

2026 Inter-League Majors Baseball Guidelines

Game Structure:

- **Game Length:** 6 innings (subject to mercy rule).
 - **Time Limit**
 - No new inning may start after **1 hour and 45 minutes**.
 - Coaches must record the start time in their scorebook, and the umpire will log it on their time sheet.
 - **Definition of an Inning Start:** The instant the 3rd defensive out is made.
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Scoring Rules:

- **No Run Limit Per Inning:** Applies for the entire game.
 - **Mercy Rule:**
 - The game ends if:
 - The **home team** leads by **15 runs** after **3 ½ innings**, OR
 - The **visiting team** leads by **10 runs** after **4 innings**.
 - **Optional Scrimmage:** If a game ends due to the mercy rule, coaches may agree to continue playing as a **scrimmage** until the time limit or 6 innings is reached.
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Batting & Substitution Rules:

- **Batting Order:**
 - **Round Robin** – All players are included in the batting lineup for the entire game.
 - Late arrivals must be added to the **bottom** of the lineup.
 - **Free Substitution:**
 - Players may rotate to different defensive positions throughout the game.
 - Players must remain in the **same batting order** as submitted to the opposing coach.
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Playing Time Requirements:

- Each player must play **at least 6 defensive outs** (not required to be consecutive).
 - If a player does not meet this requirement:
 - They must complete the **remaining outs** and their **next 6 outs** in the following scheduled game.
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Team Composition:

- **Minimum Players:** Teams may play with **8 players**.
 - Games will **not** be rescheduled if a team has at least 8 players.
 - **Fielding:** Coaches must field all **9 positions** if players are available.
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Coaching Rules:

- **Base Coaches:**
 - Two **adult** base coaches are allowed, provided that **one adult** remains in the dugout at all times.
 - If a player serves as a base coach, they **must wear a helmet**.

Bunting:

- **Bunting is allowed for the entire season.**
 - **Definition of a Bunt:** A batted ball not swung at but intentionally tapped slowly.
 - Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered a bunt attempt.
 - To avoid a bunt attempt, the batter **must pull the bat backward** away from the ball.
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Pitching Rules:

- **Warm-Up Pitches:**
 - **First Inning:** 10 warm-up pitches.
 - **Subsequent Innings:** 7 warm-up pitches.
 - **Coaches** are allowed to warm up pitchers.
- **Pitching Limits:**
 - Maximum pitches per day: **85** (Majors Division).
 - **Pitchers may complete an at-bat without penalty** if they reach their pitch limit during an at-bat.
 - **Rest Days Requirement:**

Pitches Thrown	Calendar Days of Rest
66 or more	4 days
51-65	3 days
36-50	2 days
21-35	1 day
20 or fewer	0 days

- **Pitch Count Record:**
 - Coaches must provide the pitch count sheet to the umpire and opposing coach **upon request** before the game (available in the scorebook).
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Catcher-Specific Rules:

- **Protective Cup:** Catchers **must** wear a protective cup.
 - **Catcher Pitch Limit:**
 - Catchers who catch **3 complete innings** and throw **21+ pitches** may **not** return as catcher for the remainder of the game.
 - **Catchers may finish an at-bat without penalty** if they reach their pitch limit during an at-bat.
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Base Running Rules:

- **Base Stealing:**
 - Once the ball reaches the **infield (pitching circle)**, runners must either:
 - Commit to the base they are at, OR
 - Advance to the next base at their own risk.
- **Dropped Third Strike:**
 - The batter becomes a runner when the third strike is not caught if:
 1. First base is **unoccupied**, OR
 2. First base is **occupied with two outs**.
 - Once the batter enters the dugout or a **dead-ball area**, they forfeit the opportunity to advance.

- **Sliding Rules:**
 - A runner is **out** if:
 - They do not **slide or attempt to avoid** a fielder who has the ball and is attempting a tag.
 - They slide **headfirst while advancing** to a base.
 - **Fielders cannot block** the runner's pathway without possession of the ball.
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Behavior & Sportsmanship:

- Coaches are responsible for the behavior of **players and fans**.
 - **Abusive language** toward players, fans, other coaches, or umpires **will not be tolerated**.
 - **Umpire Discussions:**
 - Coaches may approach umpires **only between innings**.
 - If there is a questionable call:
 1. Ask the umpires to **consult each other**.
 2. If unresolved, you may:
 - **Protest the game**, OR
 - Request the **Field Director** to intervene.
 - Only the **Umpire-in-Chief** may overrule an umpire's decision.
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Prohibited Items:

- Jewelry (except medical alert items)
 - Pine tar
 - Batting donuts
 - Wristbands on pitchers
 - On-deck batters
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All other rules follow the Little League Baseball Rule Book. coaches and umpires are responsible for ensuring these guidelines are followed throughout the season.