

## 2025 Westport Minor League Recreation Rules (Rev1)

### **Purpose**

The idea of the Westport Babe Ruth Division is to instruct, educate and improve our players. WBRL has in the past competed in Districts and tournament play in the region. Within our regional and divisional play it is noticed that our competition has modified rules in order to keep the game moving and keep the focus of all the players. These rule changes here within are not to develop a tournament team. It is to keep the WBRL recreation league moving and expand upon options that surrounding areas are currently incorporating. By adopting these rule changes it will refine FUNDamental skills, understand game strategy and teamwork. We do not keep standings for regular season. We want any player to feel welcome to try any position. THIS IS NOT ALL STAR COMPETITION. We will have playoffs towards the later end of the season, which will be the "competitive" portion. Nevertheless, all coaches will need to understand these rule changes. WBRL has adopted the Babe Ruth League Rules rulebook. Some rules have been modified to accommodate our league by strengthening the rules to play within WBRL.

### **Games:**

- 1) Teams can start and play with 8 players.
- 2) If a team cannot field 8 players, a team may loan players to another team. However, the lending team will choose a player who is appropriate to play. The idea of WBRL is to get games in.
- 3) We will have a "4 run rule" per inning at the Minor league age group, except for the final inning. The final inning will be an open inning. Only the 6th inning or extra innings (Playoffs) will be an open inning. If the 4th or 5th inning ends up being the final inning, it will be announced to the (2) two head coaches by the umpire prior to the start of the next inning that "This is an Open Inning".
- 4) For the regular season, **The last inning must start prior to 1hr 45 mins from the start of the game. The clock starts @ the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> pitch. There is a hard stop at 2 hours. Confirm with the umpire prior to the start of the last inning.**

For the Playoffs time of game will be kept starting at first pitch the rule will simply be no new inning after 1 hour and 45 minutes with NO HARD STOP. Home team should confirm start time and enter time in scorebook for games that start late or early. The Home Team's entry in the scorebook is the official game start time.

Managers of visiting team should confirm with Home Team. In the event that no time is noted in the Home Team scorebook, then the scheduled game start time shall be the official start of the 1 hour 45 minutes.

- 5) The next inning starts as soon as the third out has been made in the previous inning, not when the teams have re-taken the field.

- 6) There is a 10 run mercy rule in the regular season. In the playoffs, the 10 run mercy rule does apply except in the Championship Game. The mercy rule for the Championship Game is 15 runs.
- 7) No player, manager, coach or substitute shall object to any judgment decisions. This is to include but not limited to whether a batted ball is fair or foul, whether a pitch is a strike or a ball, or whether a runner is safe or out. However, if there is a questionable call on a ruling on the field the head coach may respectfully ask for an Appeal to the Umpire who made the call. As stated in the Umpire Babe Ruth Guide, "If there is any doubt an umpire's decision may be in conflict with the rules, a manager or coach may appeal the decision and ask that a correct ruling be made. Such appeal shall be made only to the umpire who made the protested decision." Again the focus is not the result of the play; but teaching and improving to both junior umpires and to the WBRL players.
- 8) Home and Away will be pre-determined by a schedule devised by the Minor League Director which is submitted to the WBRL President for review. Dugouts will be assigned by the schedule.
- 9) Any rules not listed within this listing will follow Cal Ripken rules or be at the Discretion of the League Director or Assistant (Executive Board).

#### **Pitching:**

- 1) A pitcher cannot pitch more than 6 innings in a week and no more than 2 innings in a game. A week is defined as Sunday through Saturday. A pitcher may pitch in multiple games in a week permitting there is rest and they do not go over their 6 innings per week as referenced before.
- 2) Balks will not be called.
- 3) Coaches get 2 visits to mound per inning, 5 per game before pitcher must be removed.
- 4) 3 hit batters in an inning or 5 in a game will result in removal of pitcher.
- 5) **Pitchers cannot return to the mound in the same game once they have been removed.**
- 6) No curve ball penalty but we strongly recommend no curve balls at this level.

#### **Hitting:**

- 1) All teams are batting a continuous batting order.
- 2) In the event of an injury, a player can be removed without penalty. (The players' position in the line-up will be skipped.) This rule is the same for playoffs unless the batting order falls below 9 hitters.  
IF batting 8 in the playoffs an out will be recorded in the 9th spot in the order or in the injured players spot.
- 3) Bunting is allowed.

- 4) No slash bunting (Squaring up for a bunt, pulling back and making a full swing to put into play). If this is done the hitter will be called out and a warning will be issued to the offensive coach who violated this rule.
- 5) In an effort to prevent batters from being walked and to facilitate defensive plays; the beginning of the regular season coaches will have the ability to place a Tee and or front toss a baseball to a batter.

This will occur if the batter receives an end count of 4 balls. It is at the discretion of the coach to make the choice for their player(s) ability to choose from a Tee or front toss. (If a batter intentionally does not swing to force a base on balls especially with a batters count or full count the decision from the coaches and umpire in charge will call the out or base on balls). **This practice/rule will only be allowed for the first month of Regular season. After the month the rules of base on balls resumes and the Tee or front toss is no longer an option unless agreed to in a game. This practice/rule is to be agreed to by the managers and announced to the umpires prior to the start of the game.**

#### **Base running:**

- 1) Infield fly rule is in effect.
- 2) Runner must return to base, if they stop momentum toward next base, once the pitcher is on the pitching rubber with the ball. Catcher's readiness is not part of this rule.
- 3) Runner may not leave the base until the pitched ball, passes home plate or hits the dirt.
- 4) You may attempt to steal home 2 times per inning. An out at the plate is an attempt. Any throws going past the plane of the mound that will allow a runner to advance to home will also be considered an attempt (ie PASS BALL). If a 3rd attempt to steal home is made and out is recorded the out will count.

If the runner is safe then the runner will be sent back to 3rd base.

**A runner advancing home on a pass ball / wild pitch / errant throw by the catcher (as noted above) is an attempt. At the minor league level we are trying to encourage players to also learn the catching position.**

- 5) Runners may steal from 1st to 2nd. 2nd to 3rd. Stealing is done at their own risk of being tagged out.
- 6) Delayed steals are accepted. However, once the pitcher is on the pitching rubber with possession of the ball no runner may advance /steal until the ball is pitched again. Catcher's readiness is not part of this rule.
- 7) A courtesy runner may be used for a catcher if the catcher is on the bases with two outs.
- 8) A runner can be removed for an injury and replaced by a courtesy runner. However, in the playoffs this may only be done once. A second removal will remove the player from the game.
- 9) A courtesy runner is the previous batter in the batting order who is not already on the bases.
- 10) Slide or avoid contact is in effect Players should be encouraged to slide if there is any type of play.
- 11) No head first sliding unless returning to a base.

12) Dropped third strike is NOT in affect.

### **Fielding:**

- 1) Due to continuous batting, teams will have free (unlimited) defensive substitution.
- 2) All players must play 3 defensive innings in the field, Due to unlimited substitution, consecutive innings will not be required. No penalty if game is not 6 complete innings.
- 3) Teams must field a minimum of 8 players (Lend a player if necessary), hopefully nine.
- 4) 4 outfielders may be used for minor league, however, a team can play 9 defensive players (3 outfielders) if they so choose.

**5) For the first month of the regular season a coach may have the option to stand in the field to help coach the players similar to rookie. However, this would have to be confirmed at the beginning of the game, and this coach would not be able to approach the pitcher in any way or it would count as a mound visit.**

**- This is an "optional rule" as there are a lot of young players in the field, to help start the season to make sure kids are in the correct places, similar to Hitting Rule #5.**

**- This also allows a positive way for kids of different abilities to get acclimated to playing the field in a game as they may need extra help, but would not be singled out.**

### **Ejections:**

Any coaches ejected will be removed for an additional week. If manager does not comply, team will forfeit and game will be canceled. All managers are responsible for their own fans as well as their own actions. If a fan is ejected, then the Head Coach will also be ejected if the Head Coach was warned of the fan behavior before the fan ejection.

It should be noted that we are all human and occasionally we do let our emotions supersede our actions. Nevertheless, as Coaches and adults we need to be reminded that this is a game. This game in and of itself is being taught to young children who should be excited to come to the baseball field to either practice or play an official game.

Our actions, words and non-verbal cues are picked up by these young players, which should reflect nothing but positivity. We all need to act as positive examples for the players to follow.