



Machine Pitch Program FAQ's

What ages are appropriate for the machine pitch league?

HVL machine pitch program is co-ed and for children who will be 7 or 8 on May 1st of the upcoming season.

When does the season start?

Machine Pitch season typically starts in mid-April. A coach should contact you by the beginning of April.

When are practices and games?

Machine pitch teams practice one night per week. Practice times are dependent upon field availability and the coaches. Practice times will not be determined until a coaches meeting in mid-March. Games are scheduled on Saturday mornings. Typically games have been scheduled every 2 hours starting at 8:00am or 9:00am. All is dependent upon the number of teams in the league and all is subject to change at the discretion of the Athletic Club. Machine pitch season typically lasts 6-8 weeks. Will be finished well before July 4th weekend.

When will I hear from someone?

Expect to hear from a machine pitch coach no later than the beginning of April. You may see older kids practicing before that. Don't panic.

What do my kids need?

Gloves and baseball hats are the only necessity. Optional are baseball cleats, bat, batting gloves, soft-core balls, baseball pants, and a personal helmet. FYI, personal helmets usually end up on another child's head. The club provides each team with a 15-17 oz. bat, soft-core balls, helmets, bases and a tee. Each child will receive a tee shirt, pants and a hat for games.

I don't want to coach; How can I help?

During practice: Help a coach run a station.

During games: Keep the score book, stand at 1st or third base and congratulate kids when they get there and tell them where to go next. Put balls in the pitching machine so a coach can coach. Stay in the dugout and help kids get ready to go up to bat by telling them they are "on deck" (next batter) or "in the hole"(batter up after "on deck" batter). Help the catcher get the equipment on more quickly. Help kids who may not be in the

game “stay in the game” mentally. Talk to them about what just happened or could have happened.

How many pitches does my kid get?

Each player gets a maximum of 5 pitches from the coach. This rule is not “coach’s discretion”. No matter how bad a ball is thrown, kids are to get a maximum of 5 pitches from the machine. The exception is a 5th pitch that is a foul ball. Pitches continue until a ball is hit in play or the player swings and misses. 5th pitch and any additional pitches due to foul balls are “must swing” pitches.

The machine is used to throw pitches not necessarily strikes. You will find in years to come that the kids, like it or not, are in “must swing” situations or have to be able to hit balls out of the strike zone when they get to kid pitch. Kids are certainly encouraged to wait on a pitch they like but if they don’t like the first 4 pitches they are getting themselves in a “must swing” situation. As a hitter, you essentially have 4 pitches to find the one you really like.

What are the rules for hits and base running?

If a child hits the ball well enough to get it out of the dirt infield and into the grass, we certainly encourage that player to go more than one base. Balls that simply get to the grass by rolling softly past the defense should be held to 1 base. It is the discretion of the coach to make this determination. While there is no maximum, we suspect the ball to enter the grass in the air up to three times per game. More frequent, multi-base, hits is rare and likely a coach being a jerk. This will not be tolerated by the Athletic Club. Please refer to the Machine pitch local rules document for more specific rules and rules regarding “overthrows”.

Are there “outs” in this league?

YES!!!! We play 3 innings of “3 out and switch sides” baseball under the local rules. Additional innings are played in such a way that all batters on a team get to bat before changing sides. Please refer to the machine pitch rules document for more specific rules.

Can my child play up?

The Athletic Club strongly discourages kids from “playing up” out of their age-designated league. There are exceptions and the following are guidelines for the club’s decision making regarding “playing up”.

Guidelines for “playing up” (out of an established age group)

1. Recommendation from a HVLAC member with voting privileges.
2. Recommendation from an HVLAC coach with 1 year of experience.
3. Parent who coaches.
4. Spot available in the desired age group.

How can I support the Athletic Club?

Attend meetings to make decisions about the sports in your community.

Volunteer to coordinate activity at the concession stand.

Volunteer to coach

Volunteer to perform an administrative function within the baseball program.

(Administrative functions are rewarded by reimbursement of player registration fees).