

WAA COMPETITIVE BASEBALL MAJORS BASEBALL RULES 2026

Wheatland Athletic Association Philosophy

Welcome to the Competitive Baseball Program of Wheatland Athletic Association! WAA is a non-profit organization that relies on parent volunteers and we thank you for your time in helping the kids of our program! The WAA Competitive Baseball Program was designed to prepare our youth for baseball competition in an atmosphere of fun and good sportsmanship. Additionally, WAA will strive to provide a safe and friendly environment for all players, volunteers, parents, and spectators.

A. Player Safety

- Do not allow players to throw a ball or swing a bat without adult supervision.
- Keep players in the dugout when not playing to avoid foul balls or overthrown balls.
- Helmets must be worn while batting, in the on-deck circle, and baserunning.
- The on-deck batter (with helmet on) must always be BEHIND the batter and is the only player allowed to pick up a bat near home plate. Do not allow other players to leave the dugout to pick up loose equipment during game play. No youth "bat boys/girls" are allowed.
- Head first slides at bases are highly discouraged. Head first slides at home plate are prohibited.
- **Pitchers warming up outside the field of play must throw to an adult/coach only.**
- Players warming up pitchers on the field in between innings must be in FULL protective gear.
- Players are not allowed to stand in the opening of the dugout during game play; they must remain behind the fence.
- Only players and coaches are allowed in the dugouts. Family and friends should refrain from entering the dugout and surrounding area.
- Players are not allowed to coach bases. Only adults 18+ may coach bases.

B. General

- The most current issue of the National Federation of State High School Association Playing Rules will prevail except as modified or restated herein. You can find these rules on-line at <http://www.nfhs.org/activities-sports/baseball/>.
- Coaches may not perform any field maintenance under any circumstances, including the application of a drying agent.
- Absolutely no live batting practice before games. Heavy balls or wiffle balls can be used for pre-game hitting in the outfield only. Ground balls can only be taken behind second base or along the first and third baselines (in foul territory) before games; use the outfield or other open space for all other pregame warmups. Please stay off the infield prior to games.
- Conducting any sort of batting activity (flips, tee, etc.) into any fence structure is strictly prohibited.
- The Fox Valley Park District is responsible for preparing the field prior to the first game of the day which includes setting the bases, dragging the field, and painting foul lines and batter's boxes. The field should be ready for game play. If the field is not prepped for the first game please report to WAA. Report to WAA any field issues or missing equipment.
- Pitching rubber and bases need be put back into the equipment box prior to leaving the field after the last game of the day.
- All debris in dugout area and bleacher area must be picked up. Please leave the field cleaner than you found it.

C. Field Dimensions

- The diamond will have seventy (70) foot base lines. Second base will be located 99 from home plate to the back of 2nd base. The pitching rubber will be forty-eight (48) feet from home plate.

D. Equipment & Uniforms

- WAA issued team shirts, hats and socks must be worn by all players while on the field. Players must provide their own baseball pants (color TBD by the coach) to be worn at all times while on the field. Players out of uniform will not be permitted to play.
- Each player must furnish their own glove, bat, and helmet.
- All male players must wear a protective metal fiber or plastic cup.
- Catchers must wear a chest protector, shin guards, and a catcher's helmet AND mask. Catchers under the age of 18 who are warming up pitchers **must** be in full protective gear at all times.
- The catcher must use a catcher's mitt. Left-handed catchers' mitts are available to pick up at the WAA office.
- NOCSAE approved batting helmets must be worn by the batter, on deck batter, all base runners.
- Only shoes with molded/rubber cleats are permissible; shoes with metal spikes or cleats are not permitted.
- **Legal bats must comply with the following rules, to be enforced and managed by coaches and parents alike:**
 - **2 5/8" barrels in diameter MUST have a USA stamp.**
 - Non-USA stamped bats up to 2 1/4" in diameter are allowed.
 - No bats with barrels larger than 2 5/8" are allowed.
 - No USSSA bats are allowed.
 - No wood bats are allowed.

Failure to follow the rules written here-within upon an in-game appeal by opposing coach will result in an immediate out and all players return to their prior positions (first offense in a given game). The second offense in same game will result in the head coach and any player using an illegal bat being ejected from the game.

These bat rules also apply in the Home Run Derby and during the All-Star Game.

- Two (2) regulation sized game balls will be supplied by the home team. WAA will provide game balls.
- All WAA issued equipment must be returned to the WAA office within 14 days after the last game of the season. We are requesting practice baseballs be returned if possible. If the same head coach is coaching fall baseball, then equipment does not need to be returned until after the fall season. Contact the WAA office to inform us if this is the case so we can track the equipment.

E. Game

- All games will be played per the schedule. Games are seven (7) innings unless extended because of a tie score or the mercy rule is reached.
- There is no run limit per inning.
- The home team will always occupy the 3rd base side of the field.
- The home team will keep the official score. At the completion of each inning the home team will review the score with the visiting team head coach. The **home** team head coach will email the score to the Competitive Baseball Director on the next business day or sooner.

➤ GAME CONCLUSIONS:

- It shall be a complete game if the 2-hour time limit has been reached.
- **If after five (5) innings or four and one-half innings if the Home team is ahead, a team has a lead of twelve (12) runs or more, the game shall be terminated with the team ahead declared the winner (MERCY RULE).**
- If a game is called for any reason. i.e. weather, darkness
 - It shall be considered a complete game if five (5) innings have been completed (if the mercy rule hasn't been reached) or if the home team is ahead after the completion of the visiting teams at bat in the fifth inning.
 - Before it is a complete game (5 innings or mercy rule), it shall be considered a suspended game and shall be resumed from the point of curtailment at the time scheduled by the WAA

office.

- In an uncompleted inning, after having reached complete game length and the visiting team ties the score or takes the lead in the uncompleted inning, and the home team is not provided the opportunity to bat in its half of the inning, the score will revert to the prior completed inning.
 - If the prior completed inning equates to a completed game, the game will be considered complete and winner acknowledged based on the resulting score.
 - If the prior completed inning does not equate to a completed game, the game shall be considered a suspended game and shall be continued from the point of curtailment at the time scheduled by the WAA office.
- All games that are tied once it is a complete game, and time, weather or other circumstances do not allow additional innings to be played, the game will be recorded as a tie in the standings and will not be completed.

➤ SUSPENDED GAMES:

- Rescheduling of suspended games must be arranged through the WAA office. The league will determine the time and place.
- Suspended games will be resumed from the point of suspension. The only exception is if a game is called with less than one complete inning played. In this case it will be declared no game and all records will be disregarded.
- In the event of a suspended game, lineup modifications from original game can be made based on player availability at no penalty.

➤ TIME LIMITS:

- **ALL games will have a maximum 2-hour time limit. NO new inning may start after 1:50 minutes of the first warm up pitch or start of the game as determined by the umpire.**
- During the regular season, no inning of a game may start, for any reason, within 10 minutes of the scheduled starting time of the next game on that field. If an inning starts before the 10-minute window closes, the inning should be completed in full OR until the 2-hour time limit is reached.
- No new inning will begin after 8:15pm on a field without lights or after 9:50 pm on a field with lights.
- Play Off Games Only- Must be a regulation game of 7 innings unless the mercy rule has been enforced or the maximum time limit of **2 hours** is reached. No new inning may start after **1 hour, 50-minute** from the official start of the game. If the game is tied after regulation, extra innings will be played until a winner is declared. Playoff games cannot end in a tie; play must continue until a winner is declared. Note -the championship game has no time limit for regulation play.

➤ TIE BREAKER

- In the event of a tie game at the end of 7 innings, and time permits it, the game will continue with extra innings.
- Each team will start their offensive half of the inning with a runner on second base. This person will be the player that made the last out of the previous inning.
- Each inning will start with 1 out and all batters will start the at bat with a 1 ball and 1 strike count.
- The team to score the most runs after the inning is completed will be declared the winner.

- If the score is still tied after an extra inning the teams will repeat the above procedure until a winner is declared OR the 2-hour time limit is reached. If the game is tied once the 2-hour time limit is reached the game will be counted as a tie. If the home team can't finish their at bat due to the time limit the score will revert back the previous inning and will counted as a tie.
- Coaches and/or umpires may NOT elect to continue playing for any reason after a game is considered completed.

F. Positions & Playing Time

- A legal team can be represented by a minimum of 8 players. If the team is playing with 8 the batting order will be as such and no out will be recorded at the "ninth" batter.
- If a team knows it will only have 8 players, they can request a 9th player as a sub from another Minors or Majors team. Subs approved by the Competitive Baseball Director allow for legal game to be played. Rules for playing subs are outlined in section L.
- If either team has less than 8 players present at the field five minutes after the originally scheduled start time for the game, it will be an automatic forfeit. A practice game can be played at that point.
- A maximum of 9 players can be on the field at a time.
- **Each player must play a minimum of five (5) innings in the field and a minimum of two different positions (unless the game ends in a mercy rule or time limit where less than seven (7) innings are played).**
- Except for the catcher, no player may play more than four (4) innings at the same position.
- Each player must bat as scheduled within the line-up prepared before the game.

G. Batting

- Each player on the team will be given a position in the batting order (as prepared in the lineup prior to the game) and must bat in that position. If a player is removed from the lineup due to injury/sickness, the batting order is reduced by one player and no out is recorded when it is his/her turn at bat. **If a player is removed from the lineup for any reason other than injury/sickness an out WILL be recorded each time their spot in the batting order is up.** Both head coaches must agree on the reason the player is removed from the lineup before continuing the game. A player removed from the batting order for any reason can't be reinstated in the order.
- The continuous batting order shall consist of all players present at the beginning of the game. Players arriving late shall be inserted at the bottom of the order and shall bat the first time that position comes up if the player is present. It is acceptable to insert a late arriving player at any time during the game but he must bat last in the order. The opposing head coach must be notified immediately when a player arrives and is inserted into the batting order.
- Bunting is allowed. A batter is out if he/she bunts a foul on third strike.
- Fake bunting and then attempting a full swing at a pitch is NOT allowed.
 - First offense is a warning for the team; second offense is an automatic out.
- There will be one thrown bat warning per team per game. The next batter determined to have thrown his/her bat will be declared out. The umpire's decision is final and may not be disputed.
- The dropped 3rd strike rule is in effect.
- Only 3 players should have a bat in their hand: the batter, the on-deck hitter and the player in the hole. The on-deck hitter will position himself to the BACK of the batter.
- Intentional walks are allowed. Notify the umpire the intent of walking the batter. No pitches need to be thrown.

H. Base Running

- The infield fly rule WILL be in effect.

- a. STEALING:
 - Runners are allowed to steal all bases. Lead-offs are allowed.
- b. ADVANCING BASES:
 - Runners may continue to advance on wild throws resulting from a batted ball that stay within play in fair or foul territory.
- c. SLIDING
 - Players must slide into a base where a play is being made. If a runner fails to slide into the base and impedes a fielder's ability to catch a thrown ball and/or make a play with the ball (i.e., running over the catcher/fielder) on the runner, the runner will be called out.
 - Base runners must avoid contact by sliding or giving themselves up.
 - Base runners making unnecessary contact may be called out at the discretion of the umpire.
 - A player will be ejected if he/she has deliberately attempted to cause injury to an opposing player.
 - Sliding at home is required while a play is being made that involves the catcher or any other player covering home plate. A baserunner that does not slide at home where any defensive player is making a play on the runner will be called out. Headfirst slides at home are not allowed.
- d. COURTESY RUNNERS
 - Courtesy runners can be used for the catcher at any time at the coach's discretion. However, a courtesy runner is mandatory with two outs to run in place of the catcher in the next inning.
 - The runner shall be the player who made the most recent out of the current inning or last out of the prior inning. If no outs have been recorded in the first inning and an out is then made by the pitcher or catcher the courtesy runner should be a batter further down in the order.
 - Other than an injury, these are the only circumstances in which a courtesy runner may be used during a game.

I. Pitching

- A player, once removed as a pitcher, may not pitch again in the same game.
- **Warm up pitches between innings will be limited; same pitcher from previous inning (4-5 pitches), new pitcher (5-6 pitches).**
- Pitchers must be replaced if they hit 3 batters in a game.
- Balks will be called. Each pitcher will receive one balk warning.
- Pitchers are not allowed to throw curve balls or sliders. Concerned coaches should approach the umpire and ask for his oversight moving forward, but only the umpire will deem a ball a breaking pitch.
 - First team offense: warning to offending coach and team.
 - Second team offense: batter awarded first base and runners advance if forced, and the pitcher will be removed from the mound.
 - Third team offense: game is forfeited by offending team and the opposing team will record a win. Head coach will be suspended from coaching for one game. Any subsequent offenses may result in the head coach permanently suspended from coaching WAA teams.
- REGULAR SEASON:
 - Pitch counts will be used for determining how long a pitcher may pitch in a game, as well as determining the amount of rest they will need prior to pitching in another game.

- **Pitch Counts for a game: maximum number of pitches a player can throw in one game is 70.**
- A pitcher will be allowed to complete pitching to a batter if they reach their pitch count during that batter's existing at bat.
- Opposing coaches should cross check pitch counts after each inning of play to help avoid any potential conflicts. Mandatory recovery time:
 - Up to 20 pitches = No Rest Required
 - 21-35 pitches = 1 Day Rest
 - 36-50 pitches = 2 Days Rest
 - 51-65 pitches = 3 Days Rest
 - Over 66 pitches = 4 Days Rest
- Mandatory recovery time is in CALENDAR DAYS. The day the player pitches does NOT start the clock. Example - Player throws 36 pitches on Saturday; player can pitch again on Tuesday. Sunday and Monday represent two (2) calendar days.
- Abusing pitch count and/or recovery time rules will result in forfeiture of game in which offense occurred and the ineligibility of that pitcher in their next pitching eligible game once rest required is achieved.
- For any double headers, pitchers can pitch a maximum of 70 pitches in a day and may pitch in both games provided he/she does not meet the maximum number of pitches in game one.
- For suspended games, pitching rules will remain in force under all situations, for both regular season and playoff games.
- A pitcher that reached their pitch limit in the originally scheduled game - before it was suspended will not be allowed to pitch in the continuation of the suspended game when it is re-scheduled.
- If a pitcher was in the game at time of game suspension, that pitcher is only eligible to pitch a maximum of 70 pitches (which includes his/her pitching record from the first game).

POST SEASON:

- Pitching restrictions will change for the post season tournament. **Pitchers are allowed to pitch 5 innings maximum for tournament. Maximum 70 pitches per day.** Player may pitch in both games provided he/she does not meet the maximum number of pitches in game one.
- During the post season tournament, if a pitcher enters a game and is unable to record an out for whatever reason, that pitcher will still be charged with pitching an inning and will lose one out of their eligible innings for the tournament.

J. Coaching

- The batting team is allowed a first base coach, third base coach, and must be adults 18+. Players are not allowed to coach bases. All coaches are responsible for maintaining order on the sideline and keeping equipment and players in the dugout.
- Only the head coach may speak with the umpire.
- **All coaching must be positive and instructional, not vulgar, critical or demeaning. Coaches who are abusive to players, fans, umpires, or opposing coaches must be reported to the Minors Director and the WAA Office. Coaches should refrain from continually criticizing umpire decisions and balls/strikes calls. Continued abusive behavior will not be tolerated. Profanity during games or practices is prohibited.**
- Coaches are not permitted to smoke, use alcohol, chew tobacco, or be under the influence of any substance during games or practices.
- Coaches are expected to wear appropriate coaching attire that is void of sayings, logos, etc. that others may find offensive.
- **ALL coaches must abide by the WAA Coaches Code of Conduct or jeopardize your position as a coach. This is very important to the organization and violations will be dealt with accordingly, including possible dismissal from your position as a coach. We appreciate you taking the time to volunteer as a coach and we want to make sure that all the children have a safe and supportive environment in which to participate in our programs.**
-

K. Umpires

- One umpire will be scheduled and provided by Official Finders via WAA.
- All umpire decisions which involve judgment is final.
- If there is a reasonable doubt that the umpire's decision may conflict with the rules, a coach may appeal the decision to the umpire in a professional manner and ask that a correct ruling be made.
- The umpire's decision is final. THERE WILL BE NO PROTESTS.
- Umpires have the authority to remove a coach, player, or attendee from the field/facility due to violations of the WAA Code of Conduct.
- If league umpire is not present, each team will furnish one adult umpire. The field and plate umpire will alternate position after three full innings. In this situation the plate umpire will call balls and strikes from behind the pitcher.
- **If the umpire is late or a "no show", please do not call the WAA office or Minors director. Call Official Finders @ 1-331-276-8548 or 1-630-779-2497.**

L. Substitute Players

- If a Majors team knows they will only have 8 or fewer players, they will contact the Competitive Baseball Director, preferably 48 hours in advance of the scheduled game (NOTE: having 9 players does not constitute the need for a substitute - you can play with 9).
 - A coach may secure his own sub but ONLY from a WAA non-travel team (Minors or Majors) and all subs must be approved by the Majors director PRIOR to the game. The coach that secures a substitute must contact the opposing coach informing him as such.
 - The Competitive Baseball Director will approve the coach of the team needing a substitute to reach out to another Majors or Minors coach in search of an interested substitute. A player can only sub one time per season!
- In either case, the rules for using subs for a Majors game are:
 - They bat last in the batting order.
 - They cannot pitch or play catcher.
 - The player must wear his existing team uniform.
 - All other playing time rules apply.
 - The game is a legal and sanctioned regular season game.

In the event a substitute player is no longer needed to play, the Majors coach will contact the Competitive Baseball Director immediately to inform him, so the substitute player can be notified. If the substitute player arrives at the game after failing to be informed, they are no longer needed, they will be allowed to play in the game regardless of the number of Majors players present for the team that originally requested the substitute player.

M. Canceling Games

- **Rainouts** – In the event of inclement weather OR poor field conditions, **game or field cancellations will be communicated via our website at www.waasports.org** as well as the **Rainout Line app**. Please go to the home page of the WAA website. www.waasports.org. Under "Quick Links", the first link is the "**WAA Rainout Line**". Click on the link and it will take you to all the field locations WAA is using. Scroll through the list to find your field. Green means "It's a GO, Yellow means "pending", Red means "Cancelled".
Our goal is to update the status of game fields by **4:30 pm** weekdays, **9am** on Saturday or as soon as we know about the playability of the field. **Please do not call the WAA office or Minors director as determinations are made by the Fox Valley Park District whom maintains the fields at the Eola Community Center.** We update the status as soon as FVPD crews contact us. Typically, games are not cancelled due to a weather forecast. Please note that all coaches and parents should download the free **Rainout Line App**, or sign up for email or text alerts for your team's specific fields. Sign up is easy and located on the left side of the **Rainout Line status page**. After 4:30 PM, continue to check the Rainout Line, but in most cases cancellations after

4:30, will be based on a game time decision at the field by the umpires and coaches.

Any pre-game agreements made by managers regarding any rule changes NOT specifically authorized by the League Director shall be of no force or effect.

Coach, Parents, and Player Responsibilities

- WAA works in partnership with the schools and you the families of the district and surrounding communities. Only together we can make this a fun positive experience for the kids. Many of our umpires are subjected to verbal abuse that is unfair and often presented at improper times. Occasionally, a bad call may be made. As a coach, you have a right to question a call. This has to be one in a proper manner and at the proper time-between innings or at the end of the game. As a WAA participant, please set an example for fellow coaches, players, and parents. If you have further concerns, please contact the WAA office. Harassment of umpires will not be tolerated. Such behavior can lead to the loss of coaching or playing privileges with Wheatland Athletic Association. Abusive behavior by coaches or parents can lead to the coach and/or player being dismissed from the baseball program. Parents and all family members should exhibit self-control and respect for players, coaches, umpires, and fans at all games. Abusive or derogatory behavior or language toward any player, coach, umpire or opposing teams' fans will not be tolerated. If an individual continues to exhibit such behavior after warning by a coach, umpire, or WAA official the individual will be required to leave the field. If the individual refuses to leave, the game will immediately be suspended. If the WAA General Manager of Sports and Operations and/or Program Director is present they may act in their official capacity prior, during, or after the game while on premises. In addition, they have the right to make any/all decisions pertaining to the enforcement of all WAA policies. This includes but not limited to resolving disputes, ending the game, removing coaches, parents, or players from the field due to behavior contradictory to WAA's Competitive Baseball rules and WAA's Code of Conduct. WAA adheres to a zero-tolerance policy with regards to fans, coaches, or player behavior that is contradictory to WAA Code of Conduct. This policy extends to practices, clinics, camps, and all activities where WAA participants are engaged. All use of illegal substances including but not limited to alcohol, tobacco products, vaping, and Cannabis is strictly prohibited at the field site and adjacent parking areas.

Social Media Responsibilities

- We recognize and support that program participants—players, coaches, and parents—use social media to communicate accomplishments and actions that occurred as part of the Competitive Baseball Program. When making and/or commenting on these Competitive Baseball Program related postings, however, we expect they are done in an appropriate and respectable manner. Instances of inappropriate and disrespectful postings should be reported to the WAA office, and could result in reprimand or dismissal from the program after review by the WAA General Manager of Sports and Operations and/or Program Director.

UPDATED FEBRUARY 2026