

Revised April 1, 2026

Wayne County Rural League

2026 Baseball Rules

Majors (12u)

Wayne County Rural League follows the IHSAA rules for baseball with the following modifications/additions. Any other rules are not valid or enforceable.

Rule 1 – Field & Equipment

Section 1 - Field

- Base lines will be 70'
- Pitching Rubber will be 50'
- Running Lane – 30' from first base to home and 3' wide

Section 2 – Baseballs

- NFHS/IHSAA approved baseballs
- Home team will provide 2-balls for every game (1 new &

1used)



Section 3 – Bats

- Only requirement is having the manufactured USA Engraved/Stamped Logo on the bat
- No USSSA bats allowed – no double stamped bats
- Penalty for illegal bat
 - If player catches it himself before the first pitch, he must call time and get correct bat, if caught after 1st pitch, 1st offense enforce penalty enforced.
 - 1st offense – Automatic out and coach restricted to dugout for remainder of game. Forfeit 1st round of season ending tournament.
 - Every offense after – Team forfeits game and are disqualified from season ending tournament.

Section 4 – Helmets

- Must be worn while on the field of play (batter's box, base runner, on deck circle)

Section 5 – Catcher's Equipment

- Complete catching gear including protective cup

Section 6 – Other Equipment

- Heart Guard/Chest Protector for Pitcher
 - Penalty for not having prior to start of every inning, batter will start with one ball count
- No metal cleats (spikes)

Rule 2 – Players, Substitutes and Coaches

Section 1 – Players, Positions

- Age of player is determined by age on September 1st.
- Registered with league commissioner by 1st regular season game
- Minimum of 7 players to start game
- 9 Players on the field
- All rostered players must play a minimum of 2 consecutive innings (6 outs) in the field and 1 at bat in a completed game
- Rostered player must play in 50% of regular season games to participate in the tournament. (Scorebook will be used to confirm)

Section 2 – Substituting

- Player(s) may be brought up from a lower division to bring a team to 9 players
 - Lower division commitment comes 1st – if game scheduled, player is not eligible to play up
 - Must be a registered player on a league team and on a roster in the community, and have played at least 50% of the season
 - Cannot play until the top of 4th inning (if only playing up for experience)
- No automatic out if team is playing with a minimum of 9 players, less than 9 will be charged with an out for each missing player
- A substitute must bat at the end of the lineup. Substitute cannot pitch or catch
- All rostered players must play a minimum of 2 innings (6 outs) in the field
 - Does not apply to “move up” player that is there only for “in case of an injury”
- All rostered players must bat in the lineup
- Courtesy runner
 - Selected to speed up the game
 - With 2 outs, and catcher or pitcher are on base
 - Once per inning and only for the catcher or pitcher
 - No eligible substitute, the player that made the last out should be used
 - Does not count towards mandatory play time.

Section 3 – Injury/Ejected Player

- Ejected player will be an out when they come up in the batting order
- If a player is injured, they may re-enter the game
 - If injured player needs to seek medical attention and leaves the game, the injured player will be removed from the lineup and the team will not take an out.
 - If injured player does not need to seek medical attention, and they elect not to return to their next at bat, that will result in an out.

Revised April 1, 2026

- Bleeding
 - Injured player must be removed from game and cleaned up
 - Open wounds must be covered
 - Clothing with blood on it must be changed
 - Once bleeding has stopped, player may re-enter the game, at umpire's discretion
 - Game should be stopped for player to get ready

Section 4 – Coaching

- No swearing or obscene gestures at practice or games
- No smoking or chewing tobacco products on the field or in the dugout
 - Penalties
 - 1st offense – Warning
 - 2nd Offense - Automatic ejection from game and suspended from following game
 - 3rd offense – Banned from participation in any game function (i.e. scorekeeper)
- Must be off the playing field and remain behind the fence or in the dugout while on defense
- Only base coaches allowed on playing field
- Cannot Touch Base Runners while ball is in play
- 2-minute time limit between innings for team to take the field
 - 1st offense- Warning
 - 2nd offense- Runner(Last out) is placed on second
 - 3rd offense- Coach removed from game
- Allowed 2-trips to the mound
 - 3rd trip in the same inning, pitcher is removed.
 - Crosses foul line or goes onto field of play, considered trip to the mound, except to tend to an injured player.

Rule 3 – Pitching

- Three innings per game
- Any pitcher can re-enter the game
- One additional inning allowed if game goes more than 6 innings
- One pitch equals one inning
- No batting gloves under glove
- Straddle rubber and throw to base as long as not in contact with pitching rubber
 - 1st Balk offense – Warning
 - 2nd Balk offense – Base runners advance 1 base
- Hits 2 batters in the same inning
 - Pitcher is pulled from the mound and may return the next inning, if maximum innings hasn't been reached.
 - Batter hit in strike zone, not considered hit by pitcher

Rule 4 – Starting and Ending Game

Section 1 – Games

- 6 inning game
- 6 run limit per inning/per team
- 120-minute time limit (regular season and tournament)
- Umpire must be on the field
- All regular season games must be played

Section 2 – Starting a Game

- 15-minute grace period is allowed before game is called a forfeit.
- No communication of game cancellation by home team to visitor, will result in home team forfeit. Umpire(s) and head coaches will discuss ground rules and answer questions prior to starting game.

Section 3 – Ending a Game

- Time limit is reached
- Mercy Rule:
 - Up 13 at end of 3 ½ (home team) or 4 innings
 - Up 7 at end of 4 ½ (home team) or 5 innings
- Game is tied at end of 6 innings – umpire’s discretion to continue or call due to darkness
 - If called due to darkness – reschedule at earliest convenient time to complete (games restart with new ball/strike count and point in inning where game was postponed)
- 15-minute warning is to be given prior to time limit expiring
- Upon reaching time limit – current inning is to be completed

Rule 5 – Suspension of Play

- When thunder is heard or lightning in any form (cloud-to-cloud, cloud-to-ground, etc.) is seen, which means that the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning, play will be suspended.
- Once play has been suspended, resumption of play, if warranted, should not occur until at least 30 minutes has passed since the last thunder was heard or last flash of lightning was witnessed.
- 30-minute clock restarts when thunder is heard, or lightning witnessed again.
- Games cancelled due to rain or the above conditions
 - Less than 4 innings completed – game starts over
 - 4 or more completed innings (top of the 5th or more) will be considered a complete game

Rule 6 – Batter & Defense

Section 1 – Batter

- Dropped 3rd strike
 - Catcher drops, but there is a runner on 1st, with less than 2 outs – batter out
 - Batter may attempt to reach 1st base a runner doesn't occupy 1st base and there are 2 outs.

Section 2 – Defense

- Infield Fly Rule – Ball is popped up in the infield with runners on 1st and 2nd base or bases are loaded, less than 2 outs – batter is out. Runners may advance at own risk. Cannot be a bunt attempt and ball must be an easily catchable fair ball.

Rule 7 – Batter- Runner and Runner

- Open leadoffs are allowed
- Thrown Bat
 - 1st Offense – batter is warned and play stands
 - 2nd Offense – batter is out. All runners return to original base
 - Warning is per batter not per team
 - Umpire determines bat was thrown in anger, player may be ejected without warning
- Sliding
 - Must be legal per IHSAA rules
 - Avoid contact with fielder that has the ball
 - Runner will not be called out simply by not sliding but called on basis of intentional contact being made.
 - Any contact involved with a play, runner may be called out (umpire's discretion)
 - No headfirst slides, or runner will be called out.
 - Dive back to bases are allowed
- Any contact involved with play; runner with malicious intent will be out.
 - If incident occurs; both coaches and umpire must meet to make determination of malicious intent, if this cannot be agreed upon the commissioner will be involved in solving the matter

Rule 8 – Scoring and Record Keeping

- All teams must keep score.
- All regular season games must be played prior to the tournament

Rule 9 – Umpiring

- Minimum of 1 IHSAA patched umpire- if unable to find patched umpire, an unpatched may be used if agreed upon by both coaches.
- Umpires control games
 - If a coach argues a call in a disrespectful manner – warning will be given, and coach is restricted to the bench
 - If a 2nd warning is given, the coach will be ejected
 - Upon 2nd warning, commissioners will be notified, and a verbal warning will be given
 - If conduct is repeated after above verbal warning, commissioners will determine if the coach may return in the future.

Rule 10 – Others specific to WCRL

- Games need rescheduled, but not necessarily played, within 7 days
- Games will not be postponed if a team is short players
- Games scheduled that conflict with school affiliated events can be rescheduled.
- All other reschedules must be approved by the commissioners of that community.
- End of season tournament
 - List of approved subs must be submitted to WCRL Board by noon, 2 days prior to the tournament start date.
 - If an illegal player (not on approved list) is playing, the team will be disqualified.
 - If there are more than 4 players on a team registered with an organization such as USSSA(travel ball), or equivalent organization they will not be eligible for tourney/trophies.
 - A team playing outside of the WCRL season (March 17th - November 1st) will not be eligible for tourney/trophies
 - If a coach is thrown out of a tourney game (not championship game) the coach is removed from that game, and suspended from the next game.
 - If removed from the tourney championship game, they must pay \$300 fine (\$150 will go to the hosting community, \$150 will go to WCRL funds).
 - All tournament games will be played to completion (ie. Time limit or run rule)

Rule 11 – Zero Tolerance

No tolerance is defined as any action including but not limited to swearing, arguing, fighting, heckling, threatening, acting out or not following the rules in any way.

Coaches may discuss a call within a controlled and respectful manner only. Prior to the start of every game the umpire will notify the coaches of this rule and the coach is responsible for his/her team and their fans. An announcement will also be made by the umpire to the crowd before the start of the game.

The umpire or commissioner has the authority to remove the violator
Commissioner can over-rule the umpire decision on a case by case basis

Consequences of violation:

- Coach or Player – 1 game suspension (next scheduled game)
- Spectator(s) – Anyone causing a disturbance with umpires or coaches will be asked to leave the property of the ball diamond. If they refuse to leave, their team will forfeit the game If

Revised April 1, 2026

offending spectator is a parent/guardian, they will be ejected from that game and the commissioners will be notified. The player will not be ejected from the game and will be the responsibility of the head coach until the game is complete. If the same parent repeatedly causes issues, they will be banned from all WCRL properties for one year.

An ejected person has the right to dispute the suspension by contacting their league's commissioner