

# 2026 Minor League Rules

## Player and Parent Expectations

1. Players should be on time for all practices and games. Players should notify their coach(es) in advance if they must miss a scheduled practice and/or game.
2. Players should be picked up immediately after practice and games, coaches have volunteered to coach, NOT babysit.
3. Players should be ready to take the field each inning after their team has finished batting. Players should hustle on and off the field to keep the game moving.
4. Helmets and bats will **NOT** be thrown in anger. Swearing will **NOT** be tolerated.
5. Parents, cheer for your players, teams, have fun, and stay off the umpires. We do **NOT** yell at umpires.
6. The Game is about the PLAYERS, HAVE FUN!
7. **Common sense should always prevail when issues arise!**

## Fields and Equipment

8. Bases will be 60 feet in length and the pitching mound will be 46 feet from home plate.
9. The home team on the schedule will use 3<sup>rd</sup> base dugout on all fields. If teams take infield practice prior to the game, the visiting team will take infield first followed by the home team. The home team will remain in the field for the start of the game. NO infield for either team prior to a second game of a doubleheader.
10. Metal spikes are NOT allowed in this league.
11. All catchers must wear a facemask when warming up their pitchers. Male catchers must have a protective cup when catching.

## Game Format

12. Games are six (6) innings in length. No inning shall begin more than one hour and forty-five minutes from the start of the game.
  - a. Playoff games will have no time limit. Extra innings will be played (with the runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> and no one out) until a winner is determined.
  - b. There is no 10-run rule for regular season games. All games will be 6 innings or finished at the time limit.
  - c. A 10-run rule after 4 innings will be in effect for **Playoff Games Only**.
13. A maximum of six (6) runs can be scored in a half inning. If a team scores six (6) runs in a half inning, the half inning is over.
14. If tied at the end of the game, there will be **one** extra inning played, even if the time limit has been reached. Each team will begin the extra inning with a runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> base and no one out.
  - a. The runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> base must be the previous batter in the lineup.
  - b. If still tied after the extra inning, the game will be recorded as a tie.
15. A team may play a game with eight (8) players. A team playing with eight (8) players will NOT be forced to take an out each time the ninth position comes to bat.
  - a. Games will be marked as a 6-0 forfeit in the standings if a team has less than eight (8) players. If a team does not have enough players, they should add players from the other team and scrimmage.
  - b. If both teams have less than eight (8) players, the game is not recorded in the league standings and the game will not be made up.
16. All Games will be scored on the GameChanger App.

## Playing Time and Pitch Limits

17. All players will be in the batting order. Everyone must play at least two (2) innings in the field, with at least one (1) inning in the infield (not counting the pitcher position). Players can be replaced randomly in the field, but the batting order must stay the same.
18. Coaches can make substitutions in the field each inning, with batting order remaining the same the entire game.
19. If a player must leave the game early for any reason, when their turn in the batting order comes up, no out will be recorded for that at-bat and any subsequent times the spot in the order is due up.
20. Pitchers can only pitch four (4) innings in a week (Monday – Sunday). One (1) pitch in an inning is considered an inning. Pitchers can pitch a maximum of three (3) innings per game.
  - a. Play-offs: pitchers can throw five (5) innings per week and three (3) innings in one game.
  - b. NOTE: Pitchers cannot re-enter as a pitcher once he/she has been removed as a pitcher.

## **Batting and Base Running**

21. Bunting is NOT allowed.
22. The Infield Fly Rule will be in NOT be in effect in this league.
23. Intentional walks are NOT allowed.
24. Walks will not be allowed from the start of the season to July 4<sup>th</sup>. If the count reaches three (3) balls, the coach will come in to throw up to three pitches to the batter. If after three pitches the batter is still in the box an out is recorded and the game moves on to the next scheduled batter. If the batter fouls off the third pitch, they will get an additional pitch.
  - a. After July 4<sup>th</sup>, walks will be allowed unless the bases are loaded. If the bases are already loaded and the count reaches four (4) balls, the coach will come in to throw up three pitches to the batter. If after three pitches the batter is still in the box an out is recorded and the game moves on to the next scheduled batter. If the batter fouls off the third pitch, they will get an additional pitch.
25. Players are NOT allowed to steal any base and/or advance on a passed ball.
26. Base runners cannot leave the base until the ball crosses the plate. Penalty: the result of the pitch stands, and the base runner may only advance one base further than the batter (i.e. if the batter singles, the runner may only advance to 2<sup>nd</sup> base or if the batter doubles, the runner may only advance to 3<sup>rd</sup> base).
27. Throws back to the pitcher are NOT live balls. Base runners cannot attempt to advance to the next base on an errant exchange between the catcher and pitcher.
28. On a swinging or called third strike, if the catcher misses/drops the ball, the batter is out.
29. On a batted ball in play, players can advance on an overthrown ball at their own risk (not an automatic base unless the ball is thrown out of play).
30. There is no "must slide" rule. However, a runner will be called out if they do not attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag.
  - a. **NO PLOWING!**
31. No head-first slides when advancing to a base. The runner will be called out if they attempt a head-first slide in this fashion.
  - a. Head-first slides will only be allowed if a player is going back to a base.
32. With two outs, a courtesy runner may be used for the catcher and/or pitcher of record.
  - a. The courtesy runner must be the player who made the last out.
33. Umpires will be instructed to call a large strike zone to encourage players to swing the bat. The strike zone will be from the armpits to the knees, approximately 4" (two baseballs) off the outside corner and 2" (one baseball) off the inside corner.

## **Game Cancellation and Weather Delays**

34. Games may be called off due to rain, lightning, heat, air quality, or wet grounds. We will try our best to get the games in, but the safety of the players and coaches will come first.
  - a. If you have any questions, please call the Parks and Recreation office at 218-773-8000 or the weather announcement line at 218-773-2402.
35. Game cancellations prior to 5:00 p.m. will be determined by the Parks and Recreation Office. Announcements will be on the weather line and the coaches will be notified.
  - a. Coaches should notify all of their team's players/parents to let them know of cancellations.
36. Games not cancelled by 5:00 p.m. will be decided at the ball field by the coaches and/or umpires.
37. When thunder is heard or lightning is seen, play **MUST** be suspended for at least 30 minutes before resuming play. Any subsequent thunder or lightning starts a new 30-minute delay.
  - a. No additional playing time is added due to a weather delay. Time limit rules still apply.

## **Notes**

Players should be able to play multiple positions, but not everyone can be a pitcher, catcher or shortstop, etc. Rotating positions in this league is recommended. If a player wants to pitch or catch, they should let the coach know. All pitchers should have prior practice before they can pitch in a game situation.

The development of arm strength is our main concern, and we will not abuse any of our pitchers. Teaching proper throwing mechanics is the key to a pitcher's success. Throwing curve balls at this age is not recommended.