

Draft

GENERAL RULES

- A. **UMPIRES:** The umpires for the Majors league games are carded umpires provided by SPFBL or a third party contracting with SPFBL. **All judgment calls made by an umpire shall stand. Under no circumstances shall a Manager, Coach or any Assistant Coach attempt to yell at, reprimand, embarrass or intimidate an umpire. Any ejection shall be subject to a MINIMUM of a mandatory one (1) game suspension regardless of the nature of the incident.** Any Manager or Coach that has demonstrated inappropriate behavior and/or conduct will face league sanctions as described in the SPFBL Constitution, and may include suspension and/or immediate removal of any on-field duties. Any such suspension shall be invoked immediately pending a hearing on the matter. Only a non-judgment call made by the umpire, based solely upon the interpretation of the rules, and only after both Managers discuss the rule, may be questioned. Only the Manager may be involved in any discussion of the rules with the umpire. The umpire will then decide whether the call will stand or be changed. The umpire's word is final.
- B. **PROTESTING GAMES:** (should be a very rare occasion)
1. Protests may be filed in accordance with the SPFBL Constitution. In short, Protests can occur when a Manager claims that an umpire's decision is in violation of a rule. No protest shall ever be permitted on judgment decisions by the umpire.
 2. **Whenever a Manager protests a game because of alleged misapplication of the rules the protest will not be recognized unless the umpire is notified at the time the play under protest occurs and before the next pitch, play or attempted play.**
 3. The umpire and the Manager must file a protest describing the exact situation of events (outs, count, runners on base, etc.) and describe the umpire's call and the reason it impacted the game.
 4. Protests are to be filed with the Division Vice President and reported to the President. In all protested games, the decision of the League President shall be final. Even if it is held that the protested decision violated the rules, no replay of the inning will be ordered unless in the opinion of the League President the violation adversely affected the protesting team's chances of winning the game.
- C. **THROWING EQUIPMENT:**
1. **Throwing Bats:** If the batter unintentionally throws the bat after a swing, the umpire shall issue a warning to the batter and head coach of both teams. The umpire may call the batter out (on a second or third offense) of bat throwing.
 2. If the batter hits the ball, throws the bat and the umpire calls the batter out, the ball shall still be live and all base runners are at risk to be put out. If the umpire calls the batter out the base runners DO NOT have to advance. Base runners may advance more than one base until the play has completed.
 3. Any player or coach throwing a bat INTENTIONALLY will be ejected from the game and suspended for the next game.
 4. Any player or coach throwing equipment will cause the team to be issued a warning. The next subsequent offense will result in ejection of the player or coach involved.
- D. **EJECTIONS:**
1. Any bat or helmet throwing, arguing to umpire or language deemed "offensive" or disruptive to game, will result in a "warning" to the team & if it occurs again, the player and/or coaches may be called out and may be ejected.
 2. If a player is ejected from the game, the player will be suspended for the next game. If a player is

receives a second ejection, the player will be suspended for the next two games. If the player receives a third ejection, the player will be suspended for the balance of the season and the player's eligibility for subsequent seasons will be subject to Board approval.

3. Any ejected player or coach must leave the ballpark. They are not permitted to remain on-site, in the parking lot or anywhere within sight of the playing area.
4. The umpire can delay the re-start of the game until the ejected player or coach leaves the park completely.
5. If the player/coach refused to leave the umpire may forfeit the game to the opposing team.

E. **COACHING LIMITS:** One (1) adult manager and three (3) coaches will be allowed in the dugout during any game.

F. **UNIFORMS:** Players should be in full league approved uniform to play in scheduled games. Hats should be worn by all players in the field.

1. No shorts
2. No jewelry
3. A pitcher may not wear a white long sleeve shirt.

G. EQUIPMENT

1. No metal cleats.
2. All (male) catchers must wear an athletic cup. It is advised that all (male) players wear an athletic cup for levels of play A-Seniors.
3. **Helmets:** All players must provide their own full protective Babe Ruth or Little League approved helmet. A limited number of league owned helmets will be made available.
 - i. All batters and base runners **must wear** approved batting helmets at all times.
 - ii. All players, who are on deck, **must wear** batting helmets.
 - iii. Any base coach, who is also a player on the team, must wear batting helmets when on the field. (Applies to Seniors and Majors Divisions only)
 - iv. Batting helmets with face guards are allowed as long as the equipment is Babe Ruth or Little League approved.
4. **BATS:** All bats must meet approved Babe Ruth regulations. If the writing is illegible the umpire will remove the bat from the game.
 - i. Bats are limited to a 2 ¼" barrel, BPF 1.15. No restrictions in drop.
5. **GLOVES:** Pitchers may not use a glove on the mound that is white or gray or a multi-color glove with white/light gray as one of the colors.
6. **BASEBALLS:** The home team is responsible for providing two (2) new balls at each game. New baseballs will be provided to each team by SPFBL.
7. **BASES:** For those fields that do not have fixed bases, the home team will also be responsible to provide the bases for each game. Bases may be picked up from and must be returned to the appropriate storage location at the end of the game. On Saturday, the home teams for the first game at each field will pick-up the bases; and the home team for the last game will return them to the equipment storage.
8. **PORTABLE PITCHING MOUNDS:** For certain fields the League has provided portable pitching mounds. Each division will make the decision whether or not to use these mounds. All teams will adhere to the policy set for their division.

H. DUGOUTS:

1. As a guideline, the home team should utilize the first base dugout, and the visitors should utilize the third base dugout.
2. All players should remain on the bench when not on the field playing or on-deck. Only the batter and the on-deck batter should have a bat in his/ her hand and must be as far away from any player or fan

when swinging a bat.

3. After every game each player/coach is responsible for cleaning up their assigned dugout. All trash should be properly discarded in trash barrels.

I. GAME LENGTH/TIME:

1. Time limits for Divisions are as follows: MAJORS – 2 1/2 hours. No inning can start after 2:15 has elapsed.
2. A game will be called on account of darkness when it is deemed that it is unsafe to play any further. The FINAL inning start time will be determined by the two managers. **The major concern is for the safety of the players.**

J. THE 10-RUN RULE: will apply once a game becomes official

1. If the home team is ahead after 3 ½ innings, the game will be stopped and the home team declared the winner; or
2. If the visiting team is ahead after 4 complete innings, the game will be stopped and the visiting team declared the winner.

K. FORFEITS:

1. If a team cannot field the minimum amount of players (8) after fifteen (15) minutes from the official start of the game time, the game will be forfeited. Additionally, both teams should continue to play the game as a scrimmage for the sake of the players who show up to play baseball. Umpires are not required for these games, but may stay at their option.
2. If both teams cannot field the minimum amount of players it will count as a double forfeit.
3. If a team does not have at least 1 certified coach for supervision the team will forfeit.

L. SUSPENDED GAMES:

1. Any game this is halted before it qualifies as an official game or is halted in a tie is considered a suspended game.
2. Suspended Games, if rescheduled, will be continued at a later date from the exact point where the game was stopped. Lineups, positions and innings pitched will remain the same.
3. When all teams in a division are eligible for play-offs, it is possible that Suspended games may not be rescheduled due to lack of playing fields, or lack of time remaining before play-offs begin. The decision to reschedule the game will be made by the Vice President of the Division.

M. NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1. The 9 standard positions are used in Senior League, Major League and AAA Divisions.
2. In order to field a team for a game, there must be eight (8) players present (for the entire game). At any time there becomes less than eight (8) players, for any reason, the game becomes a forfeit by the team with less than eight (8) players. The game can still be finished as a practice game if agreed upon by both coaches. Umpires are not required to finish these games.

N. PLAYING TIME:

1. Managers should try to spread playing time equally among all players.
2. No player should sit on the bench for more than one (1) consecutive inning.
3. Free defensive substitutions are permitted in all divisions, with the following notations:
 - i. Pitchers are not permitted to be reinserted to pitch in a game once they have been removed from pitching.
 - ii. Coaches are **urged** to move or rotate players into different positions during the game. Unless safety becomes an issue (E.g., player who has difficulty catching playing first base). Coaches

who are not supportive of this guideline may not be asked to coach again in SPFBLL.

O. BATTING ORDER:

1. The batting order is set by the coach prior to the start of the game. A line-up card will be given to opposing team at the start of the game. Only players who are on the official league roster at start of season will be eligible to play. Any team that allows a non-eligible league player to bat or field will be disqualified and will be issued a forfeit.
2. Batting order varies by Division as follows:
 - i. For MAJORS Division: teams will roster bat. Teams will continue to bat until three outs are recorded.

P. COURTESY RUNNERS: Can be requested as follows:

1. When the catcher is on base with two outs in the inning
2. A player is injured while running the bases
3. The courtesy runner must be the player who made the last out

Q. SLIDING: These rules are in place for the overall safety of the players.

1. Head first sliding is NOT ALLOWED, with the exception of a base runner returning to a base. If a runner slides into a base head first, the player will be called out.
2. On plays being made at a base other than 1st base, and the runner does not slide and makes unintentional contact with the fielder, impeding the fielder's ability to make a play or throw, the runner may be called out and at the umpire's discretion may rule a double play.
3. If a play is being made at home and the base runner does not slide the umpire may call the base runner out. The "slide or avoid" rule is in full effect, so sliding is strongly encouraged on any close play to avoid penalty and injury.
4. Slide rulings will be based on the umpire's judgment of interference or safety concerns and are not subject to review or protest.
5. Catchers may not stand on the line, as to block the plate, unless there is a play being made or about to be made at home. Players may not block the base runner's path, unless there is a play being made or about to be made at a base. This could result in defensive interference and will be a judgment call made by the umpire.

R. HIT BATTER LIMIT – Any pitcher who hits two batters in the same inning or three batters in a game will have to be replaced immediately.

S. BALKS: (Majors and Seniors Division Only)

1. Only clear and obvious Balks by the pitcher where a violation of the rule is to deceive the runner and puts the runner at risk to be thrown out when stealing will be called by the umpire.
2. The umpire will issue ONE warning to each pitcher before a balk will be penalized, the Umpire will call "Time - No Pitch", will allow the runner to return to base safely and instruct the pitcher on what movement they did constitutes a clear Balk. On the second Balk by a pitcher the Umpire shall enforce the rule.
3. If in the umpire's judgment a runner is clearly stealing 2nd base or 3rd base on the pitch and subsequently a balk is called – but it's the first balk warning for that pitcher – the pitcher shall be given the warning, but the player stealing the base shall not be penalized for the pitcher's infraction, and therefore that runner will be allowed to stay at the base they were stealing. This shall not apply to stealing home, the runner must return to 3rd base.
4. Coaches or Players will NOT be allowed to intimidate a pitcher by yelling, "Balk" from the Dugout. This will ONLY be called by the Umpire.

T. PITCHING:

1. Pitchers should be warmed up well away from the field and spectators.
2. **The maximum inning limit:** A pitcher must be removed from the game when he/she reaches the max innings pitched in a game (3 innings for MAJORS DIVISION) or once the pitcher reaches the maximum # pitches allowed (see pitch count rule below), whichever limit is reached first. In addition, pitchers shall be restricted to a maximum of six (6) innings per week.
3. All Travel Players shall be restricted on Saturdays to a maximum of 25 pitches a game.
4. One pitch to a batter will constitute an inning.
5. Any pitch thrown to a batter during game play counts as a pitch. Warm up pitches before the start of a game, warm up pitches before a pitcher enters a game or warm up pitches between innings DO NOT count towards the pitch count.
6. **Responsibility of Counting and Reporting number of pitches.**
 - i. The manager of each team is responsible for counting the number of pitches thrown by each of his pitchers for each game and must keep track of pitches thrown and amount of required rest needed.
 - ii. In addition, Travel Managers and House Coaches must communicate the number of pitches thrown and rest needed for those players who are pitchers and pitch on both the travel and house teams.
 - iii. The pitch count rule is for the **safety of the players** and **ALL COACHES** are expected to act in the best interest of the players' health and **must** follow the guidelines for rest as stated in the Pitch Count Rule below. Managers found violating this rule will be subject to suspension.

U. PITCH COUNT RULE & REST REQUIREMENTS: The league shall enforce per game pitch count rules, and will also make recommendations on rest requirements that have been suggested by widely accepted scientific studies. The safety of our players is our first and foremost priority. Parents have an ownership in this responsibility as well, should be aware of these recommendations and ensure the safety of their own child by ensuring their child adheres to these requirements.

1. MAJORS Division (5th/6th Grade): 65-pitch maximum per game. If pitch #65 is reached and the pitcher is in the middle of a batter, he/she may finish that batter and then come out of the game. 3 innings per game maximum, 6 innings per week maximum running Sunday to Saturday.
2. Pitching 3 innings or more in a game requires at least one (1) day rest. However the chart below should also be referenced for the recommended rest based on # of pitches thrown.

Given the **above** rules to be enforced, the following are the recommendations for pitch counts and rest requirements:

1. **League Age will be calculated as of May 1st, 2013 for the 2013 Baseball Season.**
2. Based on the number of pitches thrown, a pitcher should be rested a certain number of **calendar days** (not a 24-hour period) before they are eligible to pitch again. The recommended rest requirements are as follows:

Pitchers league age 14 and under must adhere to the following rest requirements:

- If a player pitches 66 or more pitches in a day, four (4) calendar days of rest
- If a player pitches 51 - 65 pitches in a day, three (3) calendar days of rest
- If a player pitches 36 - 50 pitches in a day, two (2) calendar days of rest
- If a player pitches 25 - 35 pitches in a day, one (1) calendar days of rest
- If a player pitches 1-25 pitches in a day, no (0) calendar day of rest

Pitchers league age 15-18 must adhere to the following rest requirements:

- If a player pitches 76 or more pitches in a day, four (4) calendar days of rest
- If a player pitches 61 - 75 pitches in a day, three (3) calendar days of rest
- If a player pitches 46 - 60 pitches in a day, two (2) calendar days of rest
- If a player pitches 31 -45 pitches in a day, one (1) calendar days of rest
- If a player pitches 1-30 pitches in a day, no (0) calendar day of rest

V. **FIELD CONDUCT:** All players, coaches and managers must adhere to the code of conduct listed on the SPFBL website.

W. **GAME SCORES:**

1. All Team Managers are responsible for keeping their game scores, and pitch counts.
2. The winning team is responsible for submitting the results of the game to either the on-line results system or the Division VP, if they are in a division that keeps standings.

MAJORS DIVISION SPECIFIC RULES

- A. **Field dimensions** will be played at 50/70. (Mound set at 50' and bases set at 70')
- B. Games consist of 6 innings or subject to a 2 ½ hour time limit. No inning can start more than two hours and 15 minutes (2:15) after the game has started.
- a. If a game is shortened by inclement weather or darkness, a complete game is recorded if 4 innings have been completed (3-1/2 innings if the home team is leading).
 - b. A game will be called on account of darkness when it is deemed that it is unsafe to play any further. The FINAL inning start time will be determined by the umpire. The major concern is for the safety of the players.
 - c. The 10-Run rule will apply.
 - d. The nine standard defensive positions will be used with free substitution allowed. Managers should spread playing time equally among all players. No player should sit on the bench for two consecutive innings.
- C. **COACHING LIMITS:** One (1) adult manager and three (3) coaches will be allowed in the dugout during any game. All managers and coaches are to remain in the dugout during the game. No coaches are allowed on the field of play, other than base coaches, and must remain in the dugout.
- D. Bat barrel may not exceed 2 ¼" in diameter and may not exceed 33" in length. **A complete list of approved bats is available on the SPFBL and Babe Ruth websites. Bats are limited to a BPF of 1.15.**
- E. If a player utilizes an illegal bat in the game, the player will be declared out and the runner's returned to the base they were on prior to the at-bat by the player with the illegal bat.
- F. **Batting:** Teams will roster bat and continue to bat until three outs are recorded or the 12-Run rule applies. There are no limits on runs or batters per inning.
- G. Strike zone on batters is from the **ARMPITS** to the **KNEES** and up to one full ball width inside or outside home plate. Please note that there is some variation between umpires that ballplayers will need to make the adjustment for.
- H. **Pitching Limits:** Pitches will be allowed to pitch a maximum of 3 innings per game or once the pitcher reaches the maximum # pitches allowed, whichever limit is reached first. **THE MAXIMUM PITCH COUNT FOR A PITCHER IN A SINGLE GAME IS 65 PITCHES, OR 3 INNINGS MAXIMUM, WHICHEVER COMES FIRST. Pitching 3 INNINGS OR**

MORE comes with a mandatory 1-day rest required until the pitcher can pitch again. However the chart in the previous section should be referenced for required rest as well.

- a. All Travel Players will be restricted on Saturdays to a maximum of 25 pitches a game.
- b. Any pitcher who hits two batters in the same inning or three batters in a game will be replaced immediately.
- I. **Balks** will be called – see section III. P.
- J. **Dropped 3rd strike** will be called: On an uncaught third strike with no runner on first base or with two outs (regardless of base runners); the batter immediately becomes a runner. The strike is called, but the umpire does not call the batter out. The umpire may also actively signal that there is "no catch" of the pitch. The batter may then attempt to reach first base and must be tagged or thrown out. With two outs and the bases loaded, the catcher who fails to catch the third strike may, upon picking up the ball, step on home plate for a force-out or make a throw to any other fielder.
- K. **In-Field Fly** will be called on a flyball that is "catchable by an infielder", as stipulated in the Cal Ripken rules, when there are fewer than two outs, and there is a force play at third base (i.e., when there are runners at first and second base, or the bases are loaded); the batter will be out regardless of whether the ball is actually caught in flight. Runners do not have to advance, but are at risk to be put out. If the ball is caught runners must tag up before advancing.
- L. **Stealing** will be limited as defined below:
 - a. Stealing is permitted and leading is allowed. Runners may advance to home on a passed ball, wild pitch, or attempted steal of home. EXCEPTION – FOR GAMES PLAYED AT FOREST ROAD PARK (due to the distance between home plate and the back stop) there will be no stealing of home; there is no advancing to home on a pass ball or wild pitch. All runs must either be batted or walked in.
- M. Managers should be respectful of opposing teams and not steal with a lead of ten (10) runs or more
- N. Courtesy Runners are allowed.