

JUNIOR LEAGUE BASEBALL LOCAL RULES

All national Little League rules for Junior League baseball, as described in the current season rulebook, apply unless specifically changed in these local rules, WMLL Universal Local Rules, the WMLL Code of Conduct, or by past WMLL custom.

GAME LIMITS + FORFEITS

INNING & TIME LIMITS: All regular season games are limited to seven innings with no new inning beginning at or after an elapsed playing time of 1-hour & 50-minutes.

- If an inning is underway at the 1-hour & 50-minute mark, the inning should be completed in full unless the home team is ahead after the top half inning of play or takes the lead in the bottom half. In that case, the game is considered completed and the home team wins.
- If the game is tied after a full inning has been completed and the game clock is at or beyond the time limit, the game shall continue as described in EXTRA INNINGS.
- A game which ends due to the time limit will be considered a complete game regardless of the number of innings played.

EXTRA INNINGS: When a game is tied after the time limit has expired, the top half of the next full inning & each half inning thereafter will begin with the offense placing a runner on second base. The runner must be the player who is scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning. Each half inning begins with no outs & play will continue in this manner until a winner is decided.

RUN DIFFERENTIAL RULE: If a team is leading the game by ten runs or more at the end of five innings (or four and one-half innings if the home team is leading), the game is considered complete even if the time limit has not been reached.

FORFEITS: Teams forfeit if they have fewer than eight players to participate in a game. A team has fifteen minutes from the scheduled starting time to obtain eight players before a forfeit is declared. When both teams have less than eight players, a double forfeit occurs. When a forfeit takes place, teams are strongly encouraged to scrimmage one another, sharing players as needed. This scrimmage is not an official game & will not count toward league standings.

EQUIPMENT & GEAR REQUIREMENTS

Each teams' coaching staff must make sure that their players are properly equipped.

HELMETS: Players must have their own helmets. If a player cannot provide their own helmet, they should contact their League Coordinator to arrange a WMLL helmet loan for the season. All offensive players outside the dugout must wear batting helmets including batters, base runners and player base coaches.

CLEATS: If players wear cleats (recommended), the cleat material may be rubber or steel.

BATS: Only bats meeting national Little League rules (Rule 1.10) may be used at WMLL. For Junior Lg baseball, bats must comply with either USABat or BBCOR standards.

DEFENSE

DEFENSIVE PLAYING TIME: Each player shall play at least three innings defensively. The minimum defensive innings in this rule must be full half innings.

Playing Time Rule Exceptions. The only exceptions to the playing time rule will be:

- If a player misses practices and/or games without a valid reason, the coach may decide to reduce the number of innings played in the field for the next game by a maximum of one inning. Absences due to family vacations should not affect playing time.
- If a player arrives late for a game, the head coach can decide to reduce the number of innings at his/her discretion.
- If a player is being disciplined, a head coach must inform the opposing head coach prior to the game or immediately after an incident which requires removal, for the participation rule to be satisfied. The player who is being disciplined should be advised of why he/she is not participating. If the discipline results in the player being "docked" more than one inning below the league minimum, the coach must inform the League Coordinator in writing of the discipline and the cause. This method of disciplining should be used with reasonable discretion.
- If a game is shortened because of the time limit, inclement weather or run limit, all players will not be required to satisfy the playing rule.
- If an eligible player does not fulfill the participation rule, that player must be a starter in the team's next game and play the whole game. Any head coach who violates this rule will be subject to dismissal by the league's Baseball Operation Committee.

INFIELD FLY RULE: The infield fly rule will be enforced and is a judgement call by the umpire.

DEFENSIVE OBSTRUCTION: A defensive player without the ball who impedes a runner, whether intentional or unintentional, or who fakes a tag will be penalized for defensive obstruction. The umpire will award the runner the base or bases they are attempting to reach.

PITCHING

APPLICATION OF PITCHING RULES: Pitching rules, including pitch counts and rest days, apply to ALL WMLL sponsored games, including playoff, in-house tournament, interleague, and/or special games which may not count toward league standings (*i.e., pitch counts do not reset for a play-off or in-house tournament*).

- If a pitcher reaches the maximum number of pitches or a days of rest threshold during an individual's at bat, the pitcher may continue until that individual's at-bat is completed and only be required to observe the days of rest for the threshold reached during that at-bat. This exception also applies to the Pitcher to Catcher and Catcher to Pitcher rules.

PITCH COUNT LIMITS: Pitchers may pitch no more than 95 pitches in a game (can complete the at bat).

- **Pitcher to Catcher Rule:** A pitcher who delivers 41 or more pitches in a game cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of the day. A pitcher who throws 40 or fewer pitches in a game may catch in the same game.
- **Catcher to Pitcher Rule:** A player who plays the position of catcher in 4 or more innings may not pitch in any games that same calendar day. A player who catches for 3 innings or less, then moves to pitcher and throws 21 or more pitches may not return to the catcher position on that calendar day. One pitch in an inning is considered 1 inning.
- **Pitcher Returning to Pitch in Same Game:** After having been removed as a pitcher but remaining in the game and otherwise eligible to throw more pitches, a player can return as a pitcher any time in the remainder of the game, but only once per game. The pitcher's pitch count continues from the actual count before the pitcher was removed. Days of rest provisions apply as written.

DAYS OF REST: The following days of rest are mandatory for pitchers Little League ages 14 and younger:

- If a player pitches 66 or more pitches in a day, 4 calendar days.
- If a player pitches 51-65 pitches in a day, 3 calendar days.
- If a player pitches 36-50 pitches in a day, 2 calendar days.
- If a player pitches 21-35 pitches in a day, 1 calendar day.
- If a player pitches 1-20 pitches in a day, 0 calendar days.
- Pitchers may not pitch three consecutive days.

A pitcher who delivers less than 30 pitches in a game may pitch again on the same day. The pitcher may continue until the at-bat is completed and still be eligible to pitch in the 2nd game. The pitch count in the 2nd game continues from the actual count when the pitcher was removed from the 1st game.

PITCH COUNT RECORD: Each head coach must maintain an accurate record of the pitch count and innings pitched for each player who pitches in a game and adhere to all pitching requirements. A counter will be provided to each team by WMLL. Prior to each game, head coaches must provide one another with a list of each player on their team who pitched in the past week along with the dates and number of pitches thrown in each outing.

INELIGIBLE PITCHER: Any violation of the pitching rules will result in the ineligible pitcher being removed from the pitching position and an automatic protest to be ruled on by the Baseball Operations Committee. The game will continue with a new eligible pitcher and both scorebooks should note the ineligible pitcher's name and the inning in which the violation was said to have occurred. Coaches will be subject to disciplinary action for using ineligible pitchers

BALKS: In games played prior to May 22, all balks will be called, but no penalty assessed. Instead, the umpire will explain the rule violation to the pitcher and tell him/her what to do so the rule is not violated. In games played May 23 and later balks will be called and penalties enforced in accordance with national rules.

BATTING

ON DECK WARMUPS: On deck warm ups are allowed in the on-deck circle closest to the batting teams' dugout.

STRIKE ZONE: To encourage more aggressive hitting and speed the game along, the strike zone used is larger than the standard. The width shall be the width of the plate plus the width of a baseball on both the inside and outside corners (for a total width of 23-inches) and the height shall be from the batter's armpits to the bottom of their knees.

BAT THROWING: A player will receive one warning each game for inadvertently throwing the bat. For any subsequent instance of throwing the bat in that same game, a player that has been warned will be called out. The warning and out can be on the same at bat. If a hitter is called out for throwing the bat the ball will be dead and any runners must return the base, which he/she occupied prior to the pitch. *Note: this rule applies to accidental bat throwing, not to bat throwing in anger or protest.*

BASERUNNING

DROPPED 3RD STRIKE: A batter may try to advance to first base after a dropped 3rd strike as stated in Little League Junior Division rules (when first base is unoccupied or when first base is occupied with two out).

SLIDING: Players are encouraged to slide on ANY close play (even if the defensive player is not yet in possession of the ball). Headfirst sliding when advancing is allowed.

OFFENSIVE INTERFERENCE: On a close play at second base, third base or home plate, the runner is required to either slide or avoid contact with a defensive player in possession of the ball while located within the batter's box area or within the vicinity of another base. If contact is made and the runner did not slide, the umpire shall call the runner out for offensive interference.

▪ *Additional Guidance: For a non-sliding runner to be automatically out, all three of the following must be true:*

- 1) There was contact between the non-sliding runner and the defensive player.*
- 2) At the time of contact the defensive player had possession of the ball.*
- 3) At the time of contact the defensive player was within the batter's box area or within the vicinity of another base.*

MALICIOUS CONTACT: When a runner initiates malicious contact with any fielder, with or without the ball, in or out of the baseline, the umpire shall eject the runner for the game. The runner has the primary responsibility to avoid a collision with the defensive player.