



2022 IN-HOUSE BASEBALL LEAGUE RULES



Eagan Athletic Association (EAA) and Inver Grove Heights Youth Athletic Association (IGH) have established a Joint In-House Baseball League. The Rules contained in this handbook apply to the Squirts III and Minors baseball divisions, regardless of whether teams are playing inter-association or intra-association games. Matters not covered in these Rules are governed by the National Federation of High School Rules (NFHS Rules). If any provision of the NFHS Rules conflict with these Rules, these Rules control.

A. LEVELS

1. Grades apply to current school year at time of registration.
2. Divisions:
 - a. **Squirts III** – 3rd Grade
 - b. **Minors** – 4th & 5th Grades

B. TEAM ROSTERS

1. **Squirts III** teams will be formed geographically within the various elementary school areas. However, availability and location of coaches, numbers of registrants, late registrations, competitive concerns, etc. may result in players being assigned to teams in other areas.
2. **Minors** (4th/5th graders) team formation will be geographically-based but the respective In-House Baseball Boards (collectively the “Baseball Board”) and Age Group Coordinators may also consider a wider variety of factors to maintain competitive balance between the teams.

C. PARTICIPATION OF PLAYERS

Each eligible player in attendance at a scheduled game must make a plate appearance. All players present bat in order throughout the game. For example, if 13 are present, then all 13 must bat in order, even if the number of batters exceeds the maximum number of permitted fielders. Batting order is determined by the batting order actually used in the first inning, even if the team's intended lineup is inaccurate. In this event, the Head Coach must inform the opposing Head Coach and umpires. Players who arrive after their assigned slot in the batting order must be placed behind the last batter in the batting order.

1. **Penalty** for batting out of order, skipping/forgetting a player, changing the batting order after a team has batted through its lineup: Player batting out of order is out.
2. Each eligible player in attendance must play at least 4 full innings in the field. An inning is defined as three consecutive outs. The full innings need not be played consecutively. This rule does not apply to postponed games (however coaches

should abide by the rule when the game is continued if attendance allows), when a player is injured either prior to or during a game, when a player is subject to disciplinary action by the coach, to a pitcher who is removed for allowing the maximum number of walks, or when the Run Rule is invoked. Parents, players, and coaches are encouraged to contact the appropriate Age Group Coordinator or the Baseball Program Director if a coach does not enforce playing time rules.

- a. **Note:** Umpires and Coaches are encouraged to issue warnings to avoid inadvertent violations and promote fair play.
3. When a player is removed from the game because of injury, the Home Plate Umpire and opposing Head Coach must be notified immediately. If the situation changes and the injured player is able to return to the game, both the Home Plate Umpire and opposing Head Coach must be notified and the player returned to his original spot in the batting order. The participation rule is amended for that player to the number of innings played plus the number of innings remaining in the game or the number of innings outlined in C2, whichever is less.
 - a. **Note:** Umpires and Head Coaches are encouraged to issue warnings to avoid inadvertent violations and promote fair play.

D. EMERGENCY SUBSTITUTES

1. **Minimum Number to Start a Game:** A team forfeits the game if it cannot present a minimum number of eligible players within 15 minutes of scheduled start of game. The minimum number of players to start a game is: 8 players.
2. **Minimum Number to Finish a Game:** A team forfeits a game when it cannot provide a minimum number of players to finish a game. The minimum number of players to complete a game is: 7 players.
3. Coaches are allowed to use substitute players from the next lower division if it would otherwise forfeit a game under Rule D1 or D2.
 - a. Substitutes must be current In-House Baseball Players within their respective associations.
 - b. Substitute players are allowed to bring the team up to the minimum number required to start or finish a game only. If another rostered member of the team arrives he must finish the game instead of the substitute.

E. GROUND RULES

1. The distance to the backstops, outfield boundaries, and location of player benches are dictated by the limitations of the available fields.
2. Special ground rules for each field are determined by the two opposing Head Coaches prior to the game in the presence of the umpires.
3. The respective association Umpire Coordinator is responsible for scheduling umpires for all games in which their association's teams are the home team.
4. Fields that are not scheduled for games or practices are available for

practice on a first come, first served basis. Practice time is limited to 1 hour if another team is waiting to practice. A Head Coach or Assistant Coach must be present to have a valid claim on a field for practice. Scheduled games or make-up games will take priority over practices.

F. CONDUCT

1. Any Baseball Board member in attendance at a game has the authority to call a game conference between the umpires and coaches for any reason, including but not limited to rule enforcement. Baseball Board members have final authority to interpret the rules governing league play, including the authority to overrule an umpire on an interpretation of the rules (but not an umpire's judgment call).
2. When a dispute or question arises, only the Head Coach may confer with the umpires and any Baseball Board members (if in attendance or otherwise available). Coaches may only question calls that involve the interpretation of rules. Coaches will not argue balls and strikes. Coaches are expected to exhibit appropriate professionalism and sportsmanship in any dispute, keeping in mind this is a youth sports league.
3. Harassment of umpires is not tolerated in any form! Umpires and Baseball Board members have the authority to eject players, coaches, and spectators who violate this rule. Anyone who is ejected must leave the premises. Failure to comply will result in forfeiture of the game by the offender's team and further disciplinary action by the Baseball Board. WARNINGS NEED NOT BE ISSUED PRIOR TO ENFORCING THIS RULE, NOR IS ENFORCEMENT OF THIS RULE SUBJECT TO PROTEST.
4. There will be no harassment of batters or pitchers in the performance of their duties. Catchers are not allowed to talk to the batter in any way which may be taken as harassment.
 - a. **Penalty:** Umpire should first issue warning to the player and Head Coach of the offending team. If conduct continues umpire may take any action that he deems necessary, including but not limited to further warnings, removal of catcher from the field for an inning, or, in extreme cases, player ejection. A violation may also be grounds for subsequent disciplinary action.
5. Players may not throw a bat or helmet.
 - a. **Penalty:** The player must be called out and the umpire must issue a team warning. Repeated or intentional violations (throwing either a bat or helmet) are cause for ejection from the game, game forfeit, and subsequent disciplinary action. Note: umpires do not, and should not, issue warnings prior to enforcing this rule.
6. All players, when not on the field or at bat, must remain on the bench.
7. All equipment must be behind the bench in an orderly manner and not on the field of play.
8. Coaches may not mutually agree to suspend any rule(s) for any given game.

9. Drugs, alcoholic beverages, and smoking are not permitted at or near practices or games.

G. TOURNAMENT

1. At the conclusion of the season's scheduled games, Squirts III and Minors teams will play in a jamboree. All will compete in a season tournament.

H. RESPONSIBILITIES – COACHES

In addition to the responsibilities stated under Section F **CONDUCT**, coaches are encouraged to:

1. Hold a parent's meeting prior to the first scheduled practice/game.
2. Conduct at least two practices per week depending on the number of games scheduled for that week.
3. Rotate players at defensive positions. Give all players a chance at each defensive position.
4. Coaches are encouraged to stress accuracy rather than speed by their pitchers. Allow speed to follow.
5. Encourage parent participation to help coordinate their team.
6. Handle all disagreements in a civil and sportsmanlike manner.
7. Be a good role model for your players.

I. POSTPONED GAMES

1. If at the point of postponement, a game IS NOT a legal game, then it may be continued at a later date. The game will resume from the exact place in the game where it was called. For example, score 3-2; bottom of the 3rd; runners on 1st and 2nd base; 1 out. Head Coaches should coordinate with their Age Group Coordinator to assign a field and umpires to re-scheduled games. The Head Coaches and Umpires of the postponed game shall report the game situation at time of postponement to their Age Group Coordinator and Umpire Coordinator.
2. If at the point of postponement, a game is a legal game, then the score at the end of the last complete inning will determine the winner.
3. If at the point of postponement, a game is a legal game, and the score at the last complete inning is tied, then it must be continued at a later date. The game will resume from the exact place in the game where it was called. However, innings pitched in a postponed game count toward the postponed game's per week restrictions.
4. Postponement or tie games should be rescheduled and played within 10 days. If coaches cannot agree to a makeup date within the 10-day period, one coach may call the home team's Age Group Coordinator who will set a date and time and notify both coaches. If one of the teams fails to appear for the game, that team

- forfeits. If neither team appears, both teams will be given a loss in the standings.
5. In the event of inclement weather, the following procedure applies.
 - a. **Inclement Weather Prior to Game Time.** If the home field's city has closed playing fields the game is cancelled. If the city has not closed fields, the coaches should attempt to contact each other prior to game time to determine if the game can be played. If a decision cannot be made in advance, the coaches should meet and confer at the field. Every effort should be made to make a poor field condition playable. A reasonable delayed start time is permitted if it appears inclement weather is expected to pass.
 - b. **Inclement Weather During Play.** Once play has started any Baseball Board member, or if none are in attendance then the umpire, shall decide if the game should be called due to inclement weather. Games should be played in steady rain. A game must be called if there is nearby lightning.
 - c. **Cancellations.** The home team Head Coach is responsible for immediately reporting a cancelled game to their Age Group Coordinator and the Umpire Coordinator.
 6. Each city has a weather hotline you can call to determine if it closed fields. Those decisions are usually made late in the afternoon. If inclement weather arises and you are uncertain if the game will be played you should contact your Head Coach. If you cannot reach your Head Coach, please attempt to go to the field. Do not call anyone at your association, the city's Parks & Recreation Department, schools, etc. to determine if the game will be played.

J. SPECIAL RULES - ALL DIVISIONS

1. A base runner is out when he does not slide or attempt to avoid contact with a fielder who HAS THE BALL and is waiting to apply a tag. A base runner that, in the umpire's judgment, maliciously runs into a fielder who HAS THE BALL shall be called out and ejected from the game. This rule applies to all bases. A runner must go around a fielder in the act of fielding in the baseline.
2. Protests may be filed at any time during a game for violations, which are of a continuing nature.
3. A batter-runner who reaches 1st base safely and then overruns or over slides may immediately return without liability of being put out provided he does not attempt to feint an advance to 2nd base. This is a judgment call.
4. Each team, when on defense, is permitted not more than 3 charged conferences during a game, without penalty, to permit a coach or his representative to confer with a defensive player or players. In an extra inning game, each team is permitted one charged conference per inning (not cumulative) while on defense. Time-outs granted for injured players or a pitcher replacement are not charged conferences.
 - a. **Penalty:** for each charged conference in excess of the limits the pitcher must be removed as pitcher for the duration of the game.

5. Each team, when batting, is permitted no more than one charged conference per inning to permit the coach or his representative to confer with a batter or base runner. Time-outs granted for injured players are not charged conferences.
 - a. **Penalty:** the umpire shall deny all subsequent requests for charged conferences by that team. If the coach persists, the umpire may call the lead runner out. This rule does not apply to Mites or Squirts.
6. Upon any injury, an immediate time-out is called, all play stops, and runners may not advance.
7. All jewelry must be removed.
8. Coaches will exchange lineups before the game
9. Only approved bats may be used. The league uses the Minnesota Youth Athletic Services (MYAS)/Gopher State Baseball League Bat Standards to determine what is an approved bat.
10. The following bat standards apply to Squirts III, Minors, and Majors Divisions:

Big Barrel Bats (2 5/8" or 2 3/4")

Only those big barrel bats made by approved USSSA or USA licensed manufacturers that are either...

- (1) Made with the USSSA or USA Mark (see image); or
- (2) Is a qualified BBCOR (see image) bat; or
- (3) Is Wood

Small Barrel Bats (2-1/4" in diameter or less)

Only those small barrel bats made by approved USSSA or USA licensed manufacturers that are either...

- (1) Made with the USSSA or USA Mark (see image); or
- (2) Is Wood

Small Barrel Bat Comment: The above includes Tee Ball bats that are longer than 23 inches in length. Tee Ball bats 23 inches and shorter in length from approved USSSA licensed manufacturers will continue to be allowed without the NEW or Old USSSA marks.





11. A fielder may not impede a runner when he is not in the act of fielding. a. **Penalty:**
The runner shall be awarded an extra base.
12. No intentional walks are allowed.
13. The home team provides game balls.
14. Batting helmets must be worn when batting, base running or in the on-deck area.
15. The on-deck area is on the dugout side behind the hitter (for a right-handed batter the on-deck area is in front of the 3rd base dugout; for a left-handed batter it is in front of the 1st base dugout). Coaches may not override this rule or otherwise prohibit an opposing batter from using the area in front of their dugout/bench area.
16. Sliding is encouraged to promote safety, players must wear long pants.

L. SPECIAL RULES – SQUIRTS III (3rd Graders)

1. This is an instructional division. Standings are not kept.
2. Paid umpires are not used for these divisions. Coaches umpire their own games. Any mention of “umpire” in the rules applicable to this age group refer to these “coach umpires”. Coaches should call balls and strikes for their own hitters from behind the player pitcher and can step in to pitch to their hitter when needed. The Defensive teams’ Coach will field any pitches that get past the catcher and make the fair/foul calls down the baseline as well as any play at home plate.
3. Official Balls: The official ball for Squirts III is a R.I.F. Level 10 baseball provided by the association or equivalent.
4. Coaches will rotate players as much as possible. **Each player will play an infield position for a minimum of 2 full innings per game.** Parents and/or players are encouraged to contact the appropriate Age Group Coordinator or the Baseball Director if your coach is not enforcing playing time rules.
5. Players will pitch to the opposing team the entire season.
6. Players may pitch a maximum of 2 innings per game and 4 innings per week.
7. Counts will be kept and batters can strike out.
8. If the batter is walked the coach will take over and pitch (No walks - we want players hitting).
 - a. The batter starts with 1 strike with the coach pitcher and batters can strike out, but they do not walk.
 - b. If the last strike pitch by the player pitcher is fouled off, the hitter will continue to receive pitches from the player pitcher until a 4th ball has been thrown (in which case the Coach Pitcher completes the at bat), the hitter strikes out, or the ball is put into play. If a batter continues to foul off pitches from a Coach Pitcher, they will continue to receive pitches until they put the ball in play or strike out (no maximum number of foul balls on a 2-strike

- count).
- c. If the pitch is over the plate and would be a strike, then a strike will be called for both player and coach pitches. This includes called third strikes.
 - d. There will be no bases on balls (walks). A batter hit by a player pitch can proceed to first base. A batter hit by a coach pitch cannot proceed to first base – such a pitch is merely a ball.
 - e. A batted ball hitting the coach (pitcher) is considered live.
 - f. Teams are strongly encouraged to place a coach or parent behind the catcher (preferably against the backstop) to retrieve wild pitches and passed balls. This individual should liberally field the ball to speed up the game.
9. Play is called when the ball is returned to the infield and controlled by a fielder. The infield is defined as within the base paths. Control is defined as either an honest effort to direct the ball to an infielder or when an infielder makes an honest effort to stop the ball. This has been very effective at this grade level. Coaches should promote backing up. When in doubt, have the runners hold instead of advancing.
 10. A team remains at bat until 3 players are out or it scores 5 runs in an inning.
 11. A foul pop-up caught by the catcher must rise **at least 10 feet** from the ground to be considered an out.
 12. During the school year, no new inning will start after 8:00 p.m. Once school is out, if time is available, extra innings may be played at the discretion of the coaches of both teams.
 13. A base runner may not lead off the base until the ball is hit by the batter.
 - a. **Penalty:** – umpire will issue 2 warnings
 - i. Additional violations – the base runner is out.
 14. The “appeal play,” to contest a possible base running infraction is not allowed.
 15. The game length is a maximum of 6 innings, if time allows. A legal game is 4 innings.
 16. The bases shall be 60 feet apart, or as close as is reasonably practicable.
 17. The distance between the pitching rubber and home plate shall be between 40 feet.
 18. Balks will not be called.
 19. The defensive team may place up to 9 players in the field. A team may not place more than 4 fielders in the infield (excluding the pitcher and catcher).
 20. Only molded (plastic/rubber) cleats/spikes are allowed. No metal cleats or spikes may be used.
 21. If the catcher fails to cleanly catch a pitch for the third strike of an at bat the batter is out (the uncaught third strike/dropped third strike rule is not in effect).
 22. The infield fly rule is not in effect and may not be called in the game.
 23. Balls thrown out of play – On balls thrown out of play all runners shall be awarded the base that they were currently running towards + 1 additional base.
 - a. (Example 1: Runner on first base. The Batter hits a ground ball to the 3rd Baseman, who then makes a throw to First Base. The throw gets past the First Baseman and goes out of play. The Batter is awarded 2nd Base. The

Runner who was on First Base, is awarded 3rd Base. Example 2: Runners on 1st and 2nd Base. The Batter hits the ball to the Short Stop, who throws the ball to the 3rd Baseman. The throw to 3rd ends up going out of play. Runner who was on 2nd, gets awarded Home, the Runner on first gets 3rd Base, and the Batter gets awarded 2nd Base.)

24. No bunting is allowed.

- a. **Penalty:** Umpire shall issue a warning. If the batter makes contact, time shall be called, the runners may not advance, and the pitch will be called a strike. If the player does not make contact, the pitch will be called a strike even if it was not in the strike zone. If the batter attempts to bunt again in the game, the batter is out.

M. SPECIAL RULES – MINORS (4th/5th Graders):

1. This is an instructional division. However, the level of competition is elevated, and standings are kept.
2. The league will hold an end of season tournament. The tournament will be seeded based upon each team's regular season record. The team's record should be kept by the Head Coach and must be reported to the league upon request.
3. The official ball for Minors is a Diamond DOL-A or equivalent.
4. Players pitch to the opposing team. Balls and strikes are called by a paid umpire.
5. During the regular season, pitchers are limited to 3 innings per game and no more than 5 innings from Sunday to Saturday. Pitching in any part of an inning constitutes one full inning. Innings pitched do not have to be consecutive innings. Example, a Pitcher Pitches the whole 1stinning and then to 1 Hitter in the 3rdinning, this constitutes 2 innings pitched. Coaches need to ensure all players get the opportunity to pitch during the season. The objective is to develop as many pitchers as possible. Tournament rules override this rule.
6. Players are limited to 3 innings at any particular position per game.
 - a. **Penalty:** A violation may subject the coaching staff to disciplinary action.
7. Coaches will rotate players as much as possible. **Each player will play an infield position for a minimum of 2 innings per game.** The intention of this rule is for players to play multiple positions in a game and nearly all positions throughout the year. It is a violation of this rule for coaches to repeatedly place players in the same positions during the same game (for example alternating one player only between 3rd base and left field the entire game).
 - a. **Penalty:** A violation may also subject the coaching staff to disciplinary action.
8. When the pitcher is in contact with the rubber, the ball is in his

possession and the catcher is in the catcher's box, the base runners must be on their bases. This is a judgment call.

- a. **Penalty:** 1st offense - team warning
 - i. After warning - Offending base runners are out.
9. Runners shall avoid fielders in the act of fielding the ball.
 - a. **Penalty:** Runner is out.
 - b. **Note:** Base runners may leave the base path to avoid running into a fielder in the act of fielding. However, the runner may not leave to avoid a tag.
10. Unless fielders are in the act of fielding, they shall not impede a base runner.
 - a. **Penalty:** Runner is safe.
11. If any play, other than an attempt to throw out a base runner in the act of stealing a base, is made against one base runner all other base runners may advance and attempt to score.
12. If in the act of the catcher returning the ball to the pitcher, the ball becomes loose in fair territory, the ball is dead.
13. Balls thrown out of play – On balls thrown out of play all runners shall be awarded the base that they were currently running towards + 1 additional base.
 - a. (Example 1: Runner on first base. The Batter hits a ground ball to the 3rd Baseman, who then makes a throw to First Base. The throw gets past the First Baseman and goes out of play. The Batter is awarded 2nd Base. The Runner who was on First Base, is awarded 3rd Base. Example 2: Runners on 1st and 2nd Base. The Batter hits the ball to the Short Stop, who throws the ball to the 3rd Baseman. The throw to 3rd ends up going out of play. Runner who was on 2nd, gets awarded Home, the Runner on first gets 3rd Base, and the Batter gets awarded 2nd Base.)
14. Small Barrel and Big Barrel bats are permitted, so long as they meet the requirements specified in Section J Special Rules – All Divisions.
15. Pitchers must be replaced after 2 hit batters in one inning or 3 hit batters in one game. A pitcher removed after 3 hit batters in a game is ineligible to pitch for the remainder of the game.
16. Any pitch that, in the opinion of the umpire, is in the strike zone but hits the batter must be called a strike and will not count as a hit batter.
17. A team remains at bat until 3 players are out or it scores 5 runs in an inning.
18. A base runner may not lead off the base until the ball is hit by the batter.
 - a. **Penalty:** 1st violation – umpire will issue a warning
 - b. Additional violations – the baserunners are out
19. Attempting to steal is legal on a passed ball only.
 - a. A passed ball must pass behind the catcher, and not beneath or

to the side of the catcher. This is to encourage catchers to block wild pitches and keep the ball in front of them. Runners may not leave their base until the ball is hit or goes behind the catcher.

- i. A passed ball hitting the umpire is a live ball, and runners may attempt to advance. The ball must be clearly behind the catcher for runners to advance. This is an umpire's judgment call. If a pitch goes out of play, runners advance one base. Runners can only attempt to steal one base per pitch even on a catcher's overthrow and even if the ball goes out of play. *Runners may not steal home*. The purpose of this rule is to encourage catchers to try to throw out a runner and encourage fielders to back up the play. This rule does not apply to normal fielding situations when the ball is in play – it only applies to situations where a runner is attempting to steal a base.
 - b. *Example 1*: Runner at first attempts to steal second base. Catcher attempts to throw him out but launches the ball into center field. Time is called and runner stays at second base.
 - c. *Example 2*: Runner at second attempts to steal third base. Catcher attempts to throw him out but throws the ball out of play. Time is called and runner stays at third.
 - d. *Example 3*: Runners at first and second attempt double steal. Catcher attempts to throw the trailing baserunner out at second but launches the ball into center field. Time is called and runners stay at second and third.
 - e. Prior to each game the coaches and umpires should meet to determine what will qualify as a passed ball. The league recommends drawing a line between the front posts of the backstop to constitute a legal passed ball. The line may be drawn with chalk or dug into the ground. The umpires have final authority to declare whether a passed ball has occurred during the game.
20. Games tied at the end of regulation play shall remain as a tie for regular season play.
21. For regular season games no inning may start: after 8:00pm during the school year; 8:15pm after school is out. Time is determined at the conclusion of the previous inning and the umpires watch is the official watch. For tournament games, no inning shall start two hours after the scheduled start time unless the game would otherwise result in a tie. The game length is a maximum of 6 innings, if time allows. A legal game is 4 innings.
22. Run Rule – For Regular Season Games if one team is ahead by 15 runs after 4 innings or 10 runs after 5 innings, the game is over. (Example 1: Home team is up 16-1 after the visiting has batted in the

Top of the 4thinning, Game is over; Example 2: Visiting Team is up by 10 runs after the Home Team has batted in the 5thinning, Game is over). If a Game is “officially over” because of the run rule, and there is still time within the time limit to play another inning or two, the teams can continue to play for fun/practice/development of pitchers. For Tournament Games only, if one team is ahead by 10 runs or more after the completion of 4 innings or 5 innings, the game is over.

23. The bases shall be 60 feet apart, or as close as reasonably practicable based upon the field.
24. The distance between the pitching rubber and home plate shall be 46 feet or as close as reasonably practicable based upon the field.
25. Balks will not be called. Umpires may call a balk as a coaching point but there will be no penalty.
26. The defensive team may place up to 9 players in the field. A team may not place more than 4 fielders in the infield (excluding the pitcher and catcher).
27. Only molded (plastic/rubber) cleats/spikes are allowed. No metal cleats or spikes may be used.
28. If the catcher fails to cleanly catch a pitch for the third strike of an at bat the batter is out (the uncaught third strike/dropped third strike rule is not in effect).
29. The infield fly rule is not in effect and may not be called in the game.
30. The appeal play for a base running infraction is not available and shall not be used.
31. Head Coaches must call time-out to discuss calls made by Umpires. Both Head Coaches should meet with the Umpires to discuss such calls in a manner that promotes sportsmanship and fair play.
32. No bunting is allowed.
 - a. **Penalty:** Umpire shall issue a warning. If the batter makes contact, time shall be called, the runners may not advance, and the pitch will be called a strike. If the player does not make contact, the pitch will be called a strike even if it was not in the strike zone. If the batter attempts to bunt again in the game, the batter is out.