



Minors Baseball - In House Rules

The official playing rules, with the exceptions and variations contained below, shall be "Cal Ripken/Babe Ruth Official Rules" wholly revised, as released through the office of the Cal Ripken/Babe Ruth League.

TEAMS

- A. Teams shall consist of at most 12 players or nine players.
- B. For league purposes, age means "league age," which is the age attained by a player as of April 30th of the season in question.

EQUIPMENT

- A. Leather-covered baseballs manufactured to appropriate specifications set forth by Cal Ripken Baseball will be used for league and tournament play. The umpires will provide two new baseballs for each game. If there is no Umpire, the game balls will be in Concessions.
- B. Rubber-soled tennis shoes or rubber-cleated shoes are permitted. Metal cleats are not allowed.
- C. Batting helmets must be worn by the batter, players in the on-deck circle, and all base runners. They must also be NOSCAE-approved. In this league, face masks/jacquard are required.
- D. Catchers are required to wear a cup and proper protective equipment, including a mask with a throat guard, chest protector, shin guards, and protective headgear that protects the top of the head when catching behind the plate.
- E. It is recommended that coaches make every effort to encourage all male players to wear athletic supporters or a protective cup.
- F. Each player must be dressed in full uniform (hat, pants, numbered shirt). Shirts must be tucked into pants, and hats must face forward. The umpire is to send a player back to the dugout prior to the start of an inning in the event any adjustment(s) to the uniform must be made. Please note that this will take away warm-up time, including a pitcher/catcher, during either the beginning or middle of an inning.

THE FIELD

- A. The field dimensions should be set up so that the distance between bases is 60' and the pitcher's rubber is 46' from the back of the home plate.
- B. The home team puts out the bases before the game and gets the field in shape for play.
- C. After the game, the home team is responsible for putting up the bases and raking in the "holes" around the bases, pitcher's mound, and home plate area.
- D. The home team is responsible for turning off the lights after the game and locking and securing the press box.
- E. Both teams are responsible for removing all trash from their respective dugouts after the game.
- F. Turn on the field lights 15 minutes before dark. Never turn off the main breaker in the electrical panels. Use the individual breaks to turn off and on the lights.

BATTING

- A. The entire roster of players present for the game shall bat in rotation. Players arriving after the start of the game will be added to the end of the batting order.
- B. Bats:
 - 1. Bats must be USA Baseball certified with a factory "stamp." 2 ¼ and 2 ⅝ barrel sizes are allowed.
 - 2. Drop-3 BBCOR Certified Bats with factory "stamp" are allowed.
 - 3. In the event of a bat rule change by Cal Ripken during mid-season, the ELO Baseball Commissioner and Minor League President will decide before any exclusion of a particular bat goes into effect.
 - 4. USSSA bats are NOT allowed in practice or game settings. Should an illegal bat be used in a game, the batter will be called out and the bat will be removed from the dugout.
- C. At most, one (1) player is allowed in the on-deck circle.
- D. Bunting is allowed; however, once a batter gets into a bunting position/stance, the batter can either bunt, attempt to bunt, or pull back and take the pitch. The player can **NOT** pull back out of the bunting stance, lean back, and swing away. If the player does pull back and swing away, the batter is automatically out (no slashing).
- E. The dropped third-strike rule will **NOT** be in effect, regardless of the number of outs.

- F. The infield fly rule is effective with fewer than two outs. **Definition of Rule** - Since the purpose is to prevent double plays, the rule applies only when there are fewer than two outs and there is a force play at third base (i.e., there are runners at first and second base, or the bases are loaded). In these situations, if a fly ball is in fair play, and in the umpire's judgment, it is catchable by an infielder with ordinary effort, the umpire shall call "infield fly," and the batter will be out regardless of whether the ball is caught in flight. Umpires typically call out, "Infield Fly, the batter is out," or raise one arm to signal everyone that the rule is in effect.

If "infield fly" is called and the fly ball is caught, it is treated exactly as an ordinary fly ball; the batter is out, there is no force, and the runners must tag up. On the other hand, if an "infield fly" is called and the ball lands fair without being caught, the batter is still out, and there is no force, but the runners are not required to tag up. In either case, the ball is live, and the runners may advance at the risk of being doubled off if the ball is caught. **Foul balls** - If the fly ball is near the foul lines, the umpire will declare "infield fly, if fair." If the ball is missed and ends up foul (including if it lands fair and then rolls foul), the infield fly is canceled, and the play is treated as an ordinary foul ball. In contrast, if the ball lands foul and then rolls fair, infield fly takes effect, and the batter is out. **"Ordinary effort"** - Any fair fly ball that could have been caught by an infielder with ordinary effort (Minor Skill Level taken into account) is covered by the rule regardless of where the ball is caught. An infielder does not need to catch the ball, nor must it be caught in the infield. For example, if an infielder retreats to the outfield to catch a fly ball with ordinary effort, the infield Fly Rule may be invoked, even if an outfielder ultimately caught the ball and even if no infielder attempted to make a play on the ball. Similarly, the rule would also cover a fly ball within the infield that could have been caught by an infielder with ordinary effort but is caught by an outfielder.

- G. The batter must keep one foot in the batter's box at all times to speed up play unless granted time by the umpire.

BASE RUNNING

- A. Players are allowed to steal all bases. Base Runner(s) must always maintain physical contact with the base (1st, 2nd, and 3rd). Once the pitched ball reaches the catcher's initial position by hitting the glove or using a "passed ball," the runner(s) can steal/advance at their own risk. Runners leaving/crossing the line before the ball reaches the catcher's position may be called out, as may an umpire's judgment.
- B. If the base runner stops the motion of stealing, they must return to the base they occupied if the exchange between the catcher and pitcher is clean. In an error during the exchange, the base runner can advance at their own risk.

- C. On a walk, the batter may only advance to first base unless a.) the ball thrown from the pitcher to the catcher is not a clean play (e.g., overthrown), or b.) the fielder throws the ball to any position other than the pitcher, who must be on the pitching mound.
- D. Once the pitcher is around the area of the rubber (both feet on the mound, umpires' judgment), a runner cannot steal until either the pitch crosses the plate, a pick-off attempt (at the defense's own risk) is made at any base, or the pitcher steps off the rubber and leaves the mound.
- E. On a catcher's passed ball, baserunner(s) can steal one base at their own risk. If an additional error is made on the play, then baserunner(s) may continue to advance at their peril (e.g., overthrow to the pitcher or a base).
- F. **Delayed Steals:** Delayed steals or intentionally baiting or attempting to draw a throw to advance another runner by the **back runner(s)** are not allowed; examples of this are as follows:

The back base runner intentionally runs only a few steps to bait a throw from the catcher and stops. **However, this is a judgment call by the umpire, and the "baiting" must be noticeable.** It should not just be an honest mistake by a young player who misunderstood a "steal" sign, took a few steps toward the next base, turned around, and returned. Nor should it be a player who instinctively is almost at the next base when he sees the ball in the baseman's glove (a sure out), turns, and goes back in the other direction. If the umpire deems a delayed steal has occurred, all runners will be made to return to the previous base. It will be considered a dead ball once it is under control; however, until it is under control, the runners will run at their peril.

- G. A courtesy runner for the catcher is permitted and recommended when two (2) outs are in the inning and the catcher is on base. The player who made the 2nd out of the inning is the only qualified courtesy runner. If the catcher is relieved as the runner, that player must be ready in advance to take the field at the start of the next inning.
- H. The runner must slide if a play is made at the Home plate. Running over the catcher at home plate is not allowed and will result in the player being called out. If the umpire determines that a runner intentionally collided with the catcher with intent to harm, the player will be ejected from the game.
- I. Runners are awarded one base on any ball that goes under a fence, under the backstop, in a dugout, etc. The umpire sets the field ground rules at the coaches meeting at the beginning of each game.
- J. Sliding is allowed with an emphasis on safety. Head-first slides are not allowed except for a runner diving back to a base that that player has safely reached. If a runner attempts a head-first slide into a base that has not yet been reached safely by that runner, the runner will be called out.

FIELDING

- A. Free substitution is allowed throughout the game.
- B. Infield players cannot interfere with base runners by lining up defensively in the base path(s). Additionally, defensive players shall not stand on bases while the ball is in play. The umpire will determine base runner interference and a base will be awarded to the runner.
- C. At this age group, coaches are encouraged to allow kids to play various positions throughout the season, as it is too early to peg them as pure infielders or outfielders. At the same time, use good judgement and keep players' safety in mind by not playing them in a position where they are likely to get injured.
- D. A player is NOT required to sit out during the game. A player sitting twice before another player sits out once is allowed.
- E. A player may not stay on the bench for more than one consecutive inning while playing the field. Every player on the team does not have to sit out an inning. (Exceptions are disciplinary actions or game ejection penalty). Willful violation of this rule will result in a forfeit and Head Coach Suspension. Any disciplinary, injury, or illness must be reported to the opposing head coach and umpire.

PITCHING

- A. Pitching Distance: 46'
- B. Balks will not be enforced. However, if a balk materially impacts the batter's at bat (judgment call by the umpire), the umpire shall call "time," and the play is considered dead.
- C. In the event of an intentional walk, the coaching staff may indicate to the umpire that no pitch has been thrown (following the MLB rule). However, five pitches shall be added to the pitch count for an intentional walk (to avoid intentionally walking a batter to get further down the line-up without incurring additional pitches to the pitch count).
- D. For the following pitching rules, as soon as a pitcher delivers one pitch to a batter, the pitcher is deemed to have pitched one inning.
- E. **Same Day Limit (See Double Header Limit Below):** The maximum number of pitches a pitcher can throw in a single game is 65. If the 65th pitch occurs in the middle of an inning, the pitcher must be replaced. However, the pitcher can finish pitching to an individual batter if the 65th pitch is delivered in the middle of a count. NO EXCEPTIONS. When the pitcher exits the game, the pitch count for that game will be 65 pitches.

- F. **Doubleheader Limit:** A pitcher may pitch up to 80 pitches daily. However, if a pitcher faces a new batter before 80 pitches, he may complete the whole time at bat (e.g., a pitch count may exceed 80 pitches, as long as a new batter was faced with 79 pitches or less). A pitcher can pitch on a consecutive day only if they pitch 40 or less in the first game and may pitch up to 40 for game 2 (80 total pitches for the two games).
- G. **Next Day Limit:** A pitcher can pitch on consecutive days only if they pitch a total of 45 or less on the first day and may pitch up to 45 for day 2 (90 total pitches for the two days).
- H. **Weekly Limit:** A pitcher may pitch up to 125 pitches during seven days beginning at 12:01 AM Monday and ending at 11:59 PM Sunday.
- I. **Rest Rule:** If a pitcher pitches 40-65 pitches, that player must rest 40 hours. (For example, if a pitcher throws 40+ pitches in a game on a Monday, that pitcher is eligible to pitch again on Wednesday.) The pitcher does not need to be the starting pitcher to be subject to the rest rule.
- J. A pitcher cannot return to pitch - Any pitcher withdrawn from the lineup or substituted to a different position may not return to the pitch.
- K. **Ambidextrous Pitching:** If a pitcher changes pitching arms in the middle of an inning, they are MANDATED to change to the appropriate glove for safety. This change can only occur at the start of an at-bat, and the pitcher must pitch with that hand for the duration of that at-bat. This change will constitute a coach mound visit as defined in the Pitching section Rule L.
- L. **Coach Mound Visits:** A pitcher must be removed from the pitching position if a coach makes two visits to the mound in one inning or after the third visit to that pitcher of a game.
- M. **Pitch Count:** Both teams are responsible for determining the pitch count. It is recommended that the pitch count be confirmed between both teams each time the side is retired (middle and bottom of the inning(s)). If there is a conflict, the two numbers should be averaged to be enforced by the umpire.
- N. If three batters are hit in any one inning or 4 in a game by the same pitcher, the pitcher must come out of the game or be substituted to a different position.

GENERAL RULES

- A. A team must have eight players to play an official game. However, an "out" will be recorded each inning when the missing 9th batter is due up. If a team starts a game with eight players, and a player gets hurt...they may finish the game

with fewer than eight players but will record outs for the missing players below nine. If a team starts with ten and a player has to leave early (for any reason, personal, injury, or otherwise), the vacated spot is **NOT** counted as an automatic out. **The option for the opposing team to allow the missing players not to count as an out is not permitted. The out for the missing player will stand.**

- B. A team failing to field at least eight uniformed players within 15 minutes of the scheduled starting time of a game shall forfeit. A forfeit shall be recorded as a score of 6-0 (one run per inning). A scrimmage game should be played if a team has less than eight players. Substitute players may be allowed, and the game will be "official" if both coaches agree in advance of the game to get to 8 players. **Substitute players are not allowed in the postseason. The option for the opposing team to allow the missing players not to count as an out is not permitted. The out for the missing player will stand.**

Fall 2024 Season Only—Substitute players will be allowed in the postseason. The team can only add a substitute player if it has less than nine players. All other substitute rules apply.

- C. Substitute players are any player registered in the ELOC baseball program for the season in question in the Rookie League if the coach and parents feel he has the skill set to play up. At most, two (2) substitute players are allowed.
- D. Substitute players can only play outfield positions and bat last in the line-up. A player assigned to the team cannot sit out in the innings while substitute players play.
- E. Regulation games shall be six (6) innings in duration. An official game is four (4) innings (3.5 if the home team is ahead).
- F. The time permitted during an inning change-over is one minute. Umpires will be asked to enforce this rule. Coaches are asked to please have their teams ready to take the field at the end of each half-inning. If a team violates this rule, the umpire will issue one warning. On the second occurrence, the umpire will notify the coach that he will begin to call balls on the batter if the defensive team is in violation or strikes on the batter if the offensive team is in violation.

G. The Mercy Rule is in effect for all regular season and playoff games.

1. Three (3) innings if a team is ahead by twelve (12) runs or more.
2. Four (4) innings if a team is ahead by ten (10) runs or more.
3. After (5) innings, if a team is ahead by eight (8) runs or more.

Once the mercy rule limit has been reached at the end of the inning, the team with more than the stated number of runs will be deemed the game's win.

Championship Game – No time limit, and a full six innings will be played, but there will be a Mercy Rule.

1. Four (4) innings if a team is ahead by twelve (12) runs or more.
2. After (5) innings, if a team is ahead by ten (10) runs or more.

B. For game time, no new inning shall be started after 1 hour and 30 minutes of play on weekdays and 1 hour and 45 minutes of the game on weekends. Innings that began before the time limit will be played entirely if necessary and conditions permit. If the inning is called for any reason, the score will revert to that of the last full inning completed. We will play a full six-inning game in the Championship Game with no time limit. **For games that are double stacked (6 pm and a 7:30 pm game on the same field) No new inning will begin after 1:20 and the game will drop dead at 1:40. Should the game come to a drop dead, the score will revert to the score of the last full inning.**

C. The home team will be asked to provide a scorekeeper. The scorekeeper will be given a batting order for both teams and is responsible for counting runs scored per inning and for the game. The scorekeeper is also responsible for recording the official start time of the game. At the end of the season, all Scorebooks will be turned in to the League President.

D. Suppose the game remains tied after completing six innings or within the 1:45 minute rule. In that case, the following procedures will be implemented during extra innings: Each team will begin the extra inning (and any subsequent necessary extra innings) with a player on second, no outs. The player in second place will be the last out from the previous inning, and the batting order will continue from the point of the next consecutive batter in the order. The batting order has not been restarted and continues from the previous inning. This is not sudden death, as each team has an opportunity to score in its half-inning. Due to game times and play during school nights, only one tiebreaker inning will be allowed. Any game not decided under the tiebreaker rule within one additional innings is declared a tie. In the playoffs, in the event of a tie after the first extra inning, the above tiebreaker rule will continue in each subsequent inning until a winner is determined.

E. Coaches or adult leaders may not use tobacco products, vaping, alcohol, or illegal drugs in any form in the dugout or on the playing field. This rule also applies to all parents and spectators. Coaches are asked to help police this activity for their respective fans.

PROTEST

- A. The proper procedure to protest a call is to call "time" and for the umpire to grant you time. You may then speak with the umpire in a controlled and subdued manner. You have the right to an explanation of a call or rule. However, you must understand and respect that much of baseball rules is left to the sole judgment of the umpire. **Although you may plead your case, you must accept their decision as final.** Any rule violations should be discussed with the umpire and the opposing head coach for clarification and correction. However, games will not be played under protection. Only the head coaches (or the designated coach) shall enter the conversation/field of play during a time-out. All other coaches are to return to their dugout. If the group cannot agree with the ruling, the umpire will stop the clock and discuss the ruling with the age coordinator to go to a final decision before play is resumed.

WEATHER

- A. If lightning is spotted during a game, the wait time is 30 mins from the last strike.
- B. If the game is delayed due to weather and four innings (3.5 innings if the home team is ahead) have been completed, the game is official, **NO EXCEPTIONS.** It will be rescheduled if the game has not reached four completed innings. The game will begin from where it ended and is "as played" from the original date. Please have the umpire confirm and initial that the home scorebook is accurate as of the time of postponement. Pitchers cannot re-enter the re-started game.
- C. Once the schedule is implemented, it is considered "final." Other than weather or another material event, a game will not be canceled or postponed. Note that any "makeup" may be played within 24 hours of the postponement.

UMPIRES

- A. Umpires are to be treated with the utmost respect at all times. Head coaches may inquire about a call made by an umpire. It is expected to ask for time and then approach the umpire in a controlled manner. It is important to remember that you can only challenge plays based on the interpretation of a rule and not on judgment calls. You are entitled to plead your case but accept that the umpire's decision is final.
- B. Coaches are not allowed to argue balls and strikes.

GENERAL CONDUCT

- A. A player who intentionally throws a bat, glove, or helmet angrily will be given a firm warning. Future incidents may result in being ejected from the game or future games.
- B. A player who throws a bat accidentally will be given a warning. The second offense will result in an out.
- C. Any coach/player/parent who is thrown out of a game, regardless of reason, will receive an automatic one (1) game suspension. The suspended coach/player/parent is forbidden from attending the next game as a participant or a spectator. In addition, the matter will be referred to the league coordinator, commissioner of baseball, and director of baseball for review and possible further sanctions.
- D. Unsportsmanlike conduct, including profanity, from players, coaches, parents, or spectators will not be tolerated and may result in ejection or game suspension.
- E. Negative chatter (swing batter), chanting, and taunting by anyone on or near the field will not be permitted. Dugout chatter should stop once the pitcher is on the rubber.

COACHES

- A. It is recommended that all coaches remain in the dugout during defensive play.
- B. Only two coaches are allowed on the field during offensive play: the third base coach and the first base coach. Only three coaches are allowed in the dugout or on the field at any given time during the game. Coaches must be in uniform to be in the dugout.

Mike Folk
ELOC Minors Director
Revised on 8/19/2024.