



## PITCH COUNT

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. **WHY THE MOVE TO PITCH COUNTS?**

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 than innings pitched.

Dr. James R. Andrews, M.D., medical director at the American Sports Medicine Institute (ASMI) in Birmingham, Alabama, is the world's foremost authority on pitching injuries and ulnar collateral ligament reconstruction, or, as it is better known, "Tommy John surgery." He believes that Pitch Count is one of the most important injury prevention steps ever initiated in youth baseball. In the mid-1990's he started to notice an alarming increase in serious injuries in adolescent pitchers. For example during the last five years of the 1990's, 21 of the 190 "Tommy John" surgeries at his medical center were high school age pitchers or younger; however during the first five years of this decade, 124 of 627 "Tommy John" surgeries were high school age pitchers or younger. This alarming trend was also happening for other types of pitching injuries.

In the previous method of pitching limitations, innings pitched were counted. However, not all innings were equal. For example, in a 2007 Pee Wee Game, one pitcher could have thrown 3 innings and only used 36 pitches to do so, while the opposing pitcher may need 75 pitches to pitch the same 3 innings. The old rules would state that both of these pitchers would be "eligible" to pitch again the next calendar day, and if they were to pitch 3 innings or less that day, they would be allowed to pitch a third consecutive day to a maximum of 7 innings. The potential volume of pitches that these arms could be subject to is incredible. Professional baseball teams would not put their pitchers through such a demanding schedule, and it certainly should not be appropriate for young, developing children.

Thus, the number of pitches delivered in a game, or games in one calendar day, will determine the amount of rest the player must have before pitching again. The idea of pitch count is to more accurately reflect the workload that is placed upon the pitcher, and to educate the coaches to be aware of the stresses of overuse.

It is recognized that Pitch Count is not the sole solution to eliminating arm problems as correct pitching mechanics may be even more important.

2. **WHAT ARE THE NEW LIMITS?**

Pitchers will be required to rest a prescribed number of days after throwing a specified number of pitches. The number of pitches and required rest are shown in the table below:

<b>MOSQUITO</b> <b>(NO CURVEBALLS)</b>	
<b>Number of Pitches</b>	<b>Rest Period</b>
1 - 25	No rest required
26 - 40	1 day rest
41 - 55	2 days rest
56 - 65	3 days rest
66 - 75	4 days rest
<b>Total allowed pitches in a day</b>	<b>75</b>

<b>PEE WEE</b> <b>(NO CURVEBALLS)</b>	
<b>Number of Pitches</b>	<b>Rest Period</b>
1 - 30	No rest required
31 - 45	1 day rest
46 - 60	2 days rest
61 - 75	3 days rest
76 - 85	4 days rest
<b>Total allowed pitches in a day</b>	<b>85</b>

<b>BANTAM</b>	
<b>Number of Pitches</b>	<b>Rest Period</b>
1 - 30	No rest required
31 - 45	1 day rest
46 - 60	2 days rest
61 - 75	3 days rest
76 - 90	4 days rest
<b>Total allowed pitches in a day</b>	<b>90</b>

<b>MIDGET</b>	
<b>Number of Pitches</b>	<b>Rest Period</b>
1 - 30	No rest required
31 - 45	1 day rest
46 - 60	2 days rest
61 - 75	3 days rest
76 - 100	4 days rest
<b>Total allowed pitches in a day</b>	<b>100</b>

**3. WHO WILL TRACK THE PITCHES**

The Home Team will assign an Official Pitch Count Scorekeeper. This person will calculate the total pitches thrown for that calendar day and determine the required rest (if any) starting the next calendar day. Athletes must **not** exceed the maximum pitch count total for that day. If there is no official Pitch Count scorekeeper, the home team scorekeeper will become the official Pitch Count scorekeeper. At provincial

championships, the host site will be responsible for providing the Official Pitch Count Scorekeeper. Also at provincials, flip scoring boards will be used to track the pitches.

4. **IS THERE A LIMIT TO THE NUMBER OF PITCHERS WHO MAY PITCH IN A GAME?**  
Any player on the team is eligible to pitch and there are no restrictions to the number of pitchers a coach may use in a game.
5. **WHAT CONSTITUTES A PITCHING APPEARANCE?**  
An appearance shall be defined as 1 pitch thrown or more. Every pitch thrown in the game is counted (including foul tips, and all foul balls). Warm-up pitches between innings, or when a new pitcher enters the game, are not part of the count. Intentional walks will be included in Pitch Count totals.
6. **WHAT IF THE PITCHER HAS A NO-HITTER AND THEIR LIMIT IS REACHED?**  
Any pitcher, without regard to their effectiveness, must be removed when they reach the limit prescribed in the regulations. Remember, no game is more important than protecting pitchers' arms. This even applies to no-hitters and perfect games.
7. **ARE THERE STILL INNINGS PITCHED RESTRICTIONS?**  
There is no limit to the number of innings a pitcher can pitch in a day or week. The limit is placed on the number of pitches only.
8. **DO WARM-UP THROWS OR PICK-OFFS COUNT AS PITCHES?**  
Warm-up throws and pick off attempts at bases **DO NOT** count as thrown pitches. The only pitches that count towards a pitchers pitch count total are ones that are thrown to a batter.
9. **WHAT IF A PITCHER IS IN THE MIDDLE OF AN AT BAT WHEN THEIR LIMIT IS REACHED?**  
Pitchers will be permitted to finish the batter if their maximum pitch limit has been reached for that calendar day. Following that batter they must be removed from the pitching position.
10. **WHAT ABOUT EXHIBITION GAMES AND TOURNAMENTS – DO THE NUMBER OF PITCHES STILL COUNT?**  
Yes! All games that are played should have the pitches counted and logged. These rules are for the protection of the pitchers so that they can enjoy healthy and productive careers regardless of how long those careers may be.
11. **WHAT IS MEANT BY “REST DAYS”?**  
A rest day is one full day as it is seen on a calendar. A calendar day begins at midnight and ends at midnight the following evening. Example: If a Pee Wee pitcher throws 78 pitches in a game on Saturday morning, that pitcher cannot pitch again until Thursday, when he/she has had four calendar days of rest (Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday). It makes no difference what time of day the pitcher pitched on Saturday, as the rest period does not begin until midnight that night. Therefore, required Rest shall be defined in “Days” starting at 12:00 a.m. and ending at 12:00 a.m. of the next calendar day.
12. **CAN THE SAME PITCHER THROW IN CONSECUTIVE GAMES IN CONSECUTIVE DAYS (back to back days)?**  
Depending on the number of pitches thrown and the days of rest, the same pitcher could pitch in consecutive games. However, if a pitcher delivers the number of pitches beyond the “No rest required” limit, they must have the number of days rest as detailed in the

Pitching Limits table. **NOTE: Pitchers are not permitted to throw 3 consecutive days.**

13. **CAN THE SAME PITCHER PITCH IN BOTH GAMES OF A DOUBLEHEADER PLAYED ON THE SAME DAY? (REVISED MAY 2009)**

Yes, pitchers shall be permitted to have a maximum of 2 appearances in the same calendar day as long as the number of pitches in Game #1 do not exceed the allowable limit without requiring 1 days rest. Ex) In Mosquito, for a pitcher to be eligible to pitch in both games of a doubleheader, he/she cannot pitch more than 25 pitches in Game #1. In Pee Wee or Bantam, for a pitcher to be eligible to pitch in both games of a doubleheader, he/she cannot pitch more than 30 pitches in Game #1. The Official Pitch Count Scorekeeper will calculate the total pitches thrown for that calendar day and determine the required rest starting the next calendar day. Pitchers must **not** exceed the maximum pitch count total for that day. These two appearances would only occur if 2 or more games are being played on the same day. **NOTE: Pitchers are not permitted to throw 3 or more games on the same calendar day.**

14. **ARE THE PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONSHIP PITCHING RULES THE SAME?**

The Pitch Count rules used at the Provincial Championships are the rules put forward to for leagues. The limits will remain the same throughout the year. .

15. **WHAT ABOUT BREAKING BALLS (curve balls, sliders, etc.)?**

Breaking balls / Curveball are no longer permitted in any Mosquito or Pee Wee division. The greatest issue is concern over damage to the pitchers growth plates from improperly thrown pitches and overuse.

16. **CAN A PITCHER RE-ENTER A GAME TO PITCH IF THEY HAVE NOT REACHED THEIR REST LIMIT?**

A pitcher who is removed from the mound during the game shall not be permitted to return to pitch in the same game, even if the pitcher is retained in the game in another position. As per Baseball Canada Rules, pitchers will not be allowed to re-enter a game to pitch once they have left the pitching position.

17. **WHY IS THERE A REGULATION PROHIBITING A PLAYER PITCHING AND CATCHING IN THE SAME GAME AND DAY?**

Medical authorities and experts say that a player who warms up to pitch, and then pitches, should not play catcher for the remainder of the day. Doing so does not provide enough "cool down" time for such a player. The same holds true for the catcher, who has had to make almost as many throws as the pitcher. Therefore, coaches may want to predetermine those players that will catch in the game, and not make them a part of the available pitchers. **A PLAYER CANNOT BE A PITCHER AND CATCHER AT ALL IN THE SAME DAY IN ANY MOSQUITO, PEE WEE, BANTAM OR MIDGET DIVISION.**

18. **WILL LOCAL LEAGUES HAVE THE ABILITY TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK TO SASK BASEBALL AND BASEBALL CANADA REGARDING THE NEW PITCH COUNT RULE?**

Absolutely. As with any rule or regulation of Saskatchewan Baseball and Baseball Canada, local leagues are encouraged to provide feedback through the provincial office. This feedback is valuable in determining what, if any, changes need to be made.

19. **WHAT ARE THE PENALTIES FOR VIOLATING THE PITCH COUNT RULES?**

The violation of any pitching rules may result in forfeiture of the game in which the violation occurred. When the use of a pitcher who is ineligible or about to become ineligible is evident scorekeepers or other officials MUST notify the manager or coach of

the offending team so that an opportunity for assignment correction may be immediately affected. (Baseball Canada Rules of Baseball 2006 version)

**20. CAN A PLAYER PITCH AND CATCH IN THE SAME DAY?**

No, a player CANNOT pitch and catch in the same DAY in Mosquito, Pee Wee, Bantam or Midget. **(REVISED JANUARY 2010)**