

## UNIVERSAL LOCAL RULES (All Baseball & Softball Leagues)

### PREGAME / POSTGAME RESPONSIBILITIES

**DUGOUT ASSIGNMENTS:** The home team occupies the first base dugout & the visiting team occupies the third base dugout.

**GAME BALLS:** The home team must provide two new regulation baseballs supplied by WMLL.

**SCOREBOARD VOLUNTEER:** A volunteer from one of the teams must be found to operate the scoreboard.

- **If playing in the first/last game of the day:** The volunteer must get/return the scoreboard controller from/to the concession stand & turn on/off the scoreboard.

**UNIFORMS:** Coaches must make sure that their players are properly dressed & equipped. Players must be in full uniform to be eligible to play in a game. Players may not wear jewelry of any kind unless it is for medical identification purposes.

**FIELD PREP:** Both teams' coaching staff must make sure that the field is safe, hazard-free & ready for play – tarps are removed, bases are in place & ready, and, if needed, the pitching machine is set-up & ready. ***See the addendum at the end of these rules for detailed instructions.***

**GAME START & END TIMES:** The official start time of the initial game of the day will be the scheduled start time regardless of the time of the first pitch (unless the delay is weather-related, or the umpires are not present). Games after the initial game of the day must start ten minutes after the final out of the previous game or the scheduled start time, whichever is later.

- The umpires will enforce the scheduled starting time and the time limits for each league.
- The umpires must record the official game start time & end time (time of the final out) on the umpire card.

**POST GAME CLEAN-UP:** After every game, both teams must clean up their respective dugout areas.

**FIELD CLOSING:** If playing in the last game of the day, both teams' coaching staffs must replace both tarps, remove the bases & store them in the dugouts, & insert the "base plugs". ***See the addendum at the end of these rules for detailed instructions.***

### PREGAME WARMUPS

**OFF-FIELD WARM UPS:** Teams may warmup on the north side of the cages and in the grass area near the Major Field, but NOT in the grass area between the batting cages and the parking lot. Players are not permitted to enter Ch 15 property for any reason at any time. Coaches & other adults are allowed on Ch 15 property only to retrieve balls.

**BATTING PRACTICE:** Pregame batting practice & bat swinging can take place only in a batting cage or soft toss station as follows:

- **Batting Cages:** Teams can use a batting cage for thirty minutes beginning forty minutes prior to the game. Each team can use only one of the cages.
- **Soft Toss Stations:** Teams may use a soft toss station for pregame batting practice during the allotted Batting Cage time. Only wiffle balls, tennis balls, or other soft surface balls are permitted for soft toss.

**INFIELD PRACTICE:** Time permitting, the home team may conduct infield practice for eight minutes or the time available until the official start time, whichever is less. Time permitting means that the infield practice cannot interfere with the game's official start time. All players present (not just the starting infielders) should participate in the infield practice.

- **Senior Field Option:** If a game on the Senior Field is the only game of the day or the last game on a Saturday or Sunday, both teams may take infield practice with head coach agreement.
- **Rookie Baseball Option:** Both teams may take infield practice for six minutes - with the visiting team taking it first, followed by the home team (with only non-starting defensive players returning to the dugout). If players are used as catchers, they shall wear a facemask. The desire is to start the game by the official start time. However, if infield practice is not completed by the official start time, it does not extend the original game end time. The original game end time is 90 minutes from (a) the scheduled start time or (b) ten minutes after the final out of the previous game, whichever is later

**PITCHER WARM-UP:** Pitchers warming up prior to or during the game must do so in each field's designated area. Pitchers must throw from the area closest to the dugout with catchers located farthest away from the dugout when an official bullpen is not available (not applicable for Rookie League teams).

### LINE-UP REQUIREMENTS & REPLACEMENT PLAYERS

**LINE UP CARDS.** Head coaches must exchange line up cards at the beginning of the game. Line up cards must indicate the starting players, all eligible substitutes, absent and injured players, players who are being disciplined by not participating and the Little League age of all players. The head coaches must also 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 (not applicable for Rookie League teams).

**OFFENSIVE BATTING REQUIREMENTS:** Every player in attendance must be in the batting order.

- **Late Arrivals:** Players not present for the game's first pitch, even if their arrival is anticipated, must be listed at the bottom of the batting order. If an absent player's batting order spot is reached before they arrive, there is no penalty and they remain in the same position in the batting order.
- **Changes in Player Availability:** If a player is unable to continue play, there will be no penalty to the offensive team when that individual is scheduled to bat. If able, the player can reenter the batting order without penalty. Players not present for the game's first pitch, even if their arrival is anticipated, must be listed at the bottom of the batting order, after call-ups if there are any.

**PLAYER SHORTAGES / REPLACEMENT PLAYERS:** If a team expects to be short of players for a game, the head coach should obtain replacement players to add to the roster for that game, unless the team is short on players due to a scheduled school event in May or June. If this occurs, the head coach should contact the league coordinator so that the game can be rescheduled.

- Coaches should contact potential replacement players directly. *WMLL's goal is to allow as many players as practical the opportunity to play up. Consequently, teams should try not to use the same call up more than two times during the season.*
- A team using a replacement player must notify the opposing team coach and the League Coordinator of his/her use.
- If unanticipated roster player(s) show up bringing the total of regular roster players to nine or more, the replacement player(s) should still play, but may play defensively the league minimum number of innings.
- **Baseball:** Except in the Rookie League, replacement players must be players from the league below the level of the team short on players. In the Rookie League replacement players come from other Rookie League teams.
  - o Replacement players may not pitch and must bat last in the batting order
- o **Softball:** Except in the Rookie League, whenever possible replacement players should be players from the league below the level of the team short on players. In the Rookie League replacement players come from other Rookie League teams. If replacement players cannot be found from the league below, replacement players from other teams in the same league may be used – this is not preferred, but is a much better option than a forfeited game.
  - o Replacement players should not pitch and must bat last in the batting order. If a team is in dire need of pitching, a replacement player may pitch with the approval of the league coordinator or VP-softball.

## COACH & PLAYER MOVEMENTS + TIME OUTS

**DUGOUT ENTRY:** Only uniformed players, coaches, and a scorekeeper are permitted on the bench. Siblings, parents, friends, etc. are not permitted. The head coach must require all others to leave the dugout. Teams violating this rule will receive one warning. Subsequent violations will result in the team forfeiting the game.

**DUGOUT EXIT:** During a game, the only players allowed outside of the dugout are the defense team, the batter, & base runners. Players must stay in the playing area or on the bench during the game unless the head coach permits them to leave.

**ON-FIELD COACHES:** The offensive team may have adults as base coaches. All other coaches must stay within three feet of the dugout entrance during play.

- **Rookie Baseball:** A coach from the offensive team may also be on the field to operate the pitching machine when their own team is batting. For all regular season games (not including the league playoffs), the defensive team may station one coach on the outfield grass for instructional purposes.
- **Rookie Softball:** A coach from the offensive team may also be on the field to operate the pitching machine &, when there is no backup catcher, place the batting tee & ball during tee batting. The defensive team may station two coaches on the outfield grass for instructional purposes. A coach or adult volunteer acting as "backup catcher" may stand at the backstop to retrieve balls that get by the catcher & assist with the placement of the tee & ball during tee batting.
- **Minor, Major & Junior Softball:** A coach from the offensive team may also be on the field for "spot relief" pitching as needed (according to the league's local rules) when their own team is batting. *Note: During the spring/summer season, the defensive team is not allowed to station one coach on the outfield grass for instructional purposes.*

**OFFENSIVE TIMEOUTS:** Each team is limited to one offensive timeout per inning, which includes a base coach coming down the line to have a conference with a batter.

**DEFENSIVE TIMEOUTS / COACH-PITCHER CONFERENCES:** A coach is permitted two visits per pitcher during a game, and only one visit per inning prior to having to replace the pitcher. Any defense timeout is considered as a visit.

- During a visit with the pitcher, coaches may confer with any player(s), including the catcher.
- On the third visit to a pitcher in a game or the second visit in an inning, the pitcher must be removed from the mound (not applicable for Rookie League teams).

## GAME PACING

**INNING SWITCH:** Players must hustle on and off the field between offense and defense to allow as many innings as possible to be played within the time limit.

**WARM-UP PITCHES:** Pitchers are limited to a maximum of four warm-up pitches prior to each half inning and a maximum of eight pitches when entering a game. For Rookie League teams, these limits are halved for catcher warmups.

**DELAY OF GAME PENALTY:** The first pitch of a half inning must be delivered not longer than 90 seconds after the third out of the previous half inning. When delays occur, the umpire may call a strike on the batter if the violation is by the offensive team, or a ball on the batter if the violation is by the defensive team. The umpire may continue to call strikes or balls each 20 seconds until the first pitch is delivered.

**COURTESY RUNNER FOR CATCHER:** To allow the catcher to be in gear and ready to play without delay, a courtesy runner may be used for the catcher at any time but is mandatory when there are two outs. This runner will be the individual who made the previous out in the inning. If the previous out was made by the scheduled pitcher the courtesy runner may be the out prior to that.

## POST-SEASON LEAGUE PLAYOFF

**STRUCTURE:** League playoffs are conducted using a single-elimination bracket play format with team seeding based on regular season standings. League coordinators determine when to establish seedings – using final standings or standings on a predetermined date (e.g., two weeks before the start of the tournament).

**RULES:** All regular-season rules apply except those which are specifically noted in these local rules or communicated by the league coordinator in advance of the playoffs.

**REPLACEMENT PLAYERS:** If a team needs replacement players for a league playoff game, a coach must obtain league coordinator approval before seeking call up players.

**CHAMPIONSHIP GAME:** The championship games will be played without a time limit, although the game may be called for darkness or weather conditions. Winning players will receive trophies or medals as determined by the Board of Directors.

## WEATHER, LIGHT & OTHER SAFETY CONDITIONS

All determinations of field, light, weather & other conditions that could affect player, spectator, umpire, coach or concession worker safety should be made together by the head coaches & umpires at each playing field unless a Board member is present and has instructed the head coaches & umpires otherwise. These determinations should always be made erring on the side of safety.

**DELAYING GAMES DUE TO RAIN, LIGHTNING OR DARKNESS/LIGHTING FAILURE:** If a field is not playable at game time but might be playable in a short period of time, the game will be delayed no more than fifteen minutes. The conditions will be checked after fifteen minutes and, if the field is still unplayable, the game will be canceled and rescheduled by the coordinator. If a delay occurs after a game has begun, the first fifteen minutes of the total delay time do not count as part of the game time limit.

**LIGHTNING:** When lightning is visible, the game will be suspended for thirty minutes and all coaches, players, spectators and umpires must take immediate shelter in the dugouts, near the concession stand or in private vehicles to ensure their safety.

**CALLING GAMES DUE TO RAIN, LIGHTNING OR DARKNESS/LIGHTING FAILURE:** When a game has been delayed for forty-five minutes, the game will be called.

- A game called before the completion of one inning will be rescheduled as a new game.
- A game called after 4 innings have been completed (3 ½ innings if the home team is leading) is an official completed contest.
  - *For Junior & Senior League baseball, an official contest is after the completion of 5 innings (4 ½ innings if home team is leading)*
- A game called after the completion of one inning and before it is an official completed contest will be considered a suspended game. A suspended game shall be resumed at the exact point of suspension.
  - o *Prior to leaving the field of play, the coaches will verify the line ups, score and exact point at which play has been stopped (i.e. outs, balls and strikes batter, runners score, etc.) Any dispute should be referred to the league coordinator for resolution.*

### **Resuming a Suspended Game:**

- *The league coordinator shall attempt to reschedule the suspended game at the time when the two teams will be playing each other again. The suspended game will be played prior to the regulation game or another suspended game.*
- *The line ups and batting order of the teams shall be the same as the moment of suspension. If player(s) present originally are absent when*

*the suspended game is resumed their spots in the batting order will be skipped over with no penalty. Players absent originally, but present when the game is resumed will be added to the end of the batting order.*

- *All pitching regulations will be determined by the week during which the suspended game is being resumed (not applicable for Rookie League teams).*

**IMMEDIATE CANCELLATIONS:** These rules will not restrict the head coaches, umpires, and/or any Board member present at the field from immediately canceling play in order to ensure the safety of players, spectators, umpires, coaches and concession workers.

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## Addendum: OPENING & CLOSING WMLL FIELDS

### OPENING A FIELD

**FIELD INSPECTION:** Walk the field & dugouts to make sure that they are safe & hazard-free. Report any items needing attention to your league coordinator or a ground crew member. If safety issues are present, do NOT use the field until repairs are made or restrict activities to safe areas of the field.

**TARPS:** Remove the tarps from the mound and home plate area, fold them up, and put the tarps and stakes or weights on the storage cart. *Note: Please do not leave tarps or weights on the grass as it can cause the grass to get damaged & burned.*

**CART:** Roll the cart to its proper storage location - behind the 1B dugout on the Minor & Senior Fields & behind the 3B dugout on the Battista (Major) Field.

**BASES:** Take the bases from the dugout to the base locations. Remove the base plugs and place the bases in the holes. Put the base plugs in the dugout on top of the helmet box.

**SCOREBOARD & CONTROLLER:** If using the scoreboard, get the scoreboard controller from the concession stand, & on the Minor & Battista Fields turn on the scoreboard via the switch on scoreboard support leg.

### CLOSING A FIELD *(after the last game of the day or a game cut short due to weather)*

**BASES:** Take the base plugs from the dugout to the base locations. Remove the bases and place the base plugs in the holes. Put the bases in the dugout. *Note: It is important to replace the plugs so the infield can be groomed without plugging/losing the holes.*

**TARPS:** Cover the mound and home plate area with the correct tarp (with the seam/dirty-side down) so that only the dirt is covered, then secure the tarp & as follows.

- **Battista & Senior Fields:** Place pegs in every other whole of both tarps.
- **Minor Field:** Place black weights on the home plate tarp around its perimeter. The mound tarp is weighted internally and does not need supplemental weights.

*Note: Tarps must be put down at the end of the day even if no rain is forecasted. Tarps are designed to hold moisture in the dirt as much as to keep rain out. Mounds & home plate areas left uncovered overnight quickly become rock hard.*

**CART:** Move the cart to its proper storage location - behind the 1B dugout on the Minor & Senior Fields & behind the 3B dugout on the Battista (Major) Field.

**SCOREBOARD & CONTROLLER:** If the scoreboard was used, return the scoreboard controller to the concession stand & on the Minor & Battista Fields turn off the scoreboard via the switch on scoreboard leg.

### PITCHING MACHINE

**STORAGE:** To use a pitching machine, get it from the equipment room before the game & return it afterwards (unless you are certain that there is a game immediately after yours that also needs to use it.)

**POWER SUPPLY:** Connect the pitching machine directly to the in-ground outlet behind the pitcher's mound (no extension cord is needed).

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### SOFTBALL PITCHING RUBBER

**STORAGE:** The softball pitching rubber, spikes & hammer are stored in the first base dugout of the Minor Field near the helmet box. If missing, check for a backup in the equipment room (formerly coach's mailroom).

**PLACEMENT:** Position the pitching rubber & secure it with the spikes as follows: Minor Softball = 35', Major Softball = 40' & Junior/Senior Softball = 43'. After the game, please return the rubber to the proper storage location (unless you are certain that there is a game immediately after yours that also needs to use it.) *Note: These distances will be marked with short paint lines.*