

## ABL JUNIOR RULES 2023

### BASIC RULES

A. The ABL follows the National Federation High School Rules, with the following exceptions and as designated below and/or listed under Special Rules by age division.

1. No metal spikes.
2. No head first sliding except to return to a base. ex: over run. Penalty: called out
3. BATS must not exceed a -15 Delta (or drop) rating or be larger than 2 5/8 in barrel width at the JUNIORS Level. Coaches are responsible to inspect their team's bats and ensure all are within the standards and in good condition. Each coach has the right to inspect bats of the other team prior to the start of the game. If a bat is found to be questionable, the Umpire shall make the decision if the bat can be used. If a questionable bat is used in a game without prior approval, the team using said bat will forfeit the game.
4. In JUNIORS, the ABL requires each MANAGER/COACH to maintain a Scorebook and Pitch Count Tracker for the entire season. During the game, both teams must have a person designated to maintain pitch counts for both teams and ENTER the TOTALS for all players who pitched in the game for both teams in their official scorebooks.
  - A. Official Scorebooks and Pitch Tracker must be taken to the field for ALL Games and are subject to review by opposing managers, league officials and umpires. If the Official Book and Pitch Count Tracker is not available, no pitcher shall be permitted to throw more than 30 pitches in that game.
  - B. If a team is found in violation later, that game will result in a forfeit regardless of the outcome of the game.

BOTH TEAMS WILL BE RESPONSIBLE TO REPORT THE RESULT OF THE GAME AND PITCH COUNTS TO LEAGUE DIRECTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE END OF THE GAME.

### PLAYING TIME

A. In JUNIORS, teams must use a continuous batting order with free defensive substitutions. Each player must play a minimum of 2 innings in the field and all substitutions must be made no later than the defensive 3rd inning. All subs must play at least 2 consecutive innings in the field. No player shall play the same position more than 3 innings (exception: catcher if you only have one player willing to play the position for that game).

2. IN JUNIORS, players from one community team at the same age level may fill in on additional community team only to ensure that the second team has a minimum of NINE (9) players to start the games. Players being used in this capacity cannot play any position other than one of the Outfield positions and will bat at the bottom of the batting order.
3. Teams may start a game with 8 players in the JUNIORS division. Less than 8 players shall result in a forfeit.

4. Any player ejected or disqualified for unsporting conduct or flagrant foul shall be ineligible for all games for the remainder of that day. In addition, the player shall be ineligible for the next game.

#### PITCH COUNTS.

A. The ABL will use PITCH COUNT guidelines similar to those of the OHSAA. The limits are outlined below for our league.

##### Daily Limit:

For JUNIORS is 75 pitches or 3 innings (whichever comes first)

<u># of pitches thrown</u>	<u>Rest required</u>
1-20	0 days
21-35	1 day
36-50	2 days
51-65	3 days
66-75	4 days (min)

1. No pitcher shall pitch more than 3 innings in a game.
2. If a pitcher pitches at least 21 pitches, he may NOT pitch in the second game of a double header (or the next day.)
3. A pitcher may finish the current batter if the daily pitch limit is reached during that at bat.
4. All pitches thrown in a suspended game or a "no contest" game SHALL COUNT towards the daily pitch limit and the total number of pitches thrown.
5. All pitches thrown in a scrimmage SHALL COUNT towards the daily pitch limit and the total number of thrown pitches.
6. Each team must keep a record of all pitches thrown by each of their players in each game and report it to the league director.
7. Any player pitching during a period in which rest is required is pitching as an ineligible player.  
Note: Any victories in which an ineligible player is participating will result in forfeiture of the contest.

#### REQUIREMENTS FOR OFFICIAL GAMES

1. An attempt will be made to reschedule all suspended or delayed games. Makeup games will be subject to field availability. Potential days will be Saturdays.
2. Games that are not started due to weather should be rescheduled. Games that are started, but are stopped due to weather or darkness, will be considered complete games if three (3) innings are complete.
3. If game is stopped at the end of the visitors at bat and the home team is ahead-score stands.
4. If game stopped at the end of, or during, the visitors at bat and visitors are winning, final score will be the score at the end of the last completed inning, tie or not.

5. Games are only to be rescheduled because of rain outs or school functions. Any other reasons must be approved by the board.
6. Every effort should be made to play a game. If a team forfeits, and/or doesn't show, they are responsible for paying the forfeit fee (Umpire Fee). Games start at 6:00pm on weeknights or other times by Pre-arranged Agreement. Rainouts are usually called by the Parks and Rec department. The coach of the home team is responsible for contacting the visiting team and working with the league director to attempt to schedule a makeup game.

## OFFICIALS

1. The Board has approved umpires for the JUNIOR division.
2. Should an interpretation of the rules arise between competing coaches or a coach and the umpire, a time limit of 5 minutes shall be set, at which time the Umpire shall make the final decision.
3. All umpire decisions are final and cannot be reversed. The league director has no authority to, and therefore will not, reverse any umpire decision. There will be no reversing of game outcomes, there will be no filing of a "formal protest". The action on the field will determine the outcome of the game, and all outcomes are final and in no way subject to any review or appeal process of any kind.
4. The ABL will provide the necessary funds to cover this fee.

## ADDITIONAL RULES

Guidelines: Our goal is to teach the fundamentals of baseball while promoting good sportsmanship, team play, friendly competition, and personal improvement. These rules are not up for interpretation or discussion. Managers that do not follow these rules or decide to make-up their own rules will be warned and then dismissed! Any manager wishing to change a rule should do so by submitting a formal request to the league director in writing at the end of the season (provide a reason and solution) for submission to the Board of the ABL. Coaches must have a copy of the ABL Rules at all games.

1. Games shall consist of six (6) innings, but will be considered complete after 3 innings in the event of inclement weather or darkness (or 2 1/2 if the home team is winning). No inning shall start after 1 hour and 45 minutes of game time. Example, game starts at 6:00p, no innings may start after 7:45p. Game starts at 6:10p, no innings may start after 7:55p. Umpires have discretion to stop games for darkness, weather or field conditions if needed at any time.
2. Bases are 60 ft., pitching distance is 45 feet. Distance from Home Plate to 2nd Base is 84'10".
3. There are no intentional walks.

4. All pitchers must be removed after hitting 3rd hit batter and cannot return even in extra innings.
5. No Curveballs! One warning is given, then removed from the game for unsportsmanlike conduct. This does not include pitches that move naturally due to pitchers natural throwing motion (and do not cause stress on pitcher's arm).
6. Thrown bats will result in a warning to both benches on the first occurrence and there after the batter will be called out for throwing a bat. Coaches, instruct your players about this rule at every practice. The Umpire has a duty to remove any player from the game who by excessive throwing of the bat or a second event in that game causes a risk in that umpire's judgement. This is not appealable.
7. Teams have a ten (10) minute grace period after the scheduled start time to field a team with a minimum of eight (8) players. Please keep in mind that we do not want forfeits. If a team has a player that is legitimately on his way to the field after the 10 minute grace period, it is acceptable to wait for said player to arrive. Game will start as soon as player arrives. There will be no warm up period for said player.
8. The game may be played by both teams if a team does not meet this requirement, however, the official score will be a 6-0 forfeit. Note: The ABL does not encourage coaches to watch the clock and should use common sense before accepting a forfeit.
9. Play is dead on a walk. Runners may only advance to next base – no advancement on a misplayed ball.
10. No Lead-offs! Baserunners may only leave the base after ball crosses home plate. One warning per team, after that all runners leaving early will be called out.
11. A courtesy runner may be used for an injured player. The last batter to record an out or a substitute not in the game may be used.
12. A courtesy runner may be used for your catcher if there are 2 outs in the inning. The last batter to record an out in the inning will be the runner.
13. WE DO NOT WANT COLLISIONS! Failure to avoid interference and obstruction will result in the runner being called out and possible ejection for the player and the Coach. Please understand the following:
  - a. Offensive interference is the act (either physical or verbal) by a member of the team at bat who illegally impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder: or when a runner creates malicious contact with any fielder with or without the ball, in or out of the baseline.
  - b. Defensive Obstruction is the act of the defensive team member that hinders or impedes a batter's attempt to contact a pitched ball or that impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases, unless the fielder is in possession of the ball or making the initial play on a batted ball. The act may be intentional or unintentional, physical or verbal.

14. There is a five (5) run per inning limit except for the last inning. After the 5th run is scored teams switch and end the 1/2 inning immediately – no running the bases! There is no run limit in the last inning of a game.

15. In order to avoid possible confusion and conflict, in the event that it is obvious a game will not be able to reach 6 innings before the 1 hour 45 minute time limit, the head coaches and umpire must agree to designate the upcoming inning as the last inning, BEFORE the visiting team comes up to bat. This will eliminate the run rule for that inning. If this isn't agreed upon BEFORE the visiting team bats, the run rule will remain in effect for that inning, even if it becomes the last inning due to time constraints. The elimination of the run rule CANNOT be retroactively enacted once the first pitch has been thrown in the visiting team's at-bat

16. Mercy Rule: twelve (12) runs after three innings, ten (10) after 4th inning.

17. BALLS HIT IN OUTFIELD:

- a. Play is continued until a hit ball is returned and controlled by an INFIELDER in the Infield. The INFIELDER is encouraged to try to make a play on ANY RUNNER who is moving in the baseline at the time the Infielder gets control.
- b. If the fielder has control of the ball in the infield and chooses NOT to try to get the runner(s) out then the runner(s) who are moving in the base- line must immediately decide to either continue to the next base or return to the last occupied base. Play is considered dead only when all runners have safely either returned to base or proceeded to the next base.
- c. If a play is made and an overthrow occurs, the runners may advance ONE additional base. If a second overthrow occurs during the same play, the runners may advance ONE additional base. NO CONTINUOUSLY RUNNING BASES ON A SINGLE OVERTHROW.

17. STEALING: a team may make three (3) ATTEMPTS per inning with the following restrictions:

- a. Runners may steal 3rd base ONLY: \*\*Runners cannot steal 2nd base.\*\* The throw is too far for the kids at this level to complete successfully.
- b. Base-runner may attempt to steal 3rd base AFTER the pitch has crossed home plate. Runners MAY NOT advance to home due to overthrow of 3<sup>rd</sup> by catcher trying to throw him out. Runners may not advance or try and steal if ball is overthrown from catcher to pitcher or if pitcher mishandles throw from catcher.
- c. There will be no stealing if a team is ahead by 8 or more runs.
- d. Ball is dead on throwback to pitcher. Runners may pick up the ball and give it to pitcher on an overthrow and will not be out.

17. Runners can only advance ONE base on overthrows of a play on a ball hit in the Infield. NO CONTINUOUSLY RUNNING BASES ON A SINGLE OVERTHROW.

18. Uniform: All players must have their shirts tucked in and hats worn in the proper manner always. No player will be permitted to play in shorts, parents are encouraged to buy baseball pants.

19. Players that are placed at CATCHER MUST wear a cup.