

2025 SPYBAS Majors Baseball League Rules

I. General

A. Ground Rules

- 1) If lightning is observed, all games must be delayed for 30 minutes after the last visible lightning. All players, coaches, and spectators shall take cover in their vehicles. After 30 minutes, umpires and League Directors will determine if games can resume.
- 2) A ball that hits the protective fencing or netting in foul territory is considered a dead ball, even if subsequently caught by a defensive player.
- 3) The orange “safety” base at first base is considered foul territory. A runner is not considered out if the defensive player touches the orange base instead of the white base.
- 4) Bases are set at 70’ distances.

B. Equipment/Safety

- 1) Bats must have a “USA Baseball” stamp. 2 ⁵/₈” barrel max. Wood bats meeting these criteria are allowed.
- 2) Players are encouraged to wear their own batting helmet.
- 3) Players must wear rubber cleats or tennis shoes – no metal cleats.
- 4) Any minor, including players, serving as a base coach, batboy or batgirl must wear a helmet while they are on the field.
- 5) Players warming up a pitcher between innings must wear a catcher’s helmet and mask.
- 6) Players are not allowed to wear jewelry, including “soft” bands and/or necklaces. Studded earrings are acceptable if covered by a band-aid or similar.
- 7) Pitchers shall not wear any items that may distract the batter. White long sleeve undershirts are not allowed.
- 8) Shirts of all players should be tucked in.

- 9) Catchers are required to wear a protective cup. All players are strongly recommended to wear a protective cup.

C. Coaches/Team Responsibilities

- 1) No player, coach or fan shall speak disrespectfully or with foul language toward another player, coach, fan or umpire. Doing so may result in disciplinary action by the umpire, and/or SPYBAS.
- 2) Teams are allowed a 1st and 3rd base coach while batting. All other coaches/parent helpers must remain in the dugout or at the mouth of the dugout unless required to pitch per league rules. No defensive coaches allowed on the field except during mound visits, appeals, or injury timeouts.
- 3) Game Setup/Clean Up responsibilities
 - a. Visiting team of 1st game: Remove base plugs and install bases.
 - b. Visiting team of last game: Replace base plugs and put away bases. Lock the storage shed when all bases are put away.
 - c. Home team is responsible for identifying a scoreboard operator.
 - d. Each team is responsible for cleaning out its own dugout.
- 4) Head coach of the winning team is responsible for reporting the score to the league immediately following their game. Games not reported within 48 hours will be recorded as a tie. Communicate scores to League Director as specified.

D. Umpires

- 1) Umpires are to be treated with respect at all times. Failure to comply with this rule can result in ejection from the game and possible dismissal from coaching at the discretion of SPYBAS.
- 2) Any umpire's call which involves judgement, such as, but not limited to:
 - fair or foul,
 - balls and strikes
 - safe or outis FINAL. No coach, player, or spectator shall object to any such judgement decisions. Coaches are required to stay in their dugouts or at their base on judgement calls.
- 3) If there is reasonable doubt that the umpire's decision may conflict with the rules, the coach may appeal the decision and ask that the ruling be reviewed. Such an appeal shall be made only to the umpire who made the protested decision. To make an appeal:

- a. The coach shall ask for “time out”. Coaches from both teams shall then approach the umpire calmly. Discussion of appeal shall only start when both coaches are present with the umpire.
- b. Coaches must not intimidate the umpire in any manner (e.g., shouting, finger pointing, invading personal space, intimidating language)
- c. If the umpire chooses, they can consult with the other umpire or league director (if present) prior to making a final ruling.
- d. When the umpire makes the final decision, coaches must accept that decision and make no further protests about the call.

E. Rosters/Lineups

- 1) Fewer than 7 players present at the beginning of a game will result in a forfeit.
- 2) If a team is below the league allowed number of players in the field, that team may have a player(s) from other league team(s) fill in and play to reach a full complement of fielders per league rules.
 - a. Any replacement players needed are only allowed to play in the outfield and must bat at the end of the rolling batting order for that game. They must wear their own league jersey, so everyone knows the players are from another team and subject to these restrictions.
 - b. If a team utilizes a replacement player to start a game, and later has sufficient team members such that the replacement player chooses to leave, they may do so with no penalty to the team utilizing the replacement player. Players who show up late will be added to the end of the lineup for that particular game if their regular spot in the order has already batted.
- 3) Playing Time
 - a. All rostered players present must bat.
 - b. All rostered players present at the start of the game may only sit one defensive inning for games 3 innings or less, or a maximum of 2 defensive innings for games 4 innings or more.
 - c. No player may play the same defensive position in a game for more than 3 innings. Each outfield position is considered unique. Free defensive substitution is allowed to accommodate this rule.
 - d. See the Pitching Section for rules regarding pitching requirements and limitations.
- 4) In an effort to get all kids the same number of at bats throughout the season, teams must use a rolling batting order. For example, if the 5th batter in the lineup makes the last out in the first game, the 6th batter will be the first batter of the next game. The batting order cannot change from game to game, it simply picks up where it left off the previous game.

F. Game Length

- 1) Umpires and coaches must note the official start time of the game. Umpire is the official timekeeper. It is very important that all games start on time. The same rules apply to all games, meaning the last game of the day cannot extend play simply because there is no game following their game.
- 2) A new inning starts immediately after the 3rd out of the previous inning.
- 3) A team's at-bat is over once three outs are made or the team has batted through the order, whichever occurs first. If one team has more players than the other, the team with fewer players may bat the same number of players as the larger team when at bat.
- 4) A game is complete if 6 innings have been played and one team has more runs than the other team. If the game is called by the umpire, it will be considered "regulation" if 4 innings have been completed,
- 5) No new inning may begin after 75 minutes. Once the 75-minute time limit has been reached, gameplay will proceed as follows:
 - a. If at the time limit, the home team is batting
 - i. with the lead, the game is over.
 - ii. and tied or behind, the home team will bat until they take the lead, bat through the order, or 3 outs are made. At that point the game will be final, including if the game ends in a tie.
 - b. If at the time limit the away team is batting
 - i. and does not tie the game or take the lead at the end of their at-bat, the game is immediately over.
 - ii. and ties the game or takes the lead, the home team will also be permitted to bat until situation (a.ii) above is met.
 - c. If the current inning is not completed before 90 minutes, the game will "hard stop" at the 90-minute mark at the score at that time will be final.
- 6) For games tied after the league determined number of regulation innings, but less than the 75-minute time limit, extra inning(s) may be played to break the tie, up until the time limit. Extra inning(s) will have the following stipulations:
 - a. Each team will begin its at-bat with a runner on 2nd base. This runner will be the player that immediately precedes the batter in the batting order.
 - b. The team at bat will begin with one out.
 - c. Limits for runs or offensive batters per inning remain in effect (as appropriate).
 - d. For end of game, Item (5) above will be followed once the game reaches the 75-minute time limit.

II. **Batting**

A. **General**

- 1) On deck batters are allowed. On deck batters must position themselves behind the batter at the plate (1st base foul territory for left-handed batters, 3rd base foul territory for right-handed batters) regardless of which dugout their team occupies.
- 2) A batter is allowed to step into and over home plate to avoid a wild pitch or a pitch thrown behind them.
- 3) If the batter unintentionally makes contact with any part of the catcher during their swing (catcher's interference), the batter will be awarded 1st base. Catchers must maintain ample separation from the batter, both in the interest of safety and to avoid interfering with the batter's swing.
- 4) Similarly, batters must get out of the way of a catcher attempting to field a foul ball, a batted ball, a wild pitch or passed ball as they attempt to make a play. If the umpire determines deliberate interference by the batter, it will be considered a dead ball. Runners attempting to advance will be returned to the base they occupied prior to the last pitch. If the batter interfered with a batted ball in play, they will be called out.

B. **Strikeouts**

- 1) There is no attempting to reach first on a dropped 3rd strike. Runners already on base may advance if league rules permit stealing/advancing on passed balls/wild pitches.

C. **Hit By Pitch (HBP)**

- 1) Any batter that is struck by a pitch must take 1st base.
- 2) A ball that hits the ground and then hits the batter is considered an HBP.

D. **Bunting**

- 1) Bunting is allowed.
- 2) If a batter is bunting with less than 2 strikes, a foul ball that is caught by the catcher must rise above the batter's head to be considered an out. Otherwise, it will be considered a strike.
- 3) If a batter chooses to bunt with 2 strikes and makes contact with the ball but does not put the ball into fair territory (e.g., a foul ball), the batter will be called out. If the ball is caught by the catcher, the ball is live. If the ball is dropped in foul territory, it will be a dead ball, regardless of how high the ball rises.

III. Base Running

A. General

- 1) Batters must use the orange “safety” base when there is a play or potential play at 1st base. If the batter fails to use the orange “safety” base and interferes with a defensive player attempting to make a play at 1st base, they will be called “out”. If the ball is hit beyond the infield, the runner may round first base using either base.
- 2) Base runners are to avoid contact and should slide when a play is being made on the runner or the potential exists for such a play. If a player doesn’t slide, the umpire will call the runner out without warning. Excessive contact with no slide may result in the runner being called out and ejection from the game.
- 3) Headfirst sliding is not allowed, and the runner will be called out except when a base runner is diving back to return to a base they already occupied.
- 4) Coaches may substitute a courtesy runner for the projected catcher at any time during the inning. A courtesy runner is required for the catcher once you reach 2 outs. The courtesy runner must be the player that recorded the last out. The projected catcher must use this time to get their gear on and ready for the next inning.

B. Leading Off

- 1) Leading off is allowed.

C. Base Stealing, Wild Pitches, & Passed Balls

- 1) Base stealing will be allowed as follows:
 - a. Stealing of 2nd base and 3rd base is permitted
 - b. Stealing of Home is not allowed.
- 2) Wild pitches and pass balls are live balls and base runners can attempt to advance, including at Home Plate.
- 3) Runners may score from third on a stolen base attempt/throw to second base when the pitch begins with runners at first base and third base.
- 4) Delayed stealing is not allowed.
- 5) There are no limits to when stealing is prohibited based on game score. However, please use good sportsmanship and judgement relative to the game situation when stealing bases.

D. Overthrows/Advancing

- 1) Batters and base runners are allowed to attempt to advance on an overthrow, including throws back to the pitcher. Advancing to Home Plate is allowed in these scenarios.
- 2) In the event a live ball (batted or thrown) leaves the field of play (e.g., enters the dugout), the base runners will be given the base to which they were running to at that time plus one additional base.
- 3) Once pitcher controls the ball (does not need to be on the mound/rubber) and runners are not already actively advancing to next base, the play is dead – no more advancing is allowed. Defense should ask for time-out to end the play. Asking for time-out does not mean umpire must grant it; if umpire deems play is still live (runners still potentially advancing), ball is still live. Umpires have also been encouraged to call “Time!” to communicate the play is dead, but responsibility for calling time-out rests first and foremost with the defense.

IV. Defense

A. General

- 1) There are 9 players in the field: 6 in the infield (including the pitcher and catcher) and 3 in the outfield. No “rover” position is allowed
- 2) Outfielders must play on the grass until the ball is hit.
- 3) An infield and outfield warm up ball will be allowed during the first inning only.

B. Defensive Gameplay

- 1) Defensive players may not obstruct the base paths unless they have the ball in their possession or are in the process of fielding a hit ball. Base runners may go around a fielder attempting to play a batted ball in the base path.
- 2) The infield fly rule is applied when there is less than 2 outs and a force play at 3rd base (1st base and 2nd base are both occupied).

V. Pitching

A. General

- 1) Pitchers pitch from 50 feet.
- 2) A player may pitch 2 innings/game, 5 innings/week Monday – Sunday during the regular season. One pitch thrown constitutes an inning worked per this rule. A pitcher may not pitch 2 innings in both games on the same day (doubleheader) or back-to-back days. In these cases, a pitcher may throw a maximum of 3 innings for the two games.

- 3) Players in 5th grade must pitch at least 2 of the first 4 innings of every game (6 outs). If an inning ends by the opposing team batting around rather than 3 outs, that will constitute 1 inning pitched.
- 4) A pitcher that hits 2 batters in an inning must be removed and may not pitch the remainder of the game regardless of if they have inning eligibility remaining.
- 5) Once a pitcher is removed from the mound, they may not pitch again that game.
- 6) Returning pitchers and new pitchers get one minute or a maximum 5 pitch warmup before the start of each inning, whichever is shorter.
- 7) Pitchers are expected to work at a brisk pace.
- 8) Coaches may make 1 mound visit per inning. Only pitcher and catcher may visit with the coach. A second visit may be granted for injury concerns only. Otherwise, a second visit will require a pitching change. Keep mound visits quick.
- 9) Curve balls are not allowed. Pitchers throwing curve balls will receive a warning on the first offense and will be removed on the second offense.

B. Pickoffs/Balks

- 1) Pickoffs are allowed. If the umpire determines an illegal pickoff/balk has occurred, each pitcher will be given a warning for their first violation of the game. On the warning, there shall be no advancement by the runners or outs recorded. On subsequent balks by the same pitcher, the runners will be awarded one base.

C. Walks/Coach Pitch

- 1) After 4 balls, a walk will be issued to the batter.
- 2) Intentional Walks are not allowed

D. Pitches Hitting the Ground

- 1) A pitch that hits the ground is considered a live ball. Runners may advance if permitted by league Base Running rules.
- 2) A pitch that hits the ground:
 - a. And then hits the batter is considered HBP. League rules for HBP shall be followed.
 - b. And the batter swings and misses is considered a strike.
 - c. And the batter swings and hits the ball will be played normally (e.g., base hit, foul ball, etc.).

VI. End of Season Tournament

The following exceptions to regular season rules exist for the End of Season Tournament

A. Roster/Lineups

- 1) Coaches will be allowed to reset their batting order for each game in the tournament.
- 2) Replacement players are not allowed in the end of season tournament. Any team with less than the minimum number of team players will be required to forfeit.

B. Game Length

- 3) Game length rules remain the same except in the event of a tie.
- 4) For games tied after 6 innings or for all new innings after the 75-minute limit:
 - a. All new innings begin with the batting team placing a runner on 2nd base. This runner will be the player that immediately precedes the batter in the batting order.
 - b. The team at bat will begin with one out.
 - c. Limits for runs or offensive batters per inning remain in effect (as appropriate).
 - d. The game ends when the home team takes the lead, or the visiting team has the lead and records 3 outs in the bottom of the inning.

C. Pitching

- 5) Pitchers may pitch 2 innings on consecutive days, subject to coach and parent judgement. A player may not pitch more than 3 innings in one day or 5 innings in one week.

The following exceptions to regular season rules exist for the End of Season Tournament

B. Roster/Lineups

- 1) Coaches will be allowed to reset their batting order for each game in the tournament.
- 2) Replacement players are not allowed in the end of season tournament. Any team with less than the minimum number of team players will be required to forfeit.

C. Game Length

- 1) Game length rules remain the same except in the event of a tie.
- 2) For games tied after 6 innings or for all new innings after the 75-minute limit:
 - a. All new innings begin with the batting team placing a runner on 2nd base. This runner will be the player that immediately precedes the batter in the batting order.
 - b. The team at bat will begin with one out.
 - c. Limits for runs or offensive batters per inning remain in effect (as appropriate).
 - d. The game ends when the home team takes the lead, or the visiting team has the lead and records 3 outs in the bottom of the inning.

D. Pitching

- 1) Pitchers may pitch 2 innings on consecutive days, subject to coach and parent judgement. A player may not pitch more than 3 innings in one day or 5 innings in one week.