) games (barring any forfeits), playing each of the other teams in its division in the "Regular Season".

1.2.1 Game Structure. Each game will be allotted 40 minutes and will consist of no more than three (3) total innings. An inning will consist of three (3) outs per team.

1.2.1.1 Time Limit. No new inning will be permitted to begin after the 35-minute mark. Play may continue past the 40-minute mark but only in the continuation on inning already in progress.

1.2.1.2 Tie Breaker. In the event of a tie game at the end of regulation, the tiebreaker will be a one-pitch mash. Each team will select one batter to step to the plate, beginning with the visiting team. Each mash batter will select one player from his roster to be his designated pitcher. The pitcher will have one opportunity to throw a pitch and the batter one opportunity to make contact with that pitch and put the ball into play. The batter who drives the ball in the air the greater distance, while remaining in field of play, wins the game for his/her respective team. In the event of a poorly thrown ball or if the batter swings and misses, that team will forfeit their opportunity for that round. If both teams fail to make contact with the ball, a second member of the team will be chosen for a second one-pitch mash. This process will continue until a winner is determined.

1.3 Tournament Advancement. The top team from each division will advance to the playoffs and will be seeded into the quarterfinal bracket.

1.3.1 Determining Division Champs & Seeding. Division champions will be determined by ranking each team by Winning Percentage. In the event of a first place tie within a division, the following tie-breaker process will be applied:

1.3.1.1 Head-to-Head. The primary tie-breaker will be Head-to-Head results. The winner of the head-to-head matchup during the regular season wins the tie breaker. However, if there are three teams tied and they have each beaten one of the other teams and lost to one of the other teams, the next tie breaker will be implemented.

1.3.1.2 Run Differential. The secondary tie-breaker will be Run Differential. This number can be found by subtracting a team's total runs allowed from its total runs scored. The team with the highest run differential number wins the tie-breaker.

1.3.1.3 Runs Scored. If two or more teams have identical winning percentages AND run differential, the second tie-breaker will be Total Runs Scored. The team with the highest number of total runs scored wins the tie-breaker.

1.3.1.4 Runs Allowed. If two or more teams have identical winning percentages, run differentials, and total runs scored, the third tie-breaker will be Total Runs Allowed. The team with the lowest number of total runs allowed wins the tie-breaker.

1.3.1.5 One-Pitch Mash. In the rare situation that teams that cannot be differentiated through any of the measures listed above, they will determine order through a One-Pitch Mash (refer to section *1.2.1.2 Tiebreaker*).

1.3.2 Quarterfinals. Once all division champions have been determined and ranked according to the tie-breaker procedure, teams will be placed in the Whiffle Blast playoff bracket (see Figure 1). Using the same structure and evaluation procedure as the regular season, quarterfinal winners will advance to the semifinal round of the playoffs, facing the opponent dictated by the playoff bracket.

1.3.3 Semifinals. Using the same structure and evaluation procedure as the regular season, semifinal winners will advance to the Whiffle Blast Championship, facing the opponent dictated by the playoff bracket.

1.3.4 Championship. The Whiffle Blast Championship game will still consist of three (3) full innings but will have 60-minute limit. If the game is tied as the end of regulation, depending on the amount of daylight remaining allowing safe play as determined by tournament officials, extra innings will be permitted in determining a Whiffle Blast Champion. If the game is tied after the completion of a full inning and play is no longer deemed to be safe, teams will compete in a One-Pitch Mash to determine the winner (*refer to section 1.2.1.2 Tiebreaker*).

FIGURE 1 – PLAYOFF BRACKET



2.0 PLAYING FIELD The playing field is the area located between foul lines extending from the middle of the strike zone to the foul markers in left field and right field respectively (see Figure 2).

2.1 Field Dimensions. The field will be 106 feet wide from foul marker to foul marker, with foul lines painted straight from each foul marker to the tip of home plate.

2.1.1 Backstop. The stationary backstop will be located four feet behind home plate.

2.1.2 Foul Line. The Foul Zone will be the area in fair ground between home plate and the Foul Line, located at the 10-foot mark.

2.1.3 Out Zone. The Out Zone will be the area in fair ground between the Foul Line and the Single Line, located at the 45-foot mark.

2.1.4 Singles. The Single Zone will be the area in fair ground between the Single Line and the Double Line, located 65 feet from home plate.

2.1.5 Doubles. The Double Zone will be the area in fair ground between the Double Line and the Triple Line, located 80 feet from home plate.

2.1.6 Triples. The Triple Zone will be the area in fair ground between the Triple Line and the Home Run Line, located 99 feet from home plate.

2.1.7 Home Runs. Home runs will be any fair ball hit beyond the Home Run Line, located at the 99-foot mark, on the fly.

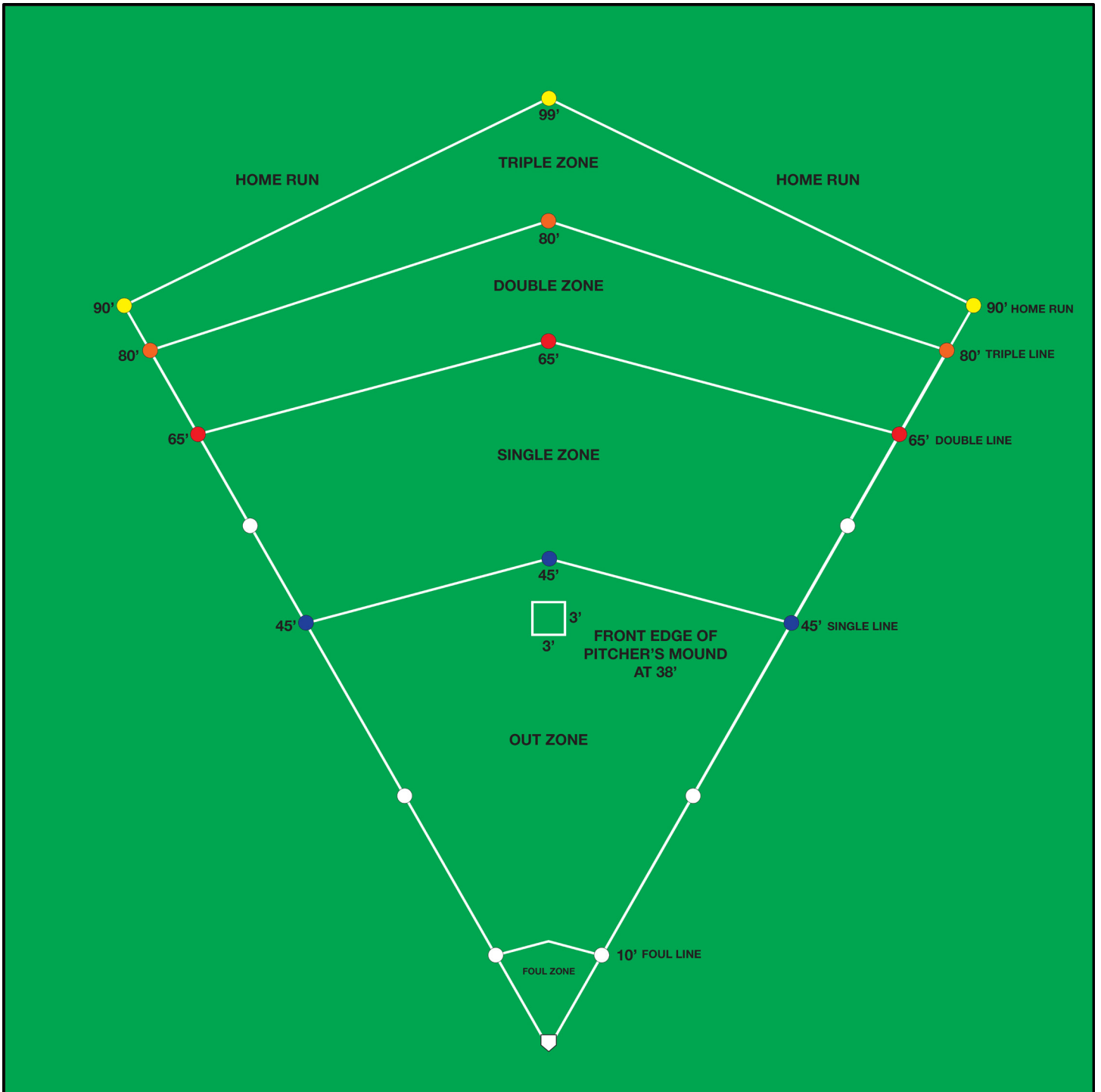
2.2 Other Field Markings. The following field markings will be located as indicated.

2.2.1 Batter's Boxes. Batter's boxes will be painted on either side of home plate, measuring three feet wide by four feet deep.

2.2.2 Pitcher's Mound. The pitcher's mound will be marked by a three-foot square with its front edge located 38 feet from home plate.

2.2.3 Strike Zone. A strike zone plate will be positioned behind home plate, attached to the stationary backstop. The strike zone will measure 28” tall by 26” wide. The bottom of the target will be positioned 12” from the ground.

FIGURE 2 – PLAYING FIELD LAYOUT



3.0 EQUIPMENT All equipment will be provided. NO OUTSIDE BATS OR BALLS WILL BE PERMITTED.

3.1 The Ball. The official ball of Whiffle Blast will be the baseball-sized Wiffle Ball™. A bucket of balls will be provided on each field. The bucket will be considered part of the field if it interferes with a batten ball in any way. These are the only balls permitted into play during the tournament. Any balls torn more than ¼ inch will be removed from game play and replaced.

3.1.1 “Doctoring” the Ball. No foreign matter may be added to the ball. Balls may not be intentionally scuffed, scarred or misshapen in any way. Violation of either of these rules will result in a forfeit for the offending team.

3.2 The Bat. The official bat of Whiffle Blast will be the standard yellow Wiffle Ball™ bat. Two bats will be provided at each field, one with a taped handle and one with a bare handle. Bats may not be modified in any other way.

3.3 Fielding Gloves. Fielding gloves are not permitted, as all fielders play barehanded.

3.4 Batting Gloves. Batting gloves are permitted while at bat but may not be used when fielding.

3.5 Cleats. Metal spikes are not permitted in Whiffle Blast but plastic or molded-bottom cleats are permissible.

3.6 Uniforms. Team uniforms are not required but are strongly encouraged. Uniform “jerseys” should include numbers to aid in tracking of starting lineups and cumulative statistics.

4.0 UMPIRES AND SCOREKEEPERS Every effort will be made to provide a minimum of two umpires and one scorekeeper on each field throughout the tournament. All umpires are volunteers who have been trained on the rules of the Whiffle Blast tournament. Disrespect or profanity directed toward any umpire or tournament official will be grounds for disqualification for the offending individual(s).

4.1 Balls & Strikes. The infield umpire will always take position opposite the batter. For example, with a right-handed batter at the plate, the umpire will take position on the first base foul area to allow full view of the batter and the strike zone. Any pitch that is swung on and missed is a strike. Any pitch not swung on that hits the strike zone plate on the fly is a strike. Any pitch that is not swung on and does not hit the strike zone plate is a ball. Any pitch that is foul tipped with two strikes that hits the strike zone plate is a strikeout. If a pitch hits a batter, it is a ball but no base is awarded. If it is determined that the batter was hit because he or she was blocking the strike zone, the pitch will be called a strike.

4.2 Fair & Foul Calls. The outfield umpire will take position in relation to the infield umpire. For example, if the infield position takes position in the first base foul area, the outfield umpire will cheat toward the left field line. In this case, the infield umpire will be responsible for fair/foul calls on the right field line and the outfield position will be responsible for the left field line.

4.3 Checked Swing Calls. The infield umpire is responsible for making checked swing calls. If he/she feels the batter was unable to check his/her swing, the umpire can make the call on his own. The pitcher may also appeal to the infield umpire for the strike call.

4.4 Official Score. An official scorekeeper will be assigned to each field. The infield umpire will work in conjunction with the scorekeeper to keep track of outs and runs scored, while helping to ensure batting orders are followed. A representative from each team will be asked to sign off on the official scorecard at the conclusion of each game.

5.0 RULES OF PLAY

5.1 Start of Play. Games on all 16 tournament fields will begin simultaneously with the Home Team in the field and the Visiting Team up to bat. Every team will have two games as Home Team and two games as Visiting Team during the regular season.

5.1.1 Post Season. During post season play, the home team will be determined by coin flip prior to the start of each playoff game.

5.2 Starting Lineups. Prior to the first pitch of each game, a starting lineup from each team will be provided to the official scorekeeper, who will ensure the correct order is followed.

5.2.1 Number of Batters. All players on the roster must bat every time through the lineup. If a team has seven (7) players, all seven must bat. In the event one of the team's players is injured and unable to bat, that player will not be permitted to return to the game. If the injured player is on a team with only five (5) players, the team will be permitted to continue play with four (4) players but will record an out each time the injured player's spot is up to bat.

5.2.2 Batting Out of Order. Any time a batter bats out of order according to the starting lineup, the batter will be declared out. Out of order will be called against a team after a single pitch to the batter who will be charged with a strikeout. The scorekeeper is responsible for communicating the out of order infraction with the infield umpire but may also be called by the defensive team if detected.

5.3 Fielder Positions. While on defense, teams must have five (5) players in the field at all times:

5.3.1 Pitcher. Each team must have a pitcher who will be pitch from anywhere inside the "pitcher's mound" (refer to section 2.2.2 Pitcher's Mound).

5.3.2 Outfielders. Each team must have a minimum of two (2) players in the outfield at all times. These players must be positioned behind the Double Line, located 65 feet from home plate, when the pitch is thrown.

5.3.2 Rovers. Each team may position the remaining two (2) players as desired, as long as they are behind the Single Line, located at the 45-foot mark, when the ball is batted. Upon contact with the ball, fielders may charge in front of the Single Line to make the defensive play.

5.3.3 Substitutions/Injuries. No defensive substitutions will be permitted during an inning, even if a pitching change is made. The same five (5) players must remain in the defensive lineup through the completion of the half inning. In the event of an injury during an inning, a substitution will be permitted but the injured player will not be permitted to return to the game. This will greatly impact teams with only five (5) roster players (*refer to section 5.2.1 Number of Batters*).

5.4 Scoring. There are no bases or base running. All runners are "ghost runners" and advance the exact number of bases as the batter: one (1) base on singles, two (2) bases on doubles and all "ghost runners" score on triples and home runs.

5.4.1 Run Limit. There is a maximum of ten (10) runs scored per half inning.

5.4.2 Mercy Rule. There will be no mercy rule in effect given the 10-run limit per inning and the three-inning format of the games.

5.5 Fielding. A minimum of five (5) players must play on defense at all times (*refer to section 5.3 Fielder Positions*).

5.5.1 Outs. The defensive team can record an out in five (5) ways:

5.5.1.1 Strikeout. A strikeout will be recorded when a batter has a count of two strikes and a.) swings and misses at the pitch, b.) foul tips the pitch and the tipped ball hits the strike zone target plate, c.) does not swing at a pitch that hits the strike zone target plate.

5.5.1.2 Fly Out. A fly out will be recorded when a ball is hit in the air and is, in fair or foul ground, prior to hitting the ground. The only exception to this rule is a ball hit beyond the Home Run Line which is caught without at least one foot in front of the line. "Ghost runners" are not permitted to tag up or advance on a sacrifice or fielder's choice.

5.5.1.3 Ground Out. A ground out will be recorded when a.) the ball is batted on the ground and is fielded cleanly prior to reaching the Single Line, located 45 feet from home plate, or b.) if a ball is hit into the field of play but for any reason comes to rest prior to reaching the Single Line, located at the 45-foot mark.

5.5.1.4 Bunting. An automatic out will be recorded if a batter intentionally bunts or attempts to bunt any pitched ball.

5.5.1.5 Batting Out of Order. An automatic out will be recorded if a batter is presented a minimum of one pitch while batting out of order (*refer to section 5.2.2 Batting Out of Order*).

5.5.2 Robbing Home Runs. An outfielder may rob a home run by catching a fly ball while keeping at least one foot in front of the Home Run Line, located 90 to 99 feet from home plate, or by leaping to catch the ball but landing with at least one foot in the field of play.

5.6 Pitching. The pitcher must deliver every pitch from within the marked pitcher's mound area. The pitcher may complete the windup and delivery from within this area or at the conclusion of a run up. In the case of a run up, the ball must be released to the plate while at least one foot is still within the marked pitcher's area. If it is judged that the pitcher released the ball from outside the pitcher's area, the pitch will be called an automatic ball.

5.6.1 Pitch Count. The pitch count will be four (4) balls for a walk or three (3) strikes for a strikeout. Foul balls are strikes unless the batter has a count of two (2) strikes. If the batter foul tips the ball with a two (2) strike count and the tipped ball hits the strike zone target plate, the batter will be out on strikes. If the tipped ball does not hit the strike zone, the batter will get another pitch.

5.6.2 Warm Up Pitches. The pitcher will be permitted a maximum of five (5) warm up pitches prior to the start of any half inning or prior to taking the mound in the event of a mid-inning pitching change.

5.6.3 Hit By Pitch. A pitch that hits the batter will be considered a ball and the batter will not be awarded first base. A batter hit by two (2) pitches within the same at bat will be awarded an automatic walk. If a player is hit in the head or face with a pitch, it will count as four balls and an automatic walk unless it is deemed that he/she leaned into the pitch, in which case it will be ruled batter interference (*refer to section 5.7.3 Batter Interference*).

5.6.4 Intentional Walks. Intentional walks will be permitted but limited to one (1) per half inning. Intentional walks may be called out by the pitcher prior to the first pitch to the batter or at any time during the at bat.

5.6.5 Pitching Limitations. Any pitcher that begins an inning may only pitch the three (3) outs of that half inning. He or she may not pitch in any other inning.

5.6.6 Relief Pitchers. A relief pitcher may be brought in to complete any half inning provided a.) he or she is one of the current defensive fielders and b.) he or she has not yet pitched at any point in that game. Whether the relief pitcher pitches one (1) out or three (3), he or she is not eligible to pitch in any other inning within that game

5.6.6.1 Relief Pitching Limitations. A team may only bring in a relief pitcher twice during any single game, including a game that goes beyond the regulation three innings.

5.7 Batting. The batter must keep both feet positioned inside the batter's box. Failure to do so during the pitch will result in an automatic called strike. Pace of play is extremely important so batters must be ready to hit in a timely manner.

5.7.1 Batting Order. The batting order will be set once the team's starting lineup is submitted prior to the start of each game. Batting out of order will be result in an automatic out.

5.7.2 Hands. The batter's hands will be considered part of the bat. Balls striking the batter's hands are either live or foul, depending on whether or not the ball comes to rest in fair or foul ground.

5.7.3 Batter Interference. If it is determined that a batter intentionally blocks the path of a pitched ball from any part of the strike zone target plate, the pitch will be called an automatic strike. This judgment call can be made independently by the infield umpire or after an appeal by the pitcher.

5.7.4 Call of Situation. The batter is responsible for audibly calling out the situation prior to the first pitch of each at bat. For example, "one out, runner or first and second."

5.7.5 Hits. Batters can register hits by batting the pitched ball as follows:

5.7.5.1 Singles. A ball batted a.) in the air that lands in the Single Zone (45 to 65 feet) which is not caught or b.) on the ground past the Single Line and is fielded cleanly or is knocked down before passing the Double Line will earn the batter a single and a "ghost runner" to first base while advancing any previous "ghost runners" one base.

5.7.5.2 Doubles. A ball batted a.) in the air that lands in the Double Zone (65 to 80 feet) which is not caught or b.) on the ground past the Double Line and is fielded cleanly or is knocked down before passing the Triple Line will earn the batter a double and a "ghost runner" to second base while advancing any previous "ghost runners" two bases.

5.7.5.3 Triples. A ball batted a.) in the air that lands in the Triple Zone (80 to 99 feet) which is not caught or b.) on the ground past the Triple Line and is fielded cleanly or knocked down before passing the Home Run Line or c.) on the ground that is not fielded or knocked down before passing the Home Run Line will earn the batter a triple and a “ghost runner” to third base while advancing any previous “ghost runners” three bases.

5.7.5.4 Home Runs. A fair ball batted IN THE AIR and landing beyond the Home Run Line will earn the batter a home run as well scoring any previous “ghost runners”. Batted balls that land in front of the Home Run Line but roll past it will be awarded a triple, not a home run.

5.7.6 Pace of Play. On deck batters and other offensive players will assist in maintaining pace of play by promptly gathering pitched balls, especially those that end up in the field of play. Gathered balls should be returned to the bucket behind the pitchers mound after each batter.