



PITCH COUNT METHODS — INSTRUCTIONS

For the safety and in the interests of saving young pitchers' arms, in 2010 the NSYBA has adopted a pitch-count rule rather than the previous innings-pitched rule as a more accurate measure of wear and tear on pitchers. An inning can have a wildly varying number of pitches — I've reviewed seven years' worth of pony league pitching records and found innings consisted of as few as five pitches and as many as 43 pitches thrown! For a full explanation of the new pitch-count rule, please see 2010 Spring Season Local Rule 8G.

There seem to be three principal methods for keeping track of pitches. The first uses a mechanical counter. The other two are pencil-and-paper methods.

METHOD A: The first step is to obtain a mechanical counter. These are available for a nominal price at real office supply stores (not Office Max or Office Depot) and some sporting good stores, like Play It Again Sports. You can also find them online. The second step is to use our Form A, downloadable from the www.nsyba.org website,



METHOD B: A pencil-and-paper method. Download Form B from the www.nsyba.org website. This is a simple pitch-count log, where you cross off a box for each pitch thrown. It has the advantage that you can keep count of pitches thrown for both your team and the opponents on the same piece of paper.

METHOD C: Also a pencil-and-paper method. Download Form C from the www.nsyba.org website. This has some advantages, notably reconciling your pitch count more easily with your opponent's during the game. You also can record more information about pitches thrown (i.e., ball / strike / hit by pitch / whatever). But it's quite a bit more involved and more akin to a varsity high school pitch count log. Some NSYBA coaches manage to that level, which is why I've included it.

WHAT IS A "PITCH"?: Local Rule 8A defines a pitch as "a delivery by the pitcher to the catcher when a batter is in the batter's box."

Count these as pitches:

1. A swing-and-miss strike, a called strike or a called ball.
2. A fouled-off pitch.
3. A pitch which is hit fair.
4. Any delivery to the plate if the umpire calls "no pitch."
5. Any ball thrown to the catcher during an intentional walk (NSYBA requires that the pitcher throw deliberate balls while intentionally walking a batter).
6. Any pitch thrown which results in the batter reaching base through catcher interference.
7. Pitches thrown during the course of an incomplete at-bat which resumes at the next inning.

Do NOT count these as pitches:

1. Warm-up pitches thrown before the half-inning starts or when a pitcher is replaced in the middle of a half-inning.
2. Trial pitches to determine pitcher injury when allowed by the umpire.
3. Pick-off throws to any of the bases or home plate.
4. Any throws made by the pitcher when acting as a fielder.
5. Tosses to infielders to keep arm loose during breaks in the course of a game.
6. A throw to a base or home plate in the course of a protested play.

INSTRUCTIONS — PITCH COUNT METHOD A

BEFORE THE GAME STARTS:

1. Fill in the header at upper right with the basic “day — date — diamond,” “our team” and “opponents” data.
2. Fill in your starting pitcher’s name and jersey number in the first box.
3. Your manager may want you to keep track of the pitcher(s) your opponent uses. If this is the case, get the starting pitcher’s name and jersey number from one of your opponent’s coach and fill in the information to start the second set of boxes.
4. Be sure your mechanical counter is set to zero.

DURING THE GAME:

1. Click your counter for each pitch as it occurs.
2. Your manager may change pitchers in the middle of the half-inning or at the start of the next half-inning. If there is a change in pitchers,
 - a. record the pitch count for the previous pitcher in the appropriate box,
 - b. enter the name and jersey number of the relieving pitcher in the next box, and
 - c. reset your mechanical counter to zero.
3. If your manager wants you to keep track of your opponent’s pitcher(s), before the next half inning starts, ask someone on the other side for their pitcher’s name and jersey number. It’s a good idea to check with the other side before the start of every one of their half-innings.
4. By the end of the game, your filled out form should look something like this (fill-ins in red):

Mongol Horde

pitcher name	jersey number	total pitches	W S	notes
<i>Millard Fillmore</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>54</i>		
<i>James Buchanan</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>65</i>		
<i>Abraham Lincoln</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>19</i>		

You can ignore the “W S” box. That’s there for the manager to record the winner or saver. Likewise, ignore the “notes” box, unless your manager has asked you to write something there.

AFTER THE GAME:

Be sure to give this pitch count log to your manager before he leaves the diamond! If your team won, he’ll need the pitch counts to give a complete game report to NSYBA. Your team gets an extra 0.2 points for prompt reporting, which can make a difference when the playoff seedings are determined at the end of the regular season.

INSTRUCTIONS — PITCH COUNT METHOD C

BEFORE THE GAME STARTS:

1. Fill in the header at upper right with the basic “day — date — diamond,” “our team” and “opponents” data.
2. Fill in the opposing team’s batting order (name and jersey number) either from your team’s manager or score-keeper or from the opponents. It’s perfectly okay to talk to the folks in the other dugout and bleachers — this is not World War II, it’s youth baseball.
3. Your manager may want you to keep two logs, one for your team as well as one for the opponents.
4. Fill in your starting pitcher’s name on the first line at the bottom of the form. In the first “inning #” box, write the number “1” (then fill in “2,” “3,” etc., as the game progresses).

DURING THE GAME:

1. As each pitch is thrown, cross off one of the little boxes in the pitch-count frame. Alternatively, your manager may want you to keep track of balls / strikes / whatever. Use these one-letter abbreviations:

B ball	S batter struck by pitch	N umpire-called “no pitch”
K swung-at strike	F fouled-off pitch	H fair hit, regardless of outcome
X caught-looking strike (backwards “K”)	C catcher interference	

2. At the end of the at-bat, count the pitches and keep a running total in the box at right. The start of the game with several at-bats might look like this when you’re done (fill-ins in red, for those with color printers):

				inning # 1				
batting order	jersey #							
1	Washington	1	B	B	K	F	B	7
			F	X				
2	Obama	44	B	F	F	F	B	13
			K					
3	Jefferson	3	B	B	B	X	H	18
4	Hoover	31	F	F	S			21

3. Indicate the end of the inning with two diagonal lines, like this:

F	B	B	X	H	S3				
B	F	K	K	B	S0				
B	X								
						K	B	S	S3
						K	H		S5
						B	B	B	B
									S9

- Show an incomplete at-bat at the end of an inning with an arrow like this:

K	B	H			S0				
B	B	K			S3				
						B	K	B	K
									S8

(These happen when, for instance, a would-be base stealer at first base is thrown out trying to steal second during a subsequent batter’s at-bat.)

4. It's possible your manager will want you to keep track of the opposing team's pitchers and pitches thrown, just to keep them honest when reporting pitch counts. You'll have to use a second page for this.

5. If you're keeping track of both sides' pitch counts, it's a good idea to periodically check with the other side to make sure you've both recorded the same counts. It's okay to talk to the folks in the other dugout or bleachers. This is youth baseball. It is not World War II.

6. If your manager has told you he wants certain pitchers to only go to certain pitch counts, let him/her know about ten pitches before the cutoff is reached. Similarly, if a pitcher is reaching the maximum permitted (at this writing, it was 90), warn your manager and the umpire when that pitcher reaches about 80 pitches.

AFTER THE GAME:

Be sure to give the pitch count log to your manager before he leaves the diamond! If your team won, he'll need the pitch counts to give a complete game report to NSYBA. Your team gets an extra 0.2 points for prompt reporting, which can make a difference when the playoff seedings are determined at the end of the regular season.