

MAJORS DIVISION - 2025 PLAYING RULES & PROCEDURES

Note: Unless otherwise stated specifically below, all divisions of Hudson Youth Baseball (HYB) adhere to the *Babe Ruth League Rules & Regulations*, and the *Official Playing Rules*.

General Rules:

- 1) Majors Division games are 6 innings in length.
- 2) Players are drafted onto teams prior to the season.
- 3) No extra inning games during the regular season (the game ends in a tie).
- 4) No new inning may begin after the 2-hour mark from the time the first pitch is thrown. Managers and umpires should agree on the exact time of first pitch.
- 5) For a game to be official, it must last 4 innings (3.5 if the home team is ahead).
- 6) Mercy rule is in effect if a team is leading by 10 runs or more after 4 innings (3.5 if the home team is ahead by 10 runs or more).
- 7) The minimum number of players needed to start a game is nine (9). Otherwise, the game is a forfeit. Coaches should check with their teams in advance to determine if they will be short players. In the event a team is short, the Minors Division Call-Up List (see Call-Up Procedures below) should be used to fill open roster spots for games in Majors. Games will not be rescheduled until the Call-Up List has been exhausted or the postponement is due to weather/field conditions.
- 8) Each player on a roster should play a minimum of 9 outs in the field or be on track to play 9 outs if the game ends early (such as by mercy rule or bad weather). HYB's recommendation is to alternate innings so no player sits consecutive innings.
- 9) Any player arriving late may be added to the end of the batting order w/out penalty. Excessive missed games by a player during the season shall be subject to review by the Board of Directors and may result in player ineligibility for HYB Summer Travel. A waiver may be allowed in case(s) of injury or illness.
- 10) RAINOUTS: Weekday rainouts should be called by the managers at least one (1) hour prior to game time. Weekend rainouts will be decided by the Division Director. If a weekend day is not a complete day of rain, then managers will follow the weekday rainout guidelines. Coaches should make every effort to play the game as long as it is safe and the field can be made playable. Following the first pitch, any further decisions to suspend or call-off the game due to weather or field-related conditions become the responsibility of the umpire(s).

Manager Conduct:

- 1) **BALLS AND STRIKES:** There is NO arguing of balls and strikes during the game. If both managers feel the strike zone is inconsistent they may notify the Division Director privately after the game. The Division Director will then notify the Umpire-In-Chief who will make the sole determination if any additional training or guidance is needed for any umpires.
- 2) **RULE DISCUSSIONS:** There are NO rule arguments during the game. Instead, a Manager may signal for time and calmly approach an Umpire after a call has been made to CLARIFY his call and the rule. Both managers may conference with the umpire to discuss the call and the rule. It is solely up to the Umpire to change his call or ask for help from another umpire (if it's a 2 or 3-man crew). If the umpire stays with the call on the field, it stands! If both managers feel a call or rule was interpreted incorrectly, they may notify the Division Director after the game who will then notify the Umpire-In-Chief. It is up to the Umpire-in-Chief to verify any rule determinations and inform managers.
- 3) **UMPIRE CONFERENCES:** Only Managers may approach an umpire in regards to a call or ruling on the field. (No Assistant Coaches, spectators or players).
- 4) **EJECTIONS:** Any Player, Assistant Coach or Manager ejected during a game will result in an automatic one-game suspension. The HYB Board of Directors, under the Code of Conduct, reserves the right to take additional action if such an ejection involves actions of an egregious or violent nature or if there are multiple ejections involving an individual.

Call-Up of Players:

- 1) Call-ups from the Minors Division may be used if a team has 9 or less players available for a game. In doing so, the following procedure must be followed:
 - a) The player must be at least 10 years old and currently on a Minors roster.
 - b) The Majors Director shall work with the Minors Director to establish a rotating list of available players with contact information. The Manager must use this "Call Up List" when contacting available players.
 - c) The Manager must attempt to contact the player at the top of the list first. If unable to get ahold of said player OR said player is unavailable, the Manager should notify the Majors and/or Minors Directors and proceed to

contact the next player on the list. Managers are not allowed to skip players on the list.

- d) Managers are encouraged not to pitch a called-up player but in the event this occurs all pitches shall count and normal rest requirements must be met.
- e) All called up players must be placed at the bottom of the batting order behind regular team members and should not play in the field more than rostered players.
- f) At the completion of the game, the Manager shall advise the Majors and Minors Directors which player was called up. That player will go to the bottom of the Call-Up List and the other players are advanced up the list.
- g) The Call-Up List will be distributed and updated as players' names rotate.

2) Call Ups during the Playoffs are not allowed unless injuries have severely limited a Manager's ability to field a team. In that situation, it shall be at the discretion of the Majors Director to determine eligibility and which player(s) are to be called up.

THE PITCHER:

- 1) HYB will mirror the growing trend of leagues across the country of tracking individual pitch counts rather than innings pitched.
- 2) HYB will follow the pitch count limits and rest recommendations provided under Major League Baseball's "Pitch Smart" Guidelines (See accompanying Pitch Smart chart). The chart lists pitch count limits by age group and outlines the days of rest recommended for pitch counts of 1-20, 21-35, 36-50, 51-65 and 66+.
- 3) The only exception to the Pitch Smart Guidelines for rest will be before the Majors and Minors Championship Games (see the specific playoff rules below).
- 4) If your roster consists of pitchers competing on an outside team (AAU, NB Select, School Teams, etc.), we highly encourage coaches to communicate with their players to ensure they are not overworking them and risking injury.
- 5) A pitcher may only pitch his maximum allowed amount on any given calendar day.
- 6) Each team's Manager is responsible to ensure their pitches are being tracked. It is highly recommended each team uses a pitch clicker or some other method like the Game Changer App or pitch sheet to track their pitch counts. All pitch counts must be recorded in the Official Scorebook at the conclusion of each inning. This provides official documentation should a pitcher's eligibility be questioned.

- 7) The Manager, an Assistant Coach or a designated Scorekeeper should verify pitch counts with the opposing team at the conclusion of every half-inning.
- 8) Managers must report all pitch counts to the Majors Director when they submit game scores (recommended within 24 hours after completion of a game).
- 9) Pitches in suspended/regulation tie games are charged against a pitcher's eligibility. If suspended games are resumed on another day, pitchers of record at the time the game was suspended will be allowed to pitch to the extent of their eligibility for that day if they have rested the proper amount of time.
- 10) Completion of pitching to a batter: If a pitcher reaches his/her maximum pitch count only while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until that batter either reaches base or is retired. For example, a 12-year old pitcher begins the batter with 84 pitches thrown. A 10-pitch at bat ensues before the batter is put out or reaches base. The pitcher is allowed to finish pitching to that batter but must be removed as a pitcher before the next batter comes to the plate since the max has been reached.
- 11) There are no pitcher-to-catcher bans (meaning there is no restriction on catching after pitching). Although not a rule, it is strongly encouraged that Managers monitor the catching of their pitchers or vice versa as catching is also a source of youth arm fatigue and risk of injury.
- 12) If a pitcher hits 3 batters in a game he/she must be removed as a pitcher only.
- 13) A pitcher must be removed on a second trip to the mound in the same inning.
- 14) Balk Rule: During the regular season, balks will not be called on the first offense and the pitcher will be warned instead. A balk will be called on the pitcher's second offense. Balk rules will be enforced 100% during the Majors playoffs.

THE BATTER:

- 1) Each team will bat its entire roster, meaning all players are in the batting order.
- 2) Any rostered players who show up after the game has started will be automatically added to the bottom of the order.
- 3) If a player is ejected, his/her team must take an out when that player's spot in the order comes up regardless of how many batters are in the lineup. If he/she leaves for any other reason, skip that spot without penalty as long as the team has no less than 9 players in its batting order. If a team has less than 9 players in the batting order, that spot is recorded as an out.

- 4) All players must use a legal bat that meets the current USABat standard. For details please visit <https://www.baberuthleague.org/bat-rules.aspx>.
- 5) No BBCOR bats are allowed in HYB.
- 6) No throwing the bat— First time warning, next time the player is called out.
- 7) Infield Fly Rule is in effect (Fly ball in the infield, if the umpire calls it the batter is automatically out and runners may advance at their own risk).
- 8) NO slash bunting - any batter who squares to bunt while in the batter's box either before or during a delivered pitch CANNOT take a full swing at that pitch; he/she must either bunt the ball or take the pitch. If the batter does swing, he/she is automatically called out, the ball is declared dead and runners may NOT advance. There are NO warnings issued. Slash bunting is very dangerous due to the fact many infielders at this level are taught to charge in expecting a bunt when a batter squares and therefore are subject to serious injury if the ball is sharply hit at them with little time to react.
- 9) Batters can advance on a dropped 3rd strike provided first base is open or there are two outs in the inning. (A "dropped third strike" occurs when the batter swings at the pitch and misses but the baseball touches the ground before a catcher is able to field it)

THE RUNNER:

- 1) Leading is allowed.
- 2) Delayed steals are allowed.
- 3) There are no limits to how many times a team may advance home on a passed ball or a wild pitch.
- 4) There are no limits on stolen bases; however Managers are encouraged to demonstrate good sportsmanship and limit stealing if ahead by a significant margin (15 runs is recommended). Care should be given not to embarrass the opponent.
- 5) While not illegal, HYB discourages head first sliding -- unless a runner is retreating to a base or avoiding a pickoff attempt by the pitcher.
- 6) Base runners must attempt to go around any fielder attempting to field the ball. If the base runner interferes, he/she is automatically called out for interference and all other runners must return to their original bases.
- 7) Any runner is out when he/she runs more than 3 feet away from a direct line between bases to avoid being 'tagged' unless his/her action is to avoid interference with a fielder fielding a batted ball.

- 8) CONTACT RULE- If a runner attempting to reach home plate intentionally and maliciously runs into a defensive player in the area of home plate, he/she will be called out on the play and ejected from the game. The objective of this is to penalize the offensive team for deliberate, unwarranted, unsportsmanlike action by the runner for the obvious purpose of crashing into the defensive player, rather than trying to reach home plate. This is an umpire's judgment call. If the runner only "bumps" the fielder or doesn't slide on a close play a warning may be issued. From then on, any runner will be called out. A fielder is not allowed to block the plate without possession of the ball.

THE FIELDER:

- 1) Only 9 Fielders are allowed on defense.
- 2) Infield Fly Rule is in effect (Fly ball in the infield, if the umpire calls it the batter is out and runners may advance at their own risk).
- 3) Each player on a roster should play a minimum of 9 outs in the field or be on track to play 9 outs if the game ends early (such as by mercy rule or bad weather). HYB's recommendation is to alternate innings so no player sits consecutive innings.

PLAYOFFS:

- 1) A Round Robin pool play format shall be used to determine seeding for an elimination round, with every team playing every other team at least once.
- 2) Tie-breaker rules to determine seeding shall be in effect during the Round Robin playoffs for the elimination round (where 1 plays 4 and 2 plays 3, etc). Tie-breaker rules will be communicated to Managers prior to the playoffs.
- 3) Balk rules will be enforced 100% during the Majors playoffs. No warnings.
- 4) Pitch counts shall be in effect for playoffs as they were during the regular season (PitchSmart) with the exception of the Championship Game (see below).
- 5) An exception to the Pitch Smart guidelines is made for the Championship Game.
For this game only - if a player has thrown 40 pitches the day prior, then he/she is eligible to pitch again that day; however that day's pitch count shall not exceed 40 pitches. (All other pitching rest requirements still apply).
- 6) There are no ties during elimination games. A winner must be determined.

- 7) Playoff games must be completed in full unless otherwise ended by mercy or forfeit. Any playoff game shortened due to rain, darkness or field conditions will be resumed at a later date and/or location.

Note: The Division Director reserves the right to modify these rules as may be deemed necessary during the course of the season or the playoffs.