

Lake Bluff Youth Baseball Association: Mustang Rules

Updates for 2020 are in italics.

All coaches must review the Phase 4 Safety Plan and promote safety guidance.

Overview: Please be sure players place equipment on the “dots” (6 feet spacing) along each side of the first (away) and third base (home team) lines. No more than 3 players permitted in the dugout. All players must use their own equipment. Ensure proper spacing for team meetings, warmups and huddles. Teams are to line up along each base line at the conclusion of the game and tip their hats to the other team—no handshakes, high-fives, etc.

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The League shall play according to the official IHSA rules and is subject to the following amendments or interpretations.

Section A -- Playing Field

1. The distance between bases shall be 60 feet.
2. The pitching distance shall be 44 feet from the front of the Pitching rubber to the point at the back of home plate.
3. The distance from the point at the back of home plate to the center of second base shall be 84 feet, 10 inches.

Section B -- Duration of the Contest

1. Games will begin at the designated start time. Teams will have a 10 minute grace period to field the required minimum number of players from their original roster (see E.6.). Failure to do so will result in a forfeit.
2. A regulation game shall consist of not more than 6 innings. Extra innings shall be played in case of a tie game, weather, daylight or time limit restrictions permitting.
3. A game is official if the losing team has had at least four (4) innings at bat in their entirety.
4. No inning shall be started after 1 hour and 45 minutes. A 2 hour and 15 minute time limit applies to all games. All action shall cease at that time, and if a complete inning has not been played, the score reverts to the last completed inning.

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5. Regular season games that are not completed due to weather or darkness may be rescheduled by LBYBA as weather and available dates permit.
6. Mercy Rule: If one team is ahead by 12 or more runs after a game becomes official (see B.2 above), or 10 or more runs after 5 innings (4 ½ if the home team is ahead), the game is over.
7. *2020 Rule: The inning is over if three outs are achieved, or the hitting team bats through the order; whichever is first.*

Section C -- Coaches' Responsibilities

1. Monitoring Pitch Count- At the pre-game meeting, coaches should inform their opponent of their appointed scorekeeper who will track pitch count. Coaches are encouraged to use Game Changer, or a similar app that can count pitches. Alternatively, coaches can manually count pitches in their scorebook. The teams should verify pitch count between each inning, and in case of discrepancy, the home team's pitch count will take precedence.

2020 Rule: A listing of travel players who frequently pitch will be provided to all Mustang League coaches. These players are NOT permitted to pitch under any circumstance. The goal of 2020 is to develop House pitchers and travel players who do not normally pitch. The reason for this rule is that we do not want to overwork the arms of the frequent pitchers because House and Travel seasons are running concurrently.

The home team is responsible for resolving any issues and reporting agreed pitch count for all pitchers to lakebluffbaseball@gmail.com.

All reporting must be complete by Noon CT on the day following the game. League commissioners will be monitoring the incoming emails.

The teams with the highest on-time response rates will be rewarded with home field advantage in the first round of the playoffs. In case of tie, a coin flip will be used as tiebreaker.

2. When a ball is hit in foul, live-ball territory, no spectator, coach or offensive player may attempt to catch the ball or otherwise interfere with the defensive player(s) attempt to make a play on the ball. It is the umpire's prerogative to invoke offensive interference and rule the batter out.
3. During any game, only listed coaches are permitted on the playing field.

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4. It is each coach's responsibility to ensure that parents and fans honor the LBYBA commitment to sportsmanship. Failure to do so could result, sequentially, in a warning from the umpire, relegation to the bench, ejection, and forfeiture of the game.
5. Prior to the start of the game, coaches from both teams shall meet with the umpire(s) (wearing a mask) and review ground rules.
1. The home team is responsible for providing at least two (2) newer, sanitized game balls (they do NOT have to be brand new, but must be sanitized).
6. The pre-game warm up period begins 30 minutes before the scheduled game time. If an earlier game has not completed, teams are encouraged to use side grassy areas to prepare for their game and must take an abbreviated on-field warm up. Regardless of the actual warm-up period, teams should equally share the field, with the visiting team taking warm-up on the field first, and games must start at their scheduled time (see Rule B1).
7. The home team will occupy the third base dugout.
8. A coach will be permitted one defensive conference per inning (wearing a mask or maintain a distance of 6 feet). On the second defensive conference per inning, a pitching substitution must be made. The exceptions to this rule occur in case of injury, an offensive conference, or umpire order.

Section D -- Pitching: Daily Pitching Limits

Day limit	
Mustang	Lesser of: 40 pitches or 6 outs/game
Bronco	Lesser of: 50 pitches or 6 outs/game

*A player pitching in a double header is available to pitch to the daily pitch limit in the two games. Rest required will be based on the day's pitch total.

*There are NO weekly pitching limits. Weekly limits are not necessary, given the Rest Requirement rule below.

*If a pitcher reaches the Daily Pitch Limits imposed while facing a batter, the pitcher must be removed and cannot continue to pitch past the Daily Limit.

*In suspended games resumed on another day, the pitchers of record at the time the game was halted may continue to pitch to the extent of their eligibility for that new day (i.e. without regard for the pitch count from the initial portion of the game), provided that the pitcher has observed the required days of rest. However, the 6 out per game limit remains in effect. Any outs pitched during the suspended game would count against that 6 out per game limit.

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*The pitch count to be recorded for a game is the actual number of pitches thrown.

Rest requirements

Mustang		Bronco	
Pitches thrown	Rest Days	Pitches thrown	Rest Days
1-20	None	1-20	None
21-30	1 Day	21-35	1 Day
31-40	2 Days	36-50	2 Days

A CALENDAR DAY is a FULL calendar day, NOT 24 hours.

Example 1: A Mustang pitcher who throws 30 pitches on Tuesday is NOT eligible to pitch again until Thursday.

Example 2: A Bronco pitcher who throws 50 pitches on Tuesday is NOT eligible to pitch again until Friday.

Playoff pitching rules

Playoff daily pitching limits

Day limit

Mustang	Lesser of: 40 pitches or 6 outs/game
Bronco	Lesser of: 50 pitches or 6 outs/game

Playoff Rest requirements

Mustang		Bronco	
Pitches thrown	Rest Days	Pitches thrown	Rest Days
1-20	None	1-25	None
21-40	1 Day	26-50	1 Day

Other pitching rules

1. A pitcher, once removed, may not be reinstated as a pitcher in that game. He/She may play any other position during the game.
2. The strike zone shall be from the knees to the shoulders, with one-ball width on each side of the plate.
3. A pitcher may throw only fastballs, knuckleballs or change-of-pace pitches. Curveballs, sliders or screwballs are illegal pitches. The plate umpire shall declare each illegal pitch,

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even if struck by the batter, a “ball” and give notice to the pitcher and coach. Deliberate or repeated violation of this rule requires the umpire to remove the pitcher.

4. The umpire shall request the removal of any pitcher he/she considers a hazard because of wildness. As a guideline, a coach should consider removing a pitcher who has hit two batters in one inning.
5. No pitcher may wear white or grey long-sleeved shirts; nor may a pitcher wear or have on his/her body any item the umpire deems distracting. A pitcher must wear the team’s regulation hat while on the mound.
6. Every new pitcher is allowed eight warm-up pitches. Each inning thereafter, the returning pitcher is allowed five warm-up pitches unless the umpire deems more pitches are needed.
7. There are no intentional walks.

Section E – Substitution

1. A team will field ten (10) defensive players with the tenth player positioned evenly in the outfield (i.e., lf, lcf, rcf, rf). No outfielder may be positioned directly behind second base or as a rover or short-fielder.
2. Any player present at the start of a game shall not sit out a second inning until every player on team has sat out once. A coach may disregard this rule for disciplinary conditions but must notify the commissioner of his/her action within 24 hours of the game’s conclusion. This rule may also be disregarded in the event of injury or illness. In such event the coach of the injured or sick player shall inform the opposing coach and umpire. The penalty for breaking this rule is forfeiture of the game.
3. All players present at the start of a game shall be listed in a continuous batting order and will bat in that spot whether or not playing a defensive position at his/her time at bat. Once a game has begun, the batting order shall not change unless a player is removed for injury. Any player entering the game once begun shall bat in the last spot(s) of the batting order.
4. With the exception of changes related to the pitcher, players may enter or re-enter the game defensively only at the half-inning when their team takes the field. A pitcher may be replaced at any time by a player from either the bench or the field, provided that the pitcher being replaced has pitched to at least one batter or his/her team has achieved one out, whichever comes first.
5. Substitutions due to illness and/or injury may be made at any time. Reentry is permissible pursuant to the substitution rules of this section.

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6. Should a player leave the game due to injury and/or illness, his/her spot in the batting order is eliminated. The plate umpire may, at his/her discretion, grant an extension to an injured player and permit said player to miss one scheduled at bat and thereafter be reinstated to the line-up. No penalty may be assessed.
7. A team must have eight (8) players from their original roster to start a game. A team may draft up to two (2) players from other Mustang teams to create a full team of ten (10) players before the game begins. A coach may not draft additional players to exceed a ten-player roster. Any drafted player(s) must bat at the bottom of the order and must play defensively in the outfield. Once a game has begun, a team may continue to play with no less than seven (7) players from its original roster. Under no circumstances may a coach draft a player to participate in a playoff game.
8. Should a substitution be made for a runner, the replacement must be the last member of their team to have made an out. If there has been no previous out made by this team in the inning, the replacement must be the last player to have made an out in the previous inning.
9. If the catcher or pitcher for the next inning is on base with two outs, a courtesy runner(s) should be provided (using the provisions described above).

Section F – Base Running

1. No lead-offs. All base runners should be on their attained base once the pitcher has stepped on the pitching rubber in possession of the ball and the catcher is in the catcher's box prepared to receive the delivery of the ball.
2. Base runners are permitted to steal any base, with the exception of home, but may not leave the base until the pitched ball has either been hit or has reached and/or passed the catcher. The umpire shall declare the ball "dead" and the runner will be declared out for attempting to steal before the ball has either been hit or has reached and/or passed the catcher.
3. All base runners must slide directly toward the base they are going to or make an effort to avoid any contact.
4. A runner is out when he/she does not slide (other than at first base) or attempt to avoid contact with a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make a tag play.

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5. IHSA rules pertain to malicious contact. If the base runner intentionally attempts to run into a fielder, the umpire will immediately call the play dead, call the runner out, send all other base runners back to the nearest base and may, as deemed appropriate, eject the player from the game that made the flagrant contact.
6. No head-first sliding is permitted into any base with the exception of a runner returning to a base he/she most recently occupied. The umpire will declare the runner out for violation of this rule.
7. Fake Tagging: IHSA rules pertain. Defensive interference will be penalized per IHSA rules. After the first offense by any fielder in the game the umpire will give a verbal warning to both teams. If either team does it a second time in the game, the player that attempts to deceive the runner will be ejected and the offending team's coach relegated to the bench for the remainder of the game.
8. Soft Toss Rule: No batter may walk with the bases loaded. Once the batter has received four balls, the batter will continue his/her at-bat with "soft tosses" being provided by his/her coach. The coach will provide soft tosses from a kneeling or crouched position. The coach should be positioned in foul territory or as close to foul territory as possible. The soft toss will be underhand. The batter will remain in the batter's box. The batter will have as many attempts as he/she has strikes remaining. A batter must swing and miss in order for a thrown ball to be ruled a strike. Foul balls with less than two strikes will also count as a strike. If the batter swings and misses on the third strike attempt, he/she is declared out. During the "soft toss" attempt, all defensive players must stay in their regular positions; the catcher must wear all protective gear and be positioned in the catcher's box, and all runners must remain on their base(s) until the ball is hit. The pitcher can be stationed immediately behind the pitcher's mound. If a batted soft toss strikes the coach in fair territory the ball shall be ruled "dead". If the batted soft toss strikes a coach in foul territory, the ball shall be ruled a foul ball. The coach shall make all reasonable effort to be in foul territory or return to foul territory as quickly as possible after delivering the soft toss without interfering with the play.
9. With the bases loaded, should a batter be struck with a pitched ball (and have made an attempt to avoid being struck with the pitch), he/she will be awarded first base and all runners shall advance one base.
10. A batter may not attempt to advance on a dropped third strike.
11. Wall At Third Rule: Any runner on or going to third base may not attempt to advance to home on a pitched ball, wild pitch, passed ball or overthrow. No player may score a run except on a play that has begun with a batted ball.

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12. After a base on balls, a runner must wait for the next pitch, or play by the pitcher to try to advance to second.

Section G – Miscellaneous Rules

1. Bunting is permitted. No batter may position him/herself in the bunting position and then draw the bat back and strike at the ball. Penalty: Dead ball, batter is ruled out, both coaches warned and next violator (and coach) will be relegated to the bench for duration of game.
2. The infield fly rule will not be called.
3. There are no balks.
4. A batted ball striking part of a tree overhanging foul lines in fair territory will be declared dead and ruled as “no pitch.” A batted ball striking part of a tree in foul territory will be declared dead and considered a foul ball. A batted ball striking part of a tree overhanging an outfield fence in fair territory shall be declared a homerun.
5. A fair batted ball that rolls or lands beyond the boundary of an outfield fence, is lodged or lost in the fence or shrubbery in fair territory or bounces over a fence shall be considered a ground-rule double.
6. Any ground rules not covered herein shall be agreed upon by both coaches and the lead umpire preceding the start of the game, as long as they are consistent with IHSA rules and the rules of the LBYBA.

Section H - Uniforms and Equipment

1. Each player must wear a complete uniform (unless he/she has been drafted from another team to compete in a house-league game). A complete uniform includes a cap and jersey provided by the LBYBA and white/grey baseball pants. Jersey logo and numbers must be visible when a player is on the playing field. Jackets can be worn only when a player is in the bench area.
2. Only rubber-soled baseball or athletic shoes may be worn during the game. Metal spikes, sandal and open-footed shoes are forbidden.
3. All batters, base runners and on-deck hitters must wear protective helmets. Catchers (and players warming up the pitcher between innings) must wear a catcher’s mask and helmet.

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4. It is the responsibility of any player who plays the catcher position to wear an athletic supporter with a cup.
5. There are no restrictions on bat size, weight or drop.

Section I – Protests

All rules governing the protesting of games will be as described in the IHSA rulebook. All protests will be heard and decided by the Mustang League Rules Committee, composed of the LBYBA President, League Commissioner(s) and the Umpire in Chief.

Section J - Safety Standards and Responsibilities

1. *Inspections.* Any equipment and field condition issues should be raised and addressed immediately. Coaches and umpires should discuss any such issues and determine a proper course of corrective action to allow for safe play. All issues and corrective actions taken should be reported to the League Commissioner. Coaches and umpires have the discretion to remove any item of playing equipment which, in their best judgment, is viewed as a safety hazard. Field issues may be resolved before the game by the umpires and coaches with the assistance of the applicable Park District staff, if necessary.
2. *Weather and Lightning.*
 - a. In the event of severe weather conditions, including high winds, hail or lightning, the focus of all participants should be on safety. The ultimate truth about lightning is that it is unpredictable and cannot be prevented. Therefore, a manager, coach or umpire who feels threatened by an approaching storm should stop play and do their best to get the kids to safety. When in doubt follow this simple rule:

When You Hear It — Clear It

When You See It — Flee It.

- b. No place is absolutely safe from the lightning threat, but some places are safer than others. Large enclosed or substantially constructed buildings are the safest. For many of the participants a place for them to seek shelter may be a fully enclosed metal vehicle with the windows rolled up. If you are stranded in an open area and cannot get to a shelter or a car, put your feet together, crouch down, and put your hands to your ears (to prevent eardrum damage).
- c. Avoid high places and open fields, isolated trees, unprotected gazebos, rain or picnic shelters, dugouts, flagpoles, light poles, bleachers (metal or wood), metal fences and water.

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- d. Coaches and umpires are expected to work in unison to use their best judgment to determine if field conditions are acceptable for play. This includes assessment of field conditions following a weather event.
3. *First Aid Kits.* Each field based in Lake Bluff and used by LBYBA has an equipment box behind the backstop that has first aid kits with basic supplies, including ice packs. Coaches and umpires should monitor these supplies and report any needs to the League Commissioner promptly.