



## OWENSBORO CATHOLIC LEAGUE (OCL) RULES - 8U SOFTBALL 2026

### Facility

- 1 Teams will have the following responsibilities:

**ALL PRACTICES:** Put away bases, put away all equipment, rake all holes and base areas, rake around the mound and home plate, pick up all trash from dugouts and bleachers.

**HOME TEAM:** Rake all holes and base areas, rake around the mound and home plate, tamp down dirt around the mound and home plate / batters boxes, turn out field lights, lock up all doors, pick up trash from your dugout and bleacher areas on your side of field.

**VISITING TEAM:** Put away bases, place scoreboard controls in concession stand, clean restrooms, pick up trash from your dugout and bleacher areas on your side of field.

**\*\* DO NOT RAKE OR DRAG INFIELD DIRT INTO THE GRASS, AS THIS WILL BUILD UP A LIP ON THE DIRT/TURF EDGE AND CAUSE BAD BOUNCES**

### Batting

- 1 All helmets used in games or practices shall utilize a full face mask or approved jaw guard. This rule applies to player furnished helmets and OCL furnished helmets. Any player running the bases and deliberately removes her helmet is out and all runners must return to their original bases.
- 2 Mandatory Playing Rules shall be enforced. Violations of this rule will be dealt with by the Owensboro Catholic League Board (OCL Board) and may include forfeiture of the game(s) in question.

#### Batting Order -

- (a) The batting order will include all players present and eligible, & this same order shall be used throughout the game, Round Robin.
- (b) A player who has left early when their turn in the batting order comes will be deleted from the batting order, without penalty, as long as you still have 9 batters. If you drop to 8 batters, the 9th batting position will be an out (not the 10th) unless this is due to illness or injury or it is the 3rd out.
- (c) A player arriving late will be added at the end of the batting order, without penalty.

Clarification: If a team starts with 9 players, the 10th player is not an out.

- 3 A batted ball that hits the Pitcher-Coach before it is touched by a defensive player shall be ruled as a dead ball and the batter will be given first base. Base runners will only advance if the batter forces them to advance. A thrown ball hitting the Pitcher-Coach is still live and a batted ball that is touched by a defensive player and then hits the Pitcher-Coach is still live.
- 4 The infield fly rule **is not** in effect.
- 5 Bunting is not allowed. If in the opinion of the umpire a batter did attempt to bunt, she is called out regardless of the count on the batter. Base runners return to their original bases.
- 6 No stealing allowed. Runners may advance only after a batter hits a fair ball. Runners are not allowed to leave early and may run only after the batter makes contact with the ball.
  - (a) First offense shall be a warning. Second offense, the runner will be called out.



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- 7 Sliding is permitted, except for sliding headfirst. Penalty: Runner is out. Diving back to the base is not considered sliding head first. Coaches are encouraged to teach their players to slide if there is a close play at all bases except first base.

\*\* There is no "must slide" rule

The runner may slide, attempt to get around the fielder who is in possession of the ball and waiting to make the tag (if not, the fielder has obstructed the runner), or give him/herself up.

Hurdling or going over the defensive player that has the ball and is waiting to make a tag is a LEGAL maneuver.

If the runner attempts to get around and successfully avoids the tag without going out of the base line, that runner is safe. If the runner attempts to avoid, but still makes contact, the runner is NOT automatically out. What constitutes an attempt is entirely up to the judgment of the umpire.

If the ball is on its way to the base or home plate, or the ball and runner get there simultaneously, and there is contact because the runner didn't slide or attempt to get around, this is just a collision, and collisions are part of baseball. Contact may occur with no penalty assessed.

### Base/Pitching Coaches

- 1 When a team is at bat, a first base coach and a third base coach may be on the field in the coach's box while their team is at bat. Players may coach bases but must wear a helmet. All other coaches must be in the dugout or off the playing field.
- 2 Base coaches must stay in coach's box. If he/she interferes (touches) a player, the runner is out.
- 3 Pitcher-Coach Requirements
  - (a) Each team will provide an adult coach/pitcher 18 years of age or older for their own batters.
  - (b) The Pitcher-Coach will stand within the pitcher's circle to deliver the pitch. They will stay in the circle.

PENALTY: 1st Offense- adult pitcher will receive a warning

2nd Offense- adult pitcher will be removed from the pitching position for remainder of game

- (c) Adult pitcher cannot make a play or attempt to make a play on a batted ball unless it is in self-defense. If the adult catches or attempts to catch a live ball, it will be a dead ball no-pitch, and the batter will return to the plate and the runners will not advance.

PENALTY: 1st Offense- adult pitcher will receive a warning

2nd Offense- adult pitcher will be removed from the pitching position for remainder of game

- (d) If the ball strikes the Pitcher-Coach before it is played upon, the batter will advance to first base and base runners will advance only if forced. If the ball has been played upon before it strikes the Pitcher-Coach it is a live ball and play continues.
- (e) Pitcher-Coach may not shout out instructions to the defensive team in order to confuse them. In the event this happens, the umpire will call the lead runner out.

PENALTY: 1st Offense- Pitcher-Coach will receive a warning

2nd Offense- Pitcher-Coach will be removed from the pitching position for remainder of game

- (g) If a pitch hits a batter, she will NOT advance to first base nor will the base runners advance. The pitch counts as one of the batter's seven pitches.



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- 3 Umpire may declare "No Pitch" on any ball deemed incorrectly pitched from the Pitcher-Coach based solely on his/her judgment. If there is a pitch thrown and the batter is in the box, the pitch counts on their pitch count – regardless of the throw.

### Defense

- 1 A catcher is a required position on the field, regardless of the number of players available in the lineup. Catchers must wear approved chest protector (long or short are both acceptable) and catcher's style helmet/mask. Coaches will be responsible in seeing that the player have and use the required protective equipment.
- 2 Any defensive player is allowed to wear a heart guard or face guards, but they are not mandatory except facemasks are required to play the position of pitcher, first base, and third base. Player-pitchers are recommended to wear a chest protector or heart guard, but they are not allowed to wear a catcher's-style chest protector. Coaches will be responsible for verifying that the players have and are wearing sufficient protective equipment and OCL reserves the right to change this rule at anytime to require the use of heart guards, chest protectors, or face guards for defined positions.
- 3 When a team is playing defense, an adult coach for the defensive team may be stationed beyond the infielders in order to provide instruction for all defensive players. This coach shall not be permitted to touch the ball nor advance into the infield while the ball is in play. This defensive coach shall not be allowed to shout out instructions to offensive runners in order to confuse them. A second adult coach for the defensive team shall be allowed to stand within 4' of his/her dugout gate/opening (foul territory only) to provide instruction for all defensive players.
- 4 Except for injuries, player positions can only be changed one time per inning. Example: A first baseman may be moved to a regular outfield position any time during an inning, but must remain there until the inning is complete.
- 5 Obstruction is the act of a fielder who, while not possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any runner. A fake tag is considered obstruction. Note: Obstruction shall be called on a defensive player who blocks off a base, base line or home plate from a base runner while not in possession of the ball. Example: A catcher on his/her knees blocking home plate before he/she has possession of the ball, prevents the sliding runner from touching home, makes the catch and applies the tag is obstructing the plate. In this example, the runner shall be called safe.

If a player covering 1st, 2nd, or 3rd base is called for obstruction by the umpire, the runner will awarded the next base if it is open and the umpire determines the runner could have advanced on the play. If the runner retreats back to a base after obstruction occurs, the umpire, at their discretion, will determine if the runner is allowed to advance or not.

(Example: If a runner is trying to round second and go to third and the 2nd baseman obstructs with the runner at second, the runner will get third base at umpire's discretion). Only if the umpire determines that a player could not touch first base because of obstruction by the first baseman, will the runner going to first be called safe.

- 6 The player-pitcher must start each play with at least one foot in the player-pitcher's circle, but he / she has the option to back up along with the shortstop and second baseman. He / she must stay within the imaginary lines between the pitcher's circle and second base.
- 7 No outfielder will be allowed in the infield before the bat is swung. First Offense: Warning. Second Offense: Hitter gets a free base at the offensive coach's discretion (Coach may elect for batter to continue at bat or take free base).
  - (a) First Offense: Warning.
  - (b) Second Offense: Hitter gets a free base.



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- 8 Play is considered live and shall not be officially stopped until "time out" is called by an umpire. The umpire shall call time out in the following situations:
- (a) When all runners have stopped on a base, or retreating to a base and the defense is no longer attempting to make a play on any runner.
  - (b) When requested by the defender in possession of the ball, after the lead runner has either stopped on a base or is retreating to a base.
  - (c) When requested by the defender in possession of the ball, who has positioned themselves in front of the lead runner, preventing the lead runner from advancing to the next base due to an obvious "tag out" situation. NOTE: A runner who has rounded a base, but has yet to retreat or advance cannot be considered a stopped runner unless the defense has the ball in front of the runner and a tag out is likely if the runner advances to the next base.
  - (d) A player is hurt or injured. If the ball was in play at the time of the injury, base runners shall advance at the discretion of the umpires.
- 9 Once time has been called, the umpire will determine the position of base runners. Runners who are at least halfway to the next base will be allowed to continue to that base. Runners who are not at least halfway, will be returned to the base last touched.
- 10 Catchers not assuming the standard catching stance (i.e. standing near the backstop fence for each pitch) are not eligible to make an out on a batter in foul territory. If a foul ball is caught by a catcher that did not start in the standard catching stance, the pitch will be treated as an uncaught foul ball and the at-bat continues.

### Playing Requirements

- 1 Every player on a team roster will participate in each game for a minimum of six (6) defensive outs. If these playing requirements are not met -
- (a) The player(s) involved shall start the next scheduled game, play any previous requirement not completed & the requirement for the current game before being removed.
  - (b) Those players not fulfilling their playing time because of a shortened game (Mercy Rule, time limit or rain out) will start the next game & play six (6) consecutive outs & bat once before they are removed from the game.
- 2 Each team shall field 10 players (6 infielders and 4 outfielders), but must field at least 8 players by game time plus 10 minutes or the game will be a forfeit. A team may field only 8 players to begin a game, however will take an automatic out at the 9th batter position unless it is the 3rd out of the inning (no out is given for 3rd out, position is skipped, no penalty). If the team drops to 8 players or fewer during the game (due to illness or injury) no out will be charged to the "empty" batting position(s). Any other reason and an out will be charged to the empty batting position(s) unless it is the 3rd out.
- If a coach knows that his / her 8U team roster will drop to 8 or fewer player for any given game, the coach has the option to pull up available player(s) from the Pee Wee division for the games in which his / her team will have 8 or fewer players. (When pulling up players, the coach is limited to a total of 9 roster positions for that particular game, including his / her full time players).

A coach may not pull up a younger player once a game has been started. The coach will be required to play with the players that are present at the start of the game (or full time players that show up late) even if his or her team drops below 9 players due to illness or injury.



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Note: You must play a defensive pitcher and catcher.

### Game Rules

- 1 Umpire will be furnished by OCL.
- 2 Umpire calls strikes on foul balls and missed swings only. No "called strikes" or "walks" are allowed. Players may strike out (3 strikes). There will be a limit of 7 pitches per batter. If on the 7th pitch the batter hits a foul ball, the batter may continue hitting until she fails to make contact with the pitch or hits a fair ball.
- 3 After a batter hits the ball, she must make an attempt to place the bat in the batter's box or lay the bat down. If a batter slings a bat, the umpire will issue a "team warning" for the first offense. The second time, the batter is out. If, in the umpire's judgment, the bat is slung dangerously the first time, no warning, the batter is out.
- 4 A  $\frac{1}{2}$  inning shall consist of 3 outs or 5 runs. Games will consist of 5 innings, but no inning shall be started after the time limits discussed below. (In case of a tie at the conclusion of the 5th inning, teams may play extra innings provided they do not exceed the times limits discussed below). If at any time a team cannot score enough runs to catch the other team, due to the 5 runs per  $\frac{1}{2}$  inning rule, the game is officially over. (For the purposes of these rules, this shall be known as the Mercy Rule). If both coaches agree, the teams may play out the rest of the game, but any additional runs shall not be scored. The next inning begins immediately after the last out of the previous inning.

5 *Regular Season time limits will be adhered to as follows:*

There will be a 1:30 time limit on games. This time limit starts when the first pitch is made.

Single games will typically start at 5:45pm.

When two games are played on the same field on the same night, the first game will start at 5:45pm and no inning of that game will start after the 1:30 time limit. Any inning started prior to the 1:30 time limit will be completed even though its completion may cause that game to run beyond 7:15pm.

The time limits starts at the time the first pitch is made in the game with the expectation that teams are warmed up, completed the pre-game prayer, and ready to go at the posted game time. The umpire has the authority to start the time limit prior to the first pitch if in his/her judgment teams did not meet this expectation.

ANY GAME CALLED DUE TO THE TIME LIMIT SHALL BE CONSIDERED A REGULATION GAME REGARDLESS OF THE NUMBER OF INNINGS PLAYED.

ANY GAME IN WHICH THE SCORE IS TIED AND CALLED BECAUSE OF THE TIME LIMIT WILL END IN A TIE. (Each team will be credited with a 1/2 game win and a 1/2 game loss.)

A game shall be considered a regulation game if at least 3 innings of the game are completed. If play is halted before the completion of the 4th or 5th inning, the final score will be defined as the score at the end of the last completed inning. (A completed inning will include any inning that the home team is at bat and the home team has more runs than the visiting team).

- 6 A runner will be called out if he/she runs more than 3 feet out of the runner's established baseline to avoid a tag. This call will be made by the umpire. Only the coach in charge may appeal to the umpire for this call.
- 7 Any bat 2-1/4 inches in diameter is permitted, but only "USA Baseball" approved 2-5/8 inches in diameter bats are permitted. The umpire in charge shall make the final decision as to the acceptance of the bat for any given OCL game.

### Field



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- 1 The on-deck circle will be a 3' circle placed on the field in close proximity to each team's dugout, and the on-deck batter must wear a helmet. For safety reasons, teams may use either on-deck circle for the on-deck batter.
- 2 The distance from home plate to the pitching rubber shall be 35 feet. An 8' radius player-pitcher's circle shall be placed around the pitching rubber. First and Third Bases are 60' away from home plate.
- 3 11" high visibility softballs shall be utilized.

### Tournament

- 1 *Tournament time limits will be adhered to as follows:*  
There will be a 1:30 time limit on all games except for the championship game(s) (no time limit). In championship games, all innings shall be played unless the game is called according to the Mercy Rule.
- 2 Tournament will be seeded based on overall record. First tiebreaker for tournament seeding is head-to-head record. Second tiebreaker is coin flip. The rules used for regular season will be used for tournament and except that games will not be allowed to end in a tie and will continue until a winning team is determined.
- 3 The higher seeded team is the home team throughout the tournament. Exception: The unbeaten team in the championship game of the winner's bracket shall be the home team regardless of seeding. If both teams have a loss going into the championship game, the home team will be determined by a coin toss under the direction of the umpire or an OCL league representative. Regarding TIE games, TIE games halted due to weather, curfew or light failure shall be resumed from the exact point at which they were halted in the original game.

### Eligibility

- 1 Owensboro Catholic 8U Division is designed for 7 - 8 year old girls, but 6-year-old girls are eligible subject to OCL Board approval. The "playing age" of the child is determined by the child's age on December 31st of the previous year for 7, 8 year olds, April 30th of the year current for 6 year olds.
- 2 Players turning 10 years old on or before December 31st of the current year are not eligible to play 8U Softball
- 3 An 8U player may not play simultaneously in another Owensboro Catholic League division, but shall be allowed to fill in for players in other divisions as outlined in appropriate league rules.