

BASEBALL RULES

SINGLE A



WESTFIELD YOUTH SPORTS

1. GAME SETUP:

- 1.1. Games are played up to 6 innings, or until time has run out.
- 1.2. During the regular season game times are capped at 1 hour as a hard stop, if this occurs the score will revert to the end of the previous inning.
- 1.3. A new inning cannot start after 45 minutes of play.
- 1.4. If time is expired and the home team is down by more than 6 runs the game will be over.
- 1.5. The umpire has discretion to shorten games if game play is getting backed up.
- 1.6. Four (4) complete innings (or 3 ½ if the home team is winning) will be considered a complete game if a game is ended due to weather.
- 1.7. Ties stand during the regular season. No extra innings during the regular season.
- 1.8. Innings end after a maximum of 6 runs or 3 outs for all innings

2. MERCY RULES:

- 2.1. A team that is ahead by 12 or more runs after 4 innings is declared the winner.
- 2.2. A team that is ahead by 10 or more runs after 5 innings is declared the winner.

3. BATS & CLEATS:

- 3.1. There are no bat restrictions.
- 3.2. Metal cleats are not allowed.

4. FIELD DIMENSIONS:

- 4.1. Bases will be spaced 60' for play.
- 4.2. The pitching rubber will be 21' from home plate.

5. UMPIRES:

- 5.1. No paid officials will be used, except in the tournament semi-finals and championship games.
- 5.2. When there is not a paid umpire, it is the responsibility of the head coach and/or one of the assistant coaches. Only coaches are eligible to be an umpire.
- 5.3. Umpires can choose to stand behind the plate or in the field. Be sure to get into proper position when calls need to be made in the field.

6. BATTING ORDER:

- 6.1. All players must bat in an established batting order, including bench players.

6.2. A batting order is to be established prior to the start of the game which includes only those players present at the start of the game. If a player arrives late, he is to be added to the bottom of the batting order.

6.3. If a Player must be excused for any reason during their teams at bat and misses their turn at bat, they will be placed at the end of the batting order for the remainder of the game. No out will be called regarding this. The bookkeeper for both teams should be notified immediately.

7. DUGOUT:

7.1. All players who are not fielding, batting, on deck, base running, or warming up to pitch must always stay in the dugout unless given explicit permission by a coach to leave (to go to the bathroom, for example).

7.2. All equipment is to remain in the dugout during the game.

8. ON DECK:

8.1. Only one player may be on deck swinging outside the dugout.

8.2. The on-deck batter must wear a helmet.

9. TIME OUTS:

9.1. The coach is allowed to stop play to only one (1) batter per inning while his team is at bat.

9.2. The umpire may stop play at the umpire's discretion for injuries, etc.

10. AT BAT:

10.1. The umpire will call all balls and strikes.

10.2. Three (3) swinging strikes is considered an out.

10.3. Four consecutive balls without a swing will result in a strike, except for the third strike (i.e. a third strike has to be a swinging strike). A warning will be given to the batter by the umpire and/or pitching coach after three (3) consecutive balls have occurred without an attempt to swing. A foul ball resets any accumulated balls to zero (0). Once a batter receives a strike for watching 4 consecutive balls go by, the accumulated balls will be reset to zero (0).

10.4. Batters may not intentionally bunt.

10.5. Upon the first offense of a batter throwing a bat, the batter and his team will be issued a warning.

10.6. Upon the second offense of throwing a bat by any batter on the previously warned team, the batter will be automatically called out.

10.7. The dropped third strike rule will NOT be in effect.

10.8. The Infield Fly Rule will NOT be in effect.

11. BASE RUNNING - LIVE BALL/DEAD BALL DEFINITION:

- 11.1. Runners are not allowed to advance on an overthrown ball to any base.
- 11.2. On balls hit to the outfield, runners may advance until the ball reaches the infield. The infield is defined as the base line. Once the ball has broken the infield plane runners may not advance past any base.

12. BASE RUNNING:

- 12.1. Excessive base running is discouraged.
- 12.2. A player cannot be tagged out after touching first base, regardless of which way they turn after touching the base.
 - 12.2.1. The only exception to this rule is if the runner makes an aggressive move to second base (i.e. 5 or more steps).
- 12.3. If a runner is blocked from advancing to a base by a defensive player, the runner will be awarded the base (including first base). Remember that a fielder has the right to field a ball that naturally brings them into a base line.
- 12.4. It is the base runner's role to avoid contact with the defensive player on any close play.
- 12.5. Umpires have full discretion to issue an immediate out if they deem contact excessive.

13. LEAD OFF:

- 13.1. Base runners may NOT lead off.

14. STEALING:

- 14.1. Stealing of any base is NOT allowed.

15. LEAVING EARLY:

- 15.1. Upon a runner leaving early the play will be stopped, all runners will return to their previous base, and the umpire will issue a warning to the entire team.
- 15.2. If the runner leaves early on a ball that was hit on the team's first offense, the play will be called dead, all base runners will return to their previous bases, and the batter will resume his at bat with the same count prior to the play.
- 15.3. Upon the second offense of a runner leaving early, play will be stopped, the runner will be called out and all base runners will return to their previous bases. The batter will resume his at bat at the same count prior to the play.
- 15.4. If the second offense occurs on a pitch that is hit, play will be stopped, the runner will be called out, all base runners except for the offending runner will return to their previous bases, and the batter will resume his at bat at the same count prior to the play.

16. SLIDING:

- 16.1. No head-first sliding is allowed unless retreating towards a base.
- 16.2. Any runner not sliding or avoiding contact with the defensive player on a close play, as determined by the umpire, will be called out and play will be stopped.

17. THROWING THE HELMET:

- 17.1. Any runner, based on the judgment of the umpire, deliberately discarding a helmet while running the bases will be declared out and play will be stopped.

18. PINCH RUNNERS/ COURTESY RUNNER:

- 18.1. If at any time there are two outs and the batting team's catcher is on base, the player who got the last out may pinch run for the catcher so the catcher can put on the catcher's gear. This is encouraged to speed game play.
- 18.2. A player injured during a play that the player safely reached base may be replaced with the player who got the last out. The replaced player may not play on defense the next half inning unless the team has no substitutes.

19. COACHES INTERFERENCE:

- 19.1. Coaches may not physically contact players at any time while the play is live.
- 19.2. Inadvertent physical contact that does not benefit the runner should be avoided but will not be penalized.
- 19.3. If a coach interferes by physically contacting a player while the play is live that benefits the runner (pushing forward or slowing/stopping them), the umpire will issue an automatic out.

20. PITCHING:

- 20.1. A coach from the batting team will be the pitcher.
- 20.2. The pitcher must pitch behind the 21' line from either a standing position or from a knee.
- 20.3. Pitching is generally overhand but allows underhanded pitching to players who plan to play softball in the future.
- 20.4. The pitcher must avoid all batted balls. If the pitcher is hit by a batted ball, the play will be called dead, and the pitch will not count. This also applies to any object a pitcher uses, such as a pad for kneeling down. A deliberate attempt by the pitcher to interfere with a batted ball will result in an automatic out.
- 20.5. The pitcher must not interfere with any defensive player. This includes blocking the path of a player or the path of their throw. If the pitcher does interfere with a defensive player, even inadvertently, the result will be an automatic out.

21. DEFENSE:

- 21.1. All players must play in the field.
- 21.2. Each team will use defensive players consisting of one (1) pitcher's helper, one catcher, four (4) infielders (first base, second base, shortstop and third base). The outfield will have all other players from a team in it.
- 21.3. The pitcher's helper must wear a helmet with a face guard, a heart-guard, and cannot be any closer to the batter than the pitcher until the ball is in play.
- 21.4. Infielders must play their positions until the ball is pitched. No "shifting" is allowed.
- 21.5. No part of a player's foot may be on the infield grass until the ball is in play.
- 21.6. Outfielders can only make plays by throwing to the infield. As such, they cannot come into the infield to tag a runner or cover a base.
- 21.7. Outfielders must be positioned in the outfield prior to any pitch.
- 21.8. A maximum of two (2) coaches are allowed in the outfield for the defensive team. Coaches for the defensive team must stay in the outfield grass while play is live.

22. CATCHERS:

- 22.1. If 9 players are present, there must be a catcher.
- 22.2. It is highly recommended that Catchers wear a catcher's mitt while catching.
- 22.3. Cups are mandatory for catchers.
- 22.4. A pop-up that is caught must go higher than the batters head to be considered an out.
- 22.5. A foul tip third strike that is caught by the catcher will be an out.

23. PLAYING TIME:

- 23.1. Coaches are expected to teach all players how to play each position. This includes rotating line-ups such that the number of innings played at any given position is generally distributed evenly among all players.
- 23.2. Every player must spend at least two innings at one of the six infield positions during the first four innings.
- 23.3. A player may spend no more than three innings at the same position during any given game.
- 23.4. No player may spend a second inning on the bench, until all players have spent an inning on the bench.
- 23.5. Players should not be put in a position where they could be risking safety (i.e., if a player cannot focus and catch a ball consistently then playing 1st base should not be considered).

24. TOURNAMENT:

- 24.1. Regular season rules will be in effect during the tournament, except:
- 24.2. There are no ties in the semi-finals or championship game.
- 24.3. There is no time limit for the championship game.
 - 24.3.1. The championship game will be played to 6 full innings (5 ½ if the home team is ahead).
 - 24.3.2. Mercy rules will still be in effect.
 - 24.3.3. If delayed by weather will resume at the exact point they were delayed.
 - 24.3.4. The 6th inning has unlimited runs allowed. Teams will play until 3 outs or until the home team wins, whichever comes first.
- 24.4. Coaches will exchange batting line-ups before the start of the game and will notify the opposing coach during the game when a change is made.
- 24.5. Tournament will begin with a Round Robin type tournament with a blind draw for seeding. Regular season records will have no bearing on seeding.
- 24.6. Winners from each pod of teams advance to a four team, single-elimination bracket; If there are only three pods, a wildcard team will also advance based upon record in the round robin tournament games.
- 24.7. In the event of tie, the following tie breakers will be used:
 - 24.7.1. 1st Tiebreaker - Head-to-head in tournament play
 - 24.7.2. 2nd Tiebreaker - Runs allowed in tournament play
 - 24.7.3. 3rd Tiebreaker – Runs differential in tournament play
 - 24.7.4. 4th Tiebreaker – Coin flip