

Southwest Baseball League Overview

Charter:

Due to the growing popularity of Travel Baseball, opportunities for recreational baseball have contracted. The Southwest Baseball League was established in 2025 by the baseball organizations Bolingbrook, Homer Glen, Lemont, Lockport & Woodridge to provide a competitive baseball program that offers a greater variety of opponents at the Bronco & Pony recreational age levels.

Season Overview:

The Number of games each season played will be determined by the number of teams enrolled. The target will be to play ~ 18 regular season games + playoffs for each team. Game play will start mid April and end by the third Sunday of June each year. The playoffs are due to complete by the fourth Sunday in June each year, with the all-star game being played on the Monday thereafter.

Game Play / Rules:

Rule	Bronco	Pony
<i>Number of Innings Per Game</i>	6	7
<i>Time Limit</i>	No new inning after 1:45. If the visiting team is trailing and the completion of the top half of an inning, the game will be considered over. Example - the 1:45 minute mark elapses in the top of the 4th inning, where the home team is leading 5-3. If the visiting team does not tie the score or take the lead by the end of the top of the 4th inning, the game will be considered over.	
<i>Bat Restrictions</i>	-10 or heavier; no specific stamp requirements (USA, USSA, etc all allowed)	-8 or heavier; no specific stamp requirements (USA, USSA, etc all allowed)
<i>Substitutions</i>	Free defensive substitutions throughout (except pitcher; pitcher may not re-enter as pitcher after being removed as pitcher)	
<i>Defensive Alignment</i>	Must maintain 9 defensive players at all times 9 defensive players Visiting team may start with 8 players; if 9th player does not arrive by the time they enter the field defensively teams should make an effort to get the game in (home team should put last player scheduled to bat in right field)	

Rule	Bronco	Pony
	<p>Every eligible player must play at least one (1) inning in the field by the conclusion of the 4th inning</p> <p>No player shall sit for a second time before all players have sat for 1 inning. This is an in-house league and the goal is to be inclusive of the players.</p>	
<i>Slashing</i>	<p>Slashing is defined as a play where the batter assumes a bunt position, then changes their grip and swings at the ball. At no time is slashing allowed.</p>	
<i>Dropped 3rd Strike</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Balk Warning</i>	<p>1 balk warning per pitcher per game; coaches and umpires are encouraged to apply leniency unless balk is “egregious”</p>	
<i>Infield Fly</i>	<p>Yes (umpires discretion)</p>	
<i>Mercy Rule</i>	<p>10 Runs after 4 innings</p>	
<i>Max Runs Per Inning</i>	<p>5 runs per inning until inning 4, then inning 5 & 6 is unlimited</p>	<p>6 runs per inning until innings 5, innings 6 & 7 are unlimited</p>
<i>Pitching Limits</i>	<p>3 innings per day; if pitching 3 innings in a day max 72 hours rest between outings; 2 innings per day requires 40 hours rest</p> <p>5 innings maximum per week (regardless of rest)</p> <p>1 pitch thrown in an inning constitutes an inning pitched</p> <p>*Suggestion that there is a balance between younger players & older players on the roster in terms of pitching</p>	<p>3 innings per day; if pitching 3 innings in a day max 48 hours rest between outings</p> <p>8 innings maximum per week (regardless of rest)</p> <p>1 pitch thrown in an inning constitutes an inning pitched</p> <p>*Suggestion that there is a balance between younger players & older players on the roster in terms of pitching</p>
<i>Mound Visits</i>	<p>A manager is allowed 1 mound visit per pitcher per inning. If a manager conducts a 2nd mound visit in an inning (to the same pitcher), the pitcher must be removed as a pitcher during that mound visit.</p> <p>A mound visit is defined as any time the manager crosses the foul line into the field of play (including in between innings) and having a conversation (on the field of play) with the pitcher. The only exception</p>	

Rule	Bronco	Pony
	is if a manager visits the mound to address a player injury / illness.	
<i>Guest Players</i>	<p>Coaches are encouraged to take all measures possible to play as scheduled. This may require the use of a guest player. The rules around guest players are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cannot pitch or play catcher - Must bat last in your order - Must play an outfield position in the lineup (unless otherwise agreed by the coaches) - Cannot be a full or part-time travel player on another roster - Can be a call up (from a younger team within your organization) or must be active on another team within your organization 	
<i>Pace of Play</i>	Courtesy runner for pitcher / catcher (must be last batted out, if no out in inning, reverts to last hitter in lineup in inning 1, thereafter last out of last inning)	

General Rules / Information:

Disputes & Behavior

- All Coaches, players & fans are reminded to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times
- Head Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their players, assistants & fans; if anybody is behaving in an inappropriate manner, Head Coaches should attempt to resolve the situation
- Umpires are in charge of the field from the time the game begins to the ending; their rulings are final. If there is a dispute / concern with an umpire, contact the host organization to provide more detailed information
- If a dispute cannot be resolved on the field directly, contact your organization representative; they will work with the dispute coordinators from each organization to address the situation

Rainout, Rain Shortened & Makeup Games

- Rainouts: Field playable is subject to the rules of each organization; rainout information should be communicated no later than **3:00 PM** on weekday games, 2 hours before the scheduled start of weekend games
- Games shortened by rain are subject to the following:

- If 3.5 innings have been played (and the home team is leading at that time), it's considered a complete game
- If 3.5 innings have been played (and the home team is losing at that time), the game should be resumed at a later time; the clock should be considered frozen (example - if it was 45 minutes to that point, there would still be 1 hour remaining to complete the game)
- If less than 2 innings have been completed, the game would be rescheduled and started over
- A player who pitched in a game that is being resumed is INELIGIBLE to pitch again in that resumed game (regular weekly limits & rest still apply)

Miscellaneous

- A coaches meeting will be held prior to the start of **each season** with the coaches from all teams across all organizations together to review the rules in detail. Coaches are expected to make every effort to attend (or send a delegate) to this meeting in person or virtually (in person is preferred)
- All games should have at least one umpire; booking umpires are the responsibility of the home team / host organization for the game to be played
- Scheduling, standings & results will be published in Gamechanger. Official scoring is to be done using Gamechanger. Each team should appoint 1-2 coaches that understand how to score the game in gamechanger.
- Home team is responsible for providing 2 game balls, a properly groomed field & umpires for each game. The visiting team should be prepared to provide additional game balls as needed (due to lost or damaged balls).
- Head coaches will be provided a “quick reference” card with a summary of the rules. Coaches are expected to have this card available throughout the season at each game. This card should be shown to the umpires before each game at the coaches pre game meeting to ensure the umpire is aware of any specific rules that govern game play.
- Minimum playing time of 2 defensive innings per game are expected for each player
- Number of games per age level
 - **Bronco:** Each team will play all registered teams a minimum of 1 time in regular season play, with additional games scheduled, not to exceed 16 regular season games
 - **Pony:** Each team will play all registered teams 3 times in regular season play, not to exceed 18 regular season games

Playoffs:

All teams will qualify for the playoffs. Playoffs rounds will be single elimination games. Seeding / need for byes will be determined based upon the number of teams signed up each season. There will be a single division that determines the standings for playoffs. Tie breakers for determining seeding will be determined as follows:

- (1) Overall Record
- (2) Head to Head Record
- (3) Total Runs Allowed (lower number)
- (4) Total Runs Against (higher number)
- (5) Coin Flip

Each playoff game shall be hosted by the organization of the home team playing the game. If the home team is unable to secure a field for the scheduled time, any organization in the league may offer use of a field to ensure the game can be played as scheduled. The Home team will still be responsible for providing game balls for games played at other organizations. Booking of umpire should be mutually agreed upon by league scheduling coordinators.

*If all teams have not played the same number of games, playoff seeding will be determined by an equal number of games played by each teams (last x number of games will be dropped to make all things equal).

All-Star Game:

The All-Star game is meant to be a celebration of the most talented players across each organization. The Number of players to be awarded spots will be evenly divided across the organizations participating in the league in a given year. The All-Star game will be hosted the day after the league championship game is completed each season. Nominations to the all-star game should be submit to your leagues coordinator no later than 2 weeks prior to the completion of the season. Each league should finalize their selection no later than 1 week prior to the completion of the season to allow adequate time for notification and planning.

Players will be assigned to teams at random on the day of the all-star game. A minimum of two catchers will be assigned to each team at random, followed by a random draw of the remaining players. Each player will be issued a hat to commemorate their all-star selection to be worn during the game.

The All-Star game will be hosted by one of the participating organization. Host organization shall provide umpires, groomed fields and game balls sufficient for the all-star game.