



**Spring 2018
Minors Division (9/10): Baseball Rules**

The official playing rules, with the exceptions and variations contained below shall be “Official Rules of Major League Baseball” completely revised, as released through the office of the Commissioner of Baseball.

EQUIPMENT

- A. Leather covered baseballs manufactured to appropriate specifications by several companies are the baseballs to be used for league play and tournament play. Two new baseballs will be provided by the home team for each game.
- B. Rubber soled tennis shoes or rubber cleated shoes are permitted. Metal cleats are not permitted.
- C. The batter, player in the on-deck batting area and base runners shall be required to wear protective headgear which gives protection to the top of the head, temples, ears and base of the skull. These items shall be NOCSAE approved.
- D. Catchers are required to wear a cup and proper protective equipment including a mask with throat guard, chest protector, shin guards and protective headgear which gives protection to the top of the head when catching behind the plate.
- E. It is recommended that coaches make every effort to encourage the wearing of athletic supporters or a protective cup by all male players.
- F. All players must be dressed in full uniforms (hat, pants, numbered shirt and socks). Shirts must be tucked into pants with hats facing forward. This rule is intended to promote teamwork, encourage players to look like a team and play like a team.

THE FIELD

- A. The field dimensions should be setup so that the distance between bases is 60’ and the pitcher’s rubber is 46’ from the back of home plate.

BATTING

- A. All players will remain in the batting lineup throughout the game (roster bat). If a player comes late to the game, that player will be inserted at the bottom of the line-up without a penalty.

- B. Bunting is allowed; however, once a batter gets into a bunting position/stance, he/she can either bunt, attempt to bunt, or pull back and take the pitch. He/she can NOT pull back out of the bunting stance, lean back and swing away. If he/she does pull back and swing away, the batter is automatically out.
- C. Infield fly rule NOT in effect
- D. Dropped 3rd strike rule NOT in effect...batter is out regardless if catcher catches the 3rd strike or not.
- E. 5 run rule per inning. Once the 5th run is scored in a single inning, we will retire the side regardless of the number of outs. Any runs scored in excess of 5 runs on the last hit of an inning will not be counted in the scorebook.
- F. The batter should keep 1 foot in the batter's box at all times in order to speed up play.
- G. Face Masks or C-Flaps must be worn with helmets at the Minors Division level (applies to Stewards of the Game players only but recommended for all leagues at this age group).
- H. Cal Ripken Division Bat Specifications **(NEW FOR 2018)**
 - a. All Bats must have the USA Baseball Marking with a 2 5/8" Barrel Maximum. 2 1/4" bats are also allowed if they also have the USA Baseball Marking. **NO BBCOR BATS.**
 - b. *Solid one piece wood bats are permitted for use in all divisions and must conform to Rule 1.10. No laminated or experimental bats shall be used in a game.*
 - c. If the illegal bat is discovered prior to a batter completing his "at bat" the bat is simply removed from play and the "at bat" continues.
 - d. A player who uses an illegal bat or non-conforming barrel dimension and hits a fair ball will be ruled out. No advancement on the bases will be allowed, and any outs during the play shall stand. This is an appeal play. The "at bat" will be considered legal once a pitch is thrown to the next batter.
 - e. Any bat discovered prior to the game that does not conform to the above rule shall be directed to be removed immediately and not be allowed for use during the game.

BASE RUNNING

- A. Base runners are not permitted to lead off.
- B. A runner can tag-up and advance to 2nd base, 3rd base or home plate on a fly ball by remaining in contact with the base until (after) the ball is first touched by a fielder.
- C. **Stealing** Base runner must maintain contact with the base until the ball has reached or passed the catcher before starting their steal attempt. If in the umpire's judgment, the first time a runner leaves early, the runner will have to go back. After a player receives one such warning on "leaving early", he will be called out on subsequent infractions in that game.

- D. **Secondary Leads.** Players are allowed to take secondary lead (one or two steps) after the ball has reached or passed the catcher without “baiting” as described below.
- E. **Delayed Steals:** Delayed steals are not allowed, examples of this are as follows:
- a. The runner breaks after the ball has left the catchers hand in the process of being returned to the pitcher or the pitcher has control of the ball.
 - b. The base runner intentionally runs only a few steps with the intention of baiting a throw from the catcher and stops. **However, this is a judgment call by the umpire and the “baiting” needs to be very obvious. It should not just be an honest mistake by a young player who misunderstood a “steal” sign and took a few steps in the direction of the next base and turned around and came back.** Nor should it be a player who instinctively is almost at the next base and when he sees the ball in the baseman’s glove (a sure out) he/she turns and goes back in the other direction.
 - c. If the umpire deems a delayed steal has occurred, the runner will be made to return to the previous base.
- F. A runner cannot steal on any ball that is mis-played by the pitcher on a return throw from the catcher. However, if the catcher makes an errant throw (i.e. over the pitcher’s head) the ball is live and runners can advance.
- G. Once the pitcher has control of the ball on or near the mound, runners may not advance to another base
- H. Sliding is allowed with an emphasis on safety. Head-first slides are not allowed; except for a runner diving back to a base that he has already reached safely. If a runner attempts a head-first slide into a base he has not yet reached safely, he will be called out.
- I. Running over the catcher at home plate is not allowed...and will result in the player being called-out and ejected from the game.
- J. Runners are awarded one base on any ball that goes under the fence, under the backstop, in a dugout, etc.
- K. Pinch runners, as well as courtesy runners for the catcher, are not permitted unless they are due to injury. We feel strongly that when a young ballplayer earns his or her way on base, he or she deserves, and needs to learn, to run the bases, especially at this age. Have a coach ready to warm a pitcher up.

FIELDING

- A. Each team can only play a maximum of 9 players in the field at one time.
- B. Free substitution is allowed in the field throughout the game.
- C. Coaches are encouraged to allow kids to play a variety of positions throughout the season. Of course, it’s up to the coaches whether they elect to rotate kids in the field during a game or from one game to the next. Regardless, while keeping

the kids' safety in mind, move your players around some in the field, as it's way too early in these kids' lives to peg them as a pure infielder or outfielder.

- D. A player may not stay on the bench more than 1 consecutive inning when they are playing the field. Every player on the team does not have to sit out an inning.. (Exception: If a player misses both practices prior to a game without providing his coach advanced notice of his absence, and then the player shows up for the game.... the player can be benched at the coach's discretion. The coach should alert the opposing coach prior to the game if this occurs.)

PITCHING

- A. Pitching Distance: 46'
- B. No balks will be called.
- C. We are committed to making sure that we develop our pitchers in a way that will allow them to pitch for as long as they possibly can throughout their baseball careers. Therefore, we take our pitch count rules very seriously and expect our coaches and parents to hold each other accountable in this area. MLB and Cal Ripken Baseball has recommended that we follow the MLB/USA Baseball Pitch Smart Program (<http://m.mlb.com/pitchsmart/>).

For pitchers in the 9-10 age range, Pitch Smart recommends the following daily pitch count limits and rest periods based on number of pitches thrown...



AGE	DAILY MAX PITCHES	REQUIRED REST (PITCHES)				
		0 Days	1 Days	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days
7-8	50	1-20	21-35	36-50	N/A	N/A
9-10	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
11-12	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
13-14	95	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
15-16	95	1-20	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+
17-18	105	1-20	31-45	46-60	61-75	

While 75 pitches in one outing may seem ok, we are not out to test that limit.

We will not allow kids to throw that many pitches in one outing. To promote opportunities for other players to learn how to pitch and gain valuable on-field pitching experience, **pitchers can throw no more than 55 pitches and/or 6 consecutive outs – whichever occurs first.** The outs must be consecutive as pitchers will not be allowed reentry to the pitching position per game (pitchers may find themselves pitching in part of 3 innings...e.g. pitch 1st inning final out, second inning 3 outs, and first 2 outs in third inning – thus 6 consecutive outs).

- D. Again, regardless of innings pitched, pitchers in this age division can throw no more than 55 pitches per day. Coaches are responsible for monitoring pitch counts...and must remove the pitcher from the mound when he reaches the 55 pitch limit. No pitcher may pitch to a new batter after his pitch count has reached 55 pitches. Once a pitcher reaches 55 pitches, he may finish pitching to that

batter...but MUST then be taken off the mound after that at-bat, regardless of the situation.

- E. Scorekeepers should be encouraged to keep count of balls, strikes and total pitch counts for both teams. In the event the pitch count gets away from the head coach of the pitcher, a reminder from the opposing coach is appropriate. But let's not have that happen. Bottom line, keep track of your pitchers' pitch counts. Winning a game is not worth wearing out a kid's arm for life!
- F. Once a pitcher throws 36 pitches, he must have 48 hours rest before his next outing on the mound. (i.e. A pitcher who throws 40 pitches on Saturday evening cannot pitch again until Monday evening.) If he throws his maximum 55 pitches, then he must have 72 hours rest before his next start. **We expect parents of kids who are playing challenge/travel ball on the weekends to abide by this rule as well, and inform their rec coaches of their child's pitch counts outside of their rec games.**
- G. Intentional walks are not allowed.
- H. Pitchers must be removed from the mound after hitting 3 batters in a game and will not be allowed to pitch again in that game.
- I. Pitchers must be removed from the mound upon a coach's second trip to the mound in an inning.
- J. When a pitcher is removed from the mound, he cannot return to the mound again at any point during the game. *This means pitchers must pitch in consecutive innings and are not allowed to pitch in inconsecutive innings (i.e. a starting pitcher who pitches the first inning and then goes to play first base, may not come back later in the game and pitch in a different inning).*
- K. Catchers will catch no more than 4 innings per game.
- L. No player can pitch or catch a combination of more than 4 innings in total per day. (For instance, if a catcher catches three innings, he can only pitch one. If he pitches two, then he can only catch two.) Pitching and catching in the same inning counts as only one inning towards the 4 inning pitch/catch limit.

GENERAL RULES / GUIDELINES

- A. Every game should begin with both teams lining up on their respective foul lines with the Home team coach offering an opening prayer. Teams should then pass by one another and shake hands...exchanging "have a good game" types of comments to their opponents to set the tone of the game for the players, coaches, parents and fans.
- B. In the event of a rained-out game, the home team will coordinate with the visiting team, the ALC to schedule a make-up game as soon as possible.
- C. If weather is a factor, use common sense in determining whether to play the game or not. Make every effort to play all games unless the safety of the children is in jeopardy. If a game is called in progress by the head umpire due to

the weather before the end of the 4th inning (3 ½ if the home team is ahead), then the game will be rescheduled by the home team coach. When the game is rescheduled, the game will resume at the precise point where it left off; with the score, count, pitch counts, substitutions, etc resuming where you left them at the point of the rain delay. If a player was not in attendance at the original game, he cannot play in the make-up game. If a game is called in progress by the head umpire due to the weather after the end of the 4th inning (3 ½ if the home team is ahead), the game will be called and not replayed. The score at the end of the last complete inning will prevail as the final score and outcome of the game. If the game was tied, it goes down in the records book as a tie.

- D. A team must have at least 8 players to start 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 8 players, and a player gets hurt...they may finish the game with less than 8 players; but will record outs for the missing players below 9.
- E. A team failing to field at least 8 uniformed players within 15 minutes of the scheduled starting time of a game shall forfeit. If a team has less than 8 players, a scrimmage game should be played. Substitute players may be allowed and game will be “official” if coaches agree in advance of the game to get to 8 players. Substitute players are not allowed in the postseason.
- F. If a player is injured or falls ill during the game and is not able to bat when his turn comes you may skip to the next batter without penalty. He retains his position in the batting order and may bat again later in the game if he recovers. Any coach found manipulating this to gain an advantage when one of his weaker batters is due up, will be suspended 2 games.
- G. Regulation games shall be six (6) innings in duration. An official game is four (4) innings (3. innings if the home team is ahead).
- H. **A maximum of 5 runs can be scored per inning, including the 6th inning.** Once a team is mathematically out (e.g. a team is up by 13 runs after 4 complete innings), the game is official. However, it is up to the Head Coach of the losing team whether to continue play or not. Completion of the game is encouraged, and umpires should remain and officiate up to the 1 hour 45 minute time limit.
- I. Mercy rule is 10 runs after 4 innings.
- J. A half inning will be declared over when the fielding team records three (3) outs or the hitting team scores six (5) runs.
- K. All games should be try and be completed within 2 hours if at all possible. No new innings shall be started after 1 hour and 45 minutes of play. Innings started prior to the 1:45 time limit will be played in their entirety if necessary and conditions permit. If the inning is called for any reason, the score will revert back to that of the last full inning completed.
 - a. The timer should be paused during a weather delay.
 - b. Playoff Games are still subject to the “No New Inning after 1:45 rule,”except in the case of a tie.
 - c. The Championship Game will have no time limit and play a full six innings.

- L. If the game remains tied after the completion of 6 innings and you are still within the 1 hr. 45 minute “no new inning” rule, 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 on second 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 is not restarted and continues from the previous inning. This is not sudden death each team has an opportunity to score in its half inning. Due to game times and play during school nights, any game not decided within the max 2-hour game time limit rule is declared a tie.

- M. To help speed up play, there will be **a maximum of 90 seconds between innings**. (This makes up 9 minutes of every game) With the exception of the first inning (5 warm up pitches), pitchers should get a maximum of 3 warm up pitches and the umpire should be ready to call “play ball” at the 90 second mark. Both coaches should make a concerted effort to move the game along quickly. Get the players on and off the field quickly by letting them know in advance where they will be playing next inning. The clock is an unnatural, but necessary, part of youth baseball. Coaches must resist the temptation to intentionally slow down a game to limit the number of innings played in order to secure a win. Please have an adult ready to warm up a pitcher and someone to help dress your catcher if he is on base when an inning ends.

The penalty for delaying longer than 90 seconds between innings will be as follows:

- **If the defensive team is stalling the umpire can start calling “balls” on the batter with 20-second intervals.**
- **If the offensive team is stalling the umpire can start calling “strikes” with 20-second intervals.**

- N. Defensive coaches must remain in the dugout, or just outside the fence...and are not allowed on the field unless time has been called. Offensive coaches should remain in the 1st and 3rd base coaches’ box area. The other offensive coach must be in the dugout. Teams may only have a total of three coaches on the field, or in the dugout.
- O. All coaches should make an extra effort to ensure the safety of the kids during practices and games. Accidents will happen, but let’s make sure it’s not due to anything we as coaches could have prevented. For example...
- Please make sure all batters and runners keep their helmets on until they get back inside their dugout.
 - On-deck hitters should always be well behind the hitter regardless of which dugout their team is in. (i.e. On-deck hitters should be on the 1st base side when a left-handed hitter is at bat and on the 3rd base side when a right-handed hitter is at bat.)
 - All other players, including the batter “in-the-hole”, should remain inside the dugout.

GENERAL CONDUCT

- A. After the game, players should line up on their respective foul lines in single file to congratulate their opponents. Of course, all comments should be encouraging in nature (ie. “good game”), with no remarks about who won or lost.

- B. Any conduct of a player or parent causing a problem should be corrected by his/her coach only.
- C. Kids should be encouraged to cheer “for” their teammates, as well as their opponents. Negative chatter directed “against” the opponents is not permitted. This goes for parents as well.
- D. If a player is ejected from a game by the umpire, he will not be allowed to play in the next game. If a player loses his temper and throws his bat, helmet, glove, etc, then his coach should immediately put him on the bench for the rest of the game...don’t wait for the umpire to make that call.
- E. If a coach is ejected from a game, he must leave the park immediately and will receive an automatic one (1) game suspension. In addition, the matter will be referred to the league coordinator, commissioner of baseball and the director of baseball for review and possible further sanctions. If a coach is ejected twice in one season, he will be removed as coach of that team for the remainder of the season.
- F. NO TOBACCO or ALCOHOL products of any kind are allowed on the playing field, or in the dugout, at games or practices. Coaches and parents...use good judgment here. Impressionable kids, who look up to you, are watching.
- G. **Please limit Mobile Device Usage while in the dugout! Pay attention to the kids and not your phone! If you have to take an emergency call, please leave the dugout and make sure an assistant coach is monitoring things until you return.**

UTILIZATION OF ROOKIES PLAYERS (Calling players up)

- A. In cases where you know you may not have enough players, we allow coaches to call up players to fill-in from the Rookies Division. However, this is NOT intended to give your team an advantage, but rather to fill a spot so your team is not forced to take an automatic out because you only have 8 players.
- B. Every Minors Division team will be associated to a Rookies Division team, so that more Rookies get the opportunity to play up if needed and the same kid is not being called up every single night. If you need a player, call on one from that team first, then if none available, call the Rookies ALC or other coaches.
- C. The players on your team take precedent. If you have 9 Players for a game you must play your players over a younger age group player being called up. If you have 8 of your own players and call up 2 Rookies players those 8 must play the field and the 2 Rookies would sub for one another. A Rookie player in the field may play any position.
- D. Called up Rookie player should bat last in the team rotation.

Of course, these rules cannot possibly cover everything that can happen out on the field. If ever in doubt on a rule, simply put the kids’ best interest at heart, and let good judgment prevail.

First, and foremost, all coaches should remember that the game is for the kids...not the adults. Our primary goal at this level is to build strong character, have fun and ensure that the players have such a good experience that they come back again next year for another fun-filled season of baseball. It is also incumbent on us as coaches that we concentrate on teaching these kids good, sound fundamental baseball skills that will help them reach their full God-given potential as a ballplayer.

Please remember...as the coach, you set the tone for your players and their parents. Please take time along the way to teach your players, both in words and in actions, not only about the game of baseball...but also important "faith-based" life lessons (i.e. sportsmanship, teamwork, perseverance, sacrifice, hard work, etc.) that will serve them well in all facets of their life. Team devotionals are both a privilege and an integral component of Stewards of the Game baseball...so please seize the precious opportunities you have as a coach to share your heart for Christ with your players.

So... work hard, play fair...and HAVE FUN!! And remember, the kids are watching

Thanks again for all your time and effort in coaching baseball!

SPECIAL POST-SEASON TOURNAMENT RULES

- Early-Round Games:
 - No new inning is started after 1 hour 45 minutes.
 - No run rule per inning.
- Championship Game:
 - No time limit...full six inning game.
 - No run rule per inning.
 - 10-run rule is replaced with a 15-run mercy rule after 2 hours of play.
- Regular season pitching and catching rules still apply in tournament play.
- Highest seed from regular season play will be home team in post-season tournament games.
- Tournament seeding will be based on results of regular season, sorted by win %. In case of a tie, tie breakers will be head to head competition, then overall fewest runs allowed.

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