

PORTER COUNTY YOUTH LEAGUE
2025 GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS
APPLES TO ALL AGE DIVISIONS

Revised 1/20/25

PCYL Baseball program serves the following leagues: Morgan Twp, Washington Twp, Kouts, Valparaiso Parks Dept, Valpo Americans, Liberty Rec, Duneland Diamond, Portage, and Westville.

1. **General Introduction:** The following rules and regulations shall govern the conduct and operation of the Porter County Youth League (PCYL). These rules shall supersede all previous rules and shall be effective until revised. It shall take a majority vote of the league members present to adopt or amend these rules once adopted.
2. **Purpose:** The purpose of the PCYL is to allow all eligible persons the opportunity to participate in an organized baseball league consisting of teams from member communities. Besides attempting to develop baseball skills, we also seek to instill values of fair play and sportsmanship in those persons participating in the league. Additionally, it is a major goal of the program to facilitate the growth and the development of the emotional and physical maturity of the players.
3. In general, all PCYL age divisions will play according to the **Babe Ruth League, Inc., Baseball Rules and Regulations & Official Playing Rules** of the current year. Where the PCYL local league rules do not address an issue (Appendices A-D), the Babe Ruth rules are in force.
 - a. **The PCYL endorses the Babe Ruth Sportsmanship Code:**
 - Develop a strong, clean, healthy body, mind and soul.
 - Develop a strong urge for sportsman-like conduct.
 - Develop understanding of and respect for the RULES.
 - Develop courage in defeat, tolerance and modesty in victory.
 - Develop control over emotions and speech.
 - Develop a spirit of cooperation and team play.
 - Develop into real, true, CITIZENS...
 - b. **Any conduct contrary to the values stated above will result in disciplinary action.**
 - c. **The following are some of the Babe Ruth rules that apply to all age groups:**
 - The player's official league age is his/her age on April 30 of any given season.
 - The local league president must certify an original record of birth for every player rostered.
 - Teams may have as many as 15 players on a roster.

d. Bats:

- Cal Ripken: all non-wood bats must have the USA Bat Marking and barrels no larger than 2 5/8". The marking must be clearly identifiable, or the bat will not be allowed for game play.
- 13-15: All non-wood bats must have the USA Bat marking or marked BBCOR .50 and barrels no larger than 2 5/8". The marking must be clearly identifiable, or the bat will not be allowed for game play.
- Any cracked or flat bats must be removed from the game.
- If the illegal bat is discovered prior to a batter completing his "at bat", the bat is simply removed from play and the batter continues his "at bat".
- A player who uses an illegal bat and reaches base on a batted ball will be ruled out.
- Note: this is an appeal play. The "at bat" will be considered legal once a pitch is thrown to the next batter.

e. Baseballs:

- Baseballs must be stamped with Official Babe Ruth League baseball, Official Cal Ripken baseball, or equivalent. The ball must have a leather cover with a cushioned cork rubber pill or a rubber pill center.

f. Catcher Helmets:

- Cal Ripken: hockey-style headgear meets all the requirements.
- 13-15: Catchers may wear hockey style or two-piece headgear. A throat protector must be attached to the face mask of two-piece headgear.
- Helmets may not have a mirrored or chrome finish.
- A mask must be worn by any player or coach warming up a pitcher at any location, standing or crouching.
- A Protective Cup must be worn by any player playing the catcher position.

g. Batting Helmets:

- Helmets must be worn by any player at bat, on deck, while a base runner, or in the coach's box in games and at practice.
- The helmet must remain on until the player enters the dugout. Removing the helmet on the field of play or throwing it in a dugout may result in ejection from a game.
- Bat boys/girls must wear a helmet any time they are out of the dugout.
- Helmets may not have a mirrored or chrome finish.

h. Jewelry:

- Jewelry is permitted. However, umpires have the authority to remove anything believed to distract or increase risk to player safety.
- Medical alert or religious bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewelry.

i. **Regulation Game:**

- **Cal Ripken:** 6 innings or 4 innings if the game is called for weather.
- **Babe Ruth 13-15:** 7 innings or 5 innings if the game is called for weather.

j. **Contact Rule:**

- If a runner attempting to reach home or any base intentionally and maliciously runs into a defensive player, he will be called out and ejected from the game. This is an umpire's judgement call.

k. **Blocking a Base/Obstruction:** No defensive player without the ball in possession has the right to block the pathway of an offensive player attempting to advance to any base. The baseline belongs to the runner and a defensive player may only be there when fielding a ball or already in possession of the ball.

l. **Taunting:** Taunting or distracting the opposition with "cheering" or other antics from the field or the dugout could be the determination of unsportsmanlike behavior is at the discretion of the umpire and may result in ejection. The following rules are included for guidance.

- 4.06(a) No manager or player shall at any time, whether from the bench, the coach's box or on the playing field or elsewhere
 1. incite a demonstration by the spectators
 2. use language which will in any manner refer to or reflect upon opposing players
 3. employ any word or phrase or commit any act while the ball is alive and in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit a balk
- 9.01 Each umpire has the authority to disqualify any player, coach, manager, or substitute for unsportsmanlike conduct or language, and to eject such disqualified people from the playing field

m. **Slash Bunt:** Slash Bunt (Cal Ripken only). A batter is out for illegal action when the player fakes a bunt and then takes a full swing.

n. **Intentional Walks:** An intentional base on balls may be given by the defensive team by having the catcher or coach request the umpire to award the batter first base. This may be done before pitching to the batter or on any ball- and strike-count.

o. **Warm up Pitches:** At the beginning of an inning or when he relieves another pitcher, the pitcher shall be allowed a minimum of five (5) preparatory pitches to his catcher, not to exceed eight pitches. Preparatory pitches shall not exceed one minute. In case of injury or emergency, a relieving pitcher may take as many preparatory pitches as the umpire deems necessary.

p. **Appeal:** A manager cannot argue or appeal an umpire's decision based on judgement (such as fair or foul, ball or strike, safe or out). An appeal may only be made to the umpire that made the call if there is reasonable doubt that the umpire's decision may be in violation of the rules.

q. **Tobacco/Alcohol:** Tobacco and alcohol use are NOT permitted on or near any field during a scheduled game, practice, or any league activity.

4. **Starting Time:** Weekday games shall start at 5:30pm until June when 6:00pm will be used. Saturday games shall start as posted in the schedule. Game times may be changed if mutually agreed upon.

5. A game shall be considered regulation if the time limit has been reached or if darkness impedes play and each team has completed its at bat in the inning (unless the home team was winning) regardless of the number of innings played.

6. **Forfeiting Games:** Every effort should be made to avoid a forfeit.

- Failure to schedule a make-up game in a reasonable amount of time.
- Failure to field a team with a minimum of eight players within 15 minutes of the scheduled start time.
- Abusive fans or coaches (see section 10).

7. **Home Team Responsibilities:**

- Provide a playing field to official specifications.
- Provide at least two new baseballs. Extra baseballs should be on hand in case of weather, or a ball becomes unplayable.
- Scorebook: The home team is responsible for keeping the official scorebook. The scorekeeper must be identified to the opposing manager and shall sit in or near the dugout.
- Cancellations: The home team must decide if the field is playable and will support a safely played game. If the game is to be canceled, the visiting team should be notified at least 90 minutes prior to the scheduled start time. Note: once the game begins, it shall be the discretion of the home plate umpire (in consultation with the respective coaches) to determine if the game is playable.

8. **League Fees:** League fees are \$20.00 per team.

9. **Conduct:** Players, coaches, parents and fans shall always conduct themselves in a courteous and safe manner. All coaches, assistants, and any adults on the field are expected to have a signed Code of Conduct agreement in the hands of a PCYL official before they step foot on the field. Each team manager is responsible for the conduct of their coaches and fans. In the case of an abusive coach or fan, either manager or umpire may call a conference. The offender must bring their behavior under control, or they will be asked to leave. If they refuse, the game may be called and forfeited by the offending team.

10. All players will line up and shake hands at the completion of the game.

11. During the game, all players must remain within the playing area (field/dugout). Going to the restroom will be the only exception.

12. Profanity, name calling, taunting, or teasing are not allowed by any player, coach or fan.

13. Discipline: The league's president and/or the Board of Directors reserves the right to discipline and/or remove the coach or assistant(s) of any team. Undue emphasis on winning or competitiveness that fosters un-sportsmanlike conduct will NOT be tolerated. If any person (coach, player, or fan) is ejected from the game, they shall miss the rest of that game and the next scheduled game. All decisions of the Board of Directors and its officers will be final.

14. A pregame meeting should be conducted between the two managers and the umpire(s) prior to the start of the game. The home manager will provide information about any limitations to the playing field and the umpire will review any pertinent rules. At this time, make sure the umpire is familiar with both Babe Ruth and PCYL specific rules. Lineups shall be exchanged at this time, or preferably, as early as possible.

15. No member league may create local league rules without PCYL approval.

16. Continuous Batting Order: All roster players present will bat, even if they are not playing in the field.

17. Free Player Substitution: A coach can freely move players from position to position, be removed from the game and re-enter the same or any other position. This type of free substitution can occur without limit as to the number of substitutions. This rule applies to the pitching position as well.

18. Eligibility to Play: A coach can declare a player ineligible before a game for injury or disciplinary reasons. He must inform the umpire and the opposing coach of this decision. Additionally, a coach may declare a player ineligible during a game for injury or disciplinary reasons with the approval of the home plate umpire and notification to the opposing coach.

19. Protest: A protest shall be considered only when based on the violation or interpretation of a playing rule or the use of an ineligible player. No protest shall be considered on a decision involving an umpire's judgment. Equipment which does not meet specifications must be removed from the game and shall not be the basis for the protest. Coaches of contesting teams only shall have the right to protest the game. The protesting coach shall immediately, and before any succeeding play begins, notify the umpire that the game is being played under protest. Protests must be submitted to the protesting coaches' league president within 24 hours of the incident. The respective league president must decide if this protest should be submitted to the PCYL for consideration. The respective league president shall submit the valid protest, in writing, to the PCYL president for presentation to the members of the PCYL. The defending coach shall submit his version of the protest also to the PCYL president for presentation to the members. A special meeting with the PCYL will be called to consider the protest to the PCYL board. A vote will be taken (the protesting leagues do not have a vote in the protest) to decide the outcome of the protest. The findings of the board will be final.

20. Game Schedules: Schedules shall be arranged and approved by the league members. Schedules shall be established and approved two weeks prior to the first game.

21. These rules shall be reviewed annually by the PCYL board and updated as needed.

22. Appendices A through D cover the particular playing rules for each PCYL age division.

Appendix A: **Playing Rules for Boys 7-8:**

1. **Eligibility:** Players who will be ages 7 through 8 on or before April 30th of this season are eligible.
2. No more than eight (8) players with a league age of eight (8) will be allowed on any one team.
3. An on-field team shall consist of a maximum of ten players. The minimum number of players a team can field is eight. Having less than eight players will result in a forfeit, but the game may still be played with volunteers from the other team.
4. Every player must play a minimum of three innings during each game.
5. The players on defense will be positioned as follows: four (4) outfielders, four (4) infielders, one (1) pitcher and one (1) catcher who will take his normal position.
6. **Player Sharing:** The sharing of players from one team to another is permitted. The intent of this rule is to avoid forfeiting games, not to strengthen a team by adding players from another team. The team borrowing players may only borrow enough players to play the allowed number defensively. If a shared player(s) is to be used, the coach must notify the opposing coach of his intent to use a player(s) from another team's roster. Only roster players on another PCYL team from the same community may be used. Borrowed player(s) may not pitch or catch. Perceived abuse of this rule should be reported to the PCYL board for review. Penalty for abuse of this rule would result in forfeiture of games where illegal players were used.
7. Four completed innings are required for a complete game.
8. **Time Limit:** No inning shall start one (1) hour 30 minutes after the first pitch of the game. The umpire is the official timekeeper.
9. **Pitching:**
 - Umpires will determine balls and strikes.
 - Pitchers may only pitch two innings per game, and they must be consecutive.
 - Pitching distance is from the rookie pitching rubber (38 feet). This applies to both player pitch and coach pitch.
 - There are no walks. Once a pitcher throws a count that constitutes a walk, the batting team's coach will step in to pitch.
 - The coach shall pitch to the batter from within **three** feet of the pitching rubber.
 - When the coach comes in to pitch the strike count remains intact. The coach is allowed to throw a maximum of five pitches during which the umpire will continue to call strikes and balls. The batter is out if the coach throws five pitches and the batter does not reach base. The pitcher will resume pitching to the next batter.
 - If a pitcher hits three batters a pitching change must be made.

10. If a batter throws his bat he will be given a warning first. The second time in a game the bat is thrown he is ejected. This is a safety rule.
11. **Intentional Walks:** There are no intentional walks.
12. **Bunting:** Bunting is not allowed. Slash bunting is not allowed.
13. **Leadoffs:** There are no leadoffs. Runner(s) may not leave the base until the ball is hit.
14. There is no infield-fly rule.
15. **Sliding into Home Plate:** If a play is being made at home plate the player must slide. The third base coach should instruct the runner to slide as the play develops. If the player does not slide, he may be called out (umpire's discretion).
16. **Base Stealing:** Base stealing or advancing on a passed ball is not allowed.
17. The dropped third strike rule is not in effect. The batter is out on a dropped third strike as if it had been caught.
18. The balk rule is not in effect.
19. **Bat Rule:** All non-wood bats must have the USA Bat marking. Barrel Maximum 2 5/8". No BBCOR or USSA bats are permitted.
20. A play ends when, in the judgment of the umpire, the ball is in the possession of the pitcher within the pitching zone and an attempt at continuous advancement by the offense has stopped. "Cat-and-Mouse Games" are not to be allowed by the umpire.
21. A team may place up to two coaches in the outfield, so long as they are positioned behind the outfielders. This is to help instruct the outfielders. The outfielders must be positioned in the outfield grass.
22. Games are not terminated early based on score. There is no "slaughter" or "mercy" rule. Instead, each team is limited to no more than seven (7) runs per inning, regardless of outs. Once the 7th run scores, that team's inning is officially over. This rule remains in effect during the last inning. However, the home team may bat in the last inning even if they are behind by more than seven runs but cannot win or tie the game.

Appendix B: Playing Rules for Boys 9-10 (Cal Ripken Minors)

1. **Eligibility:** Players who will be ages 9 through 10 on or before April 30th of this season are eligible.
2. No more than eight (8) players with a league age of ten (10) will be allowed on any one team.
3. Teams will be allowed a fourth outfielder. All outfielders must be positioned in the outfield grass.
4. Games are not terminated early based on score. There is no “slaughter” or “mercy” rule. Instead, each team is limited to no more than seven (7) runs per inning, regardless of outs. Once the 7th run scores, that team’s inning is officially over. This rule remains in effect during the last inning. However, the home team may bat in the last inning even if they are behind by more than seven runs but cannot win or tie the game.
5. **Three Inning Rule:** All rostered players who are present for the game must play a minimum of three (3) full innings of the game (on defense).
6. Games may be played with no fewer than eight (8) players. If a game is played with eight players, the ninth batter player’s spot in the lineup shall be declared prior to the game. The vacant batting position is not an automatic out. If a ninth player arrives, he/she may occupy that spot in the order.
7. **Player Sharing:** The sharing of players from one team to another is sometimes necessary to avoid forfeiture and is permitted. The intent of this rule is to avoid forfeiting games and not to strengthen a team by adding players from another team. The team borrowing players may only borrow enough players to play the allowed number defensively. If a shared player(s) is to be used, the coach **must** notify the opposing coach of his intent to use a player(s) from another team’s roster. Only roster players on another PCYL team from the same community may be used. Borrowed player(s) may not pitch or catch. Perceived abuse of this rule should be reported to the PCYL board for review. Penalty for abuse of this rule would result in forfeiture of games where illegal players were used.
8. **Complete Games:** A complete game shall consist of four (4) completed innings if the home team is trailing in the score or three and one-half (3½) innings if the home team is leading in the score. Tied games will be postponed if conditions require it and finished at another agreed upon time. When the umpire announces that “this is the last inning”, the game will be considered official.
9. A full game shall consist of 6 innings.
10. **Pitching Restrictions:** A pitch count or innings pitched rule will be implemented. 75 total pitches or 3 innings, whichever comes first. Regardless of pitch count, pitchers may pitch a maximum of six innings in a calendar week. It is strongly recommended that coaches communicate between innings about pitch count.

11. The dropped third strike rule is not in effect. The batter is out as if the ball had been caught.
12. There is no balk called.
13. The Infield Fly Rule **does** apply.
14. **Base Stealing:** Base stealing is permitted. Base runners may not leave the base until the ball reaches home plate. Base runners may advance on wild pitches and passed balls. Base runners are not allowed to lead off.
15. **Cal Ripken Special Base Running Rule:** once the catcher has secured the ball **and** the runner has stopped forward progress, all runners must immediately return to their bases (However, the ball is still live and runners may advance if the catcher makes an errant throw to the pitcher or makes a play on a runner).
16. **Time Limit:** No inning shall start one (1) hour 45 minutes after the first pitch of the game. The umpire is the official timekeeper.
17. Pitchers will pitch from a mound if available. The pitching distance is 46'.
18. **Bat Rule:** All non-wood bats must have the USA Bat marking. Barrel Maximum 2 5/8". No BBCOR or USSA bats are permitted.
19. Stealing home is not permitted if the team is up by 7 runs or more.

Appendix C: **Playing Rules for Boys 11-12 (Cal Ripken Majors)**

1. **Eligibility:** Players who will be ages 11 through 12 on or before April 30th of this season are eligible.
2. No more than eight (8) players with a league age of twelve (12) will be allowed on any one team.
3. Games are not terminated early based on score. There is no “slaughter” or “mercy” rule. Instead, each team is limited to no more than seven (7) runs per inning, regardless of outs. Once the 7th run scores, that team’s inning is officially over. This rule remains in effect during the last inning. However, the home team may bat in the last inning even if they are behind by more than seven runs but cannot win or tie the game.
4. **Three Inning Rule:** All roster players who are present for the game must play a minimum of three (3) full innings of the game (on defense).
5. Games may be played with no fewer than eight (8) players. If a game is played with eight players, the ninth batter player’s spot in the lineup shall be declared prior to the game. The vacant batting position is not an automatic out. If a ninth player arrives, he/she may occupy that spot in the order.
6. **Player Sharing:** The sharing of players from one team to another is sometimes necessary to avoid forfeiture and is permitted. The intent of this rule is to avoid forfeiting games and not to strengthen a team by adding players from another team. The team borrowing players may only borrow enough players to play the allowed number defensively. If a shared player(s) is to be used, the coach **must** notify the opposing coach of his intent to use a player(s) from another team’s roster. Only roster players on another PCYL team from the same community may be used. The borrowed player may not pitch or catch. Perceived abuse of this rule should be reported to the PCYL board for review. Penalty for abuse of this rule would result in forfeiture of games where illegal players were used.
7. **Complete Games:** A complete game shall consist of four (4) completed innings if the home team is trailing in the score or three and one-half (3½) innings if the home team is leading in the score. Tied games will be postponed if conditions require it and finished at another agreed upon time. When the umpire announces that “this is the last inning”, the game will be considered official.
8. A full game shall consist of 6 innings.
9. **Pitching Restrictions:** A pitch count or innings pitched rule will be implemented. 75 total pitches or 3 innings, whichever comes first. Regardless of pitch count, pitchers may pitch a maximum of six innings in a calendar week. It is strongly recommended that coaches communicate between innings about pitch count.
10. The dropped third strike rule is in effect.
11. Balks will be called (refer to the Babe Ruth/Cal Ripken rule book). There is no

automatic warning by the umpire unless it is discussed with the umpire before the game and agreed upon by both managers.

12. The Infield Fly Rule **is in effect**.
13. Base runners are allowed to lead off. A base runner may attempt to steal a base.
14. **Time Limit:** No inning shall start two (2) hours after the first pitch of the game. The umpire is the official timekeeper.
15. Pitchers will pitch from a mound if available. The pitching distance shall be 50'.
16. **Bat Rule:** All non-wood bats must have the USA Bat marking. Barrel Maximum 2 5/8". No BBCOR or USSA bats are permitted.
17. Stealing home is not permitted if the team is up by 7 runs or more.
18. Metal cleats are not allowed.
19. The base distance is 70'.

Appendix D: Playing Rules for Boys 13-16 (Babe Ruth)

1. **Pitchers:** Any rostered player on the team may pitch. Free substitution as described in the general rules applies to the pitcher's position. A pitcher (including the starter) may re-enter the pitching position later in a game in which he was removed.
2. **Pitching Restrictions as per 11.05:** The daily max pitches shall be 95. Zero days rest are required for 1-45 pitches thrown in a day, 1 day rest for 46-75 pitches, 2 days rest for 76+ pitches. If a pitcher reaches any of these maximums while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to face the batter until the batter reaches base safely or is put out without the pitcher advancing to the next day rest restriction. Official pitch count shall be kept in the official scorebook (home team). It is recommended that the pitch count is reconciled between scorekeepers often during games to avoid conflict. Each manager is responsible for adhering to these guidelines and the safety of the pitchers. The PCYL does not require reporting of daily pitch counts during the regular season. Managers must report pitch counts during the tournament.
3. No inning shall start two (2) hours after the first pitch of the game. When the umpire announces that "this is the last inning" the game will be considered official. The umpire is the official timekeeper.
4. A full game shall consist of 7 innings.
5. **Slaughter Rule:** A game shall be terminated if one team is ahead by 10 runs or more after five (5) completed innings if the home team is trailing in the score or four and one-half (4½) innings if the home team is leading in the score. If a team is behind by 20 runs at any point, that team may elect to conclude the official game as a loss but continue playing until time limit by mutually agreed modified rules. Umpires shall continue to officiate the game.
6. **Balk:** There is no obligatory balk warning given. However, if a balk is called, it is requested that the umpire notify the pitcher of his error for instructional purposes.
7. Metal cleats are allowed.
8. **Bats:** BBCOR, USA (any drop), and wood bats are allowed. Barrel max 2 5/8".
9. It is highly recommended that two umpires are employed for all games.
10. **Borrowing Players:** Every effort must be made to avoid rescheduled games and forfeits. As such, borrowing players may become necessary to field enough players for a legal team. If possible, discuss the situation with the opposing coach in advance. A borrowed player may be selected from another 13-15 team or be a 12-year-old in the same local league. The borrowed player may not pitch and will bat at the end of the order. If borrowed players are used, the game roster cannot exceed nine players.
11. Courtesy runner for the catcher (regular season only). When there are two out, a coach may elect to courtesy run for a player that will play catcher the next half inning. The courtesy runner will be the player who made the last recorded out. This rule is intended to speed up the game by allowing the incoming catcher to get into his gear, not for competitive advantage.

12. **Regular Season and Tournaments:** The season consists of twelve regular season games and a seeded, single-elimination tournament. Seeding for the tournament will be based on win percentage at designated points in the schedule. A minimum number of games played will be required. Tournament games shall be hosted by the better seeded team. The championship game shall be held at a predetermined site. Courtesy runners are not allowed during the tournament. If necessary to avoid forfeiting, teams may only borrow players from their 12U major program. The winning tournament teams must submit scores and pitch counts to the tournament director immediately at the conclusion of the game.
13. **Make-Up Games:** Every effort should be made to schedule a make-up game as soon as practicable. The game shall not result in a forfeit if the home team, in good faith, has attempted and cannot reschedule the game.
14. **Jewelry:** Jewelry is allowed. An umpire may disallow any jewelry that he feels is distracting or a safety risk.
15. **Pitcher Attire:** If a pitcher wears a compression sleeve, it must be a solid, dark color. A pitcher may wear sunglasses that are not mirrored. However, he must remove sunglasses if the umpires deem them distracting. The fielding glove, or batting glove worn inside the fielding glove, may not be white or have white piping or laces.
16. **On Deck Circle:** For safety, an on-deck batter may elect to take warm up swings on the opposing side. For instance, warm up on the third base side if a right-hand batter is in the box, or the first base side if a left-hand batter is up.
17. **Dropped Third Strike Explanation:** Dropped third strike is in effect when there are two out or if first base is unoccupied and there are fewer than two out. The umpire shall call "strike three" and the batter shall be out if tagged, forced out at first base, or if he leaves the dirt circle before attempting to run to first base. If a batter is called "out" on strikes and runs to first base believing a dropped third strike is in effect, it is a live ball, and any ensuing action will stand.
18. **Unsportsmanlike Behavior:** The umpire shall determine actions unsportsmanlike if they are directed at the opposing team or intended to distract the opposing team.