

Recommendations from USA Baseball regarding Pitch counts for Youth players

Based upon its expertise and review of existing studies, the USA Baseball Medical & Safety Advisory Committee makes the following recommendations for minimizing a pitcher's risk of future serious arm injury and maximizing his chance of success:

- Coaches and parents should listen and react appropriately to a youth pitcher when he/she complains about arm pain. A pitcher who complains or shows signs of arm pain during a game should be removed immediately from pitching. Parents should seek medical attention if pain is not relieved within four days or if the pain recurs immediately the next time the player pitches. League officials should inform parents about this consideration.
- Pitch counts should be monitored and regulated in youth baseball. Recommended limits for youth pitchers should be approximately as follows:

9-10 year old pitchers:

50 pitches per game
75 pitches per week
1000 pitches per season
2000 pitches per year

11-12 year old pitchers:

75 pitches per game
100 pitches per week
1000 pitches per season
3000 pitches per year

13-14 year old pitchers:

75 pitches per game
125 pitches per week
1000 pitches per season
3000 pitches per year

Pitch count limits pertain to pitches thrown in games only. These limits do not include throws from other positions, instructional pitching during practice sessions, and throwing drills, which are important for the development of technique and strength. Backyard pitching practice after a pitched game is strongly discouraged

- Pitchers should not throw breaking pitches (curveballs, sliders, etc.) in competition until their bones have matured (indicated by puberty) - typically about 13 years of age. In order to succeed, a youth pitcher should focus on good mechanics, a fast fastball, a good change-up, and good control.
- Pitchers should develop proper mechanics as early as possible and include more year-round physical conditioning as their body develops.
- A Pitcher returning to the mound in a game once he/she has been removed as the pitcher is strongly discouraged.
- Baseball players - especially pitchers - are discouraged from participating in showcases due to the risk of injury. The importance of showcases should be de-emphasized, and at the least, pitchers should be permitted time to appropriately prepare.
- Baseball pitchers are discouraged from pitching for more than one team in overlapping seasons.
- Baseball pitchers should not compete in baseball more than nine months in any given year, as periodization is needed to give the pitcher's body time to rest and recover. For at least three months a year, a baseball pitcher should not play any baseball, participate in throwing drills, or participate in other stressful overhead activities (javelin throwing, football quarterback, softball, competitive swimming, etc.).

References:

Andrews JR, Chmielewski T, Escamilla RF, Fleisig GS, Wilk KE. Conditioning program for professional baseball pitchers. American Sports Medicine Institute, Birmingham, AL, 1997.

Andrews JR, Fleisig GS. How many pitches should I allow my child to throw? *USA Baseball News* April, 1996