

RULE HIGHLIGHTS / LOCAL RULES SWBBL (rev. 01/24)

Read through all the information, paying attention to each section header which will alert to a particular league or all the leagues. The League reserves the right to change, omit or modify rules and policies as deemed necessary during the season and will alert Head Coaches via e-mail of any changes.

Rules used are:

1) Local Rules 2) National Federation of High Schools 3) Official Baseball Rules

Local rules supersede NFHS rules, that which is not governed by Local or NFHS is governed by OBR. NFHS rules are available on the League's website.

Enforcement

Southwest Baseball League (SWBBL) emphasizes fair play, sportsmanship, and adherence to rules. Any violations of league rules will be subject to review by SWBBL, and appropriate punishment will be determined based on factors such as intent, severity, and any post-infractions. The league is committed to ensuring a positive and respectful environment for all participants.

LOCAL RULES

BATTING AND LINE UP 9U – HS LEAGUES SELECT TEAMS (rev. 7/23)

Teams may bat with a **nine (9) player line-up** or **continuous line-up** of all present, eligible, uniformed players. Such a line-up must be declared before the start of the game and shall be used for the entire game.

If a team uses a 9-player line-up that contains substitute players, starting players may be removed and reenter the game once, but must re-enter in their original position in the batting order. Non-starters are not allowed to re-enter. When a starter re-enters, the substitute player in the starter's batting position in the batting order must be removed from the game and is ineligible for the remainder of the game. All players moving in or out of the batting lineup should be reported to the umpire(s) and opposing team manager or scorekeeper. If during a game a player is injured, sick or must leave the game, they may only be replaced by a valid substitute player (meaning a sub that has not previously entered the game). A team that falls under 8 players will forfeit the game at that point.

ALL TEAMS

If a team uses a continuous line-up, all players may move freely in defensive positions except for the pitching position. Any player(s) arriving after the game has begun, shall be added to the bottom of the batting line-up. If a player leaves the game and/or batting order for any reason, that batting position will be an out provided the defensive team brings it to umpires attention. (9U and up) (rev. 7/23)

Once a pitcher is removed from the mound, that player is ineligible to return as pitcher in the game. (rev. 6/20)

Teams may play an official game with an eight (8) player line-up. 15 minutes (game time clock running) will be allowed for a team to have 8 players available. If a team plays with an eight (8) player line-up, an out shall be declared for the ninth (9th) position in the batting line-up, provided the defensive team brings it to umpires attention. A ninth (9th) player and all subsequent players may be added to the line-up as soon as they become available. (rev. 7/22)

LINE UP CARDS TB+ – HS

Leagues TB+ and up will provide a lineup card to the home plate umpire and opposing manager. The card will list batting order, ***last name, first name and jersey number***, starting pitcher. Lineup cards will be prepared by the time of pregame conference. The game will not start until both teams have provided a proper lineup, and failure to do so shall result in the game being forfeited by the offending team. (rev. 7/22)

STARTING AND ENDING A GAME TB+ – HS (rev. 7/23)

A regulation game consists of:

Twice through the Batting Order for Tee Ball Plus.

Five (5) innings for 8U and 9U.

Six (6) innings for 10U – 12U.

Seven (7) innings for 14U - High School.

unless the game is:

Extended because the score is tied after the completion of the regulation number of innings *and* a new inning can be started, in which case, play shall continue until the visiting team has scored more total runs than the home team at the end of a completed inning, or the home team scores the winning run in an uncompleted inning, and within the rules of playing beyond time limit; or shortened because the home team needs none of its half of the last inning or only a fraction of it to win; or mathematical elimination will apply if a team trails by more runs than can be scored in their remaining at-bats (TB+, 8U, 9U), or shortened because an imposed Time Limit has been met. (rev. 7/23)

TIME LIMITS (rev. 7/23)

A new inning will not start after the time clock reaches 0:00 in the game. An inning started before time has expired will be finished.

Tee Ball Instructional :55 DROP DEAD **Tee Ball Plus 2x through batting order:** 55

Coach Pitch 1:10 **9U - 12U** 1:25 **14U** 1:40 **High School** 1:50

Leagues 8U through HS: if a new inning is started with less than 5:00 minutes remaining on the time clock, speed up rule will apply as follows; inning will start with 1 out for team at bat, batter will start with 1 – 1 pitch count.

At completion of pre-game conference, Plate umpire will begin the countdown game timer clock. ***The home team should take the field at the time of plate conference to be ready to start play at conclusion of meeting.***

(rev. 2/23)

RUN RULES

Coach Pitch: 15 runs after 3 innings, 8 runs after 4 innings.

9U: 11 runs after 3 innings, 6 runs after 4 innings.

10U - 12U: 15 runs after 2 innings, 12 runs after 3 innings, 10 runs after 4 innings

14U – HS: 15 runs after 2 innings, 12 runs after 3 innings, 10 runs after 4 innings, 8 runs after 5 innings (rev. 7/23)

CALLED GAME

If a game is called due to rain, weather, light failure, or other un-expected action and cannot be resumed, it is a regulation game if:

For a scheduled five (5) or six (6) inning game, if three (3) innings have been completed or if the home team has scored more runs in two and one half (2 1/2) innings than the visiting team has scored in three (3) complete innings; or if the home team scores one (1) or more runs in its half (1/2) of the third (3rd) inning to tie the score; or if minimum time played has been reached. (Coach Pitch 40 minutes; 9U-10U-12U 50 minutes) (rev. 7/23)

For a scheduled seven (7) inning game, if four (4) innings have been completed or if the home team has scored more runs in three and one half (3 1/2) innings than the visiting team has scored in four (4) complete innings or if the home team scores one (1) or more runs in its half (1/2) of the fourth (4th) inning to tie the score; or if minimum time played has been reached. (14U 60 minutes; High School 65 minutes)

Note: A game that is called and is a regulation game as defined above will be a sudden death situation, score at time game is called will stand as final score.

Games that cannot be declared a regulation game by rule shall be a no game and subject to make up if there is availability in the schedule to do so. (rev. 7/23)

BASEBALLS

The League supplies all games with baseballs. The ball used for 8U - HS is the Rawling ROLB1. Coaches will not introduce their own baseballs into the game. (rev. 2/22)

BAT RULES: (rev. 7/23)

SWBBL is a non-sanctioning body that will allow both the BPF 1.15 USSSA Stamped Bat and the USA Baseball Stamped Bat. Graphics must be clearly visible and not worn off. Solid wood bats allowed at all levels.

* "Coach Pitch" bats not allowed in Kid Pitch brackets; "Tee Ball" bats not allowed in Coach Pitch.

14U: -5 is the maximum weight/length ratio. All bats must be stamped BPF 1.15 or with the USA Baseball Stamp.

HS: BBCOR (bat must have BBCOR certification) (By definition, BBCOR is -3 drop)

All bats must be in fit condition for play, no dents, cracks, or loose parts.

UNIFORMS TB – HS

All players of each team should wear matching baseball jerseys and caps, similar in color and logo. All jerseys will have a number affixed on the back or a sleeve of the jersey. Numbers will be whole numerals and may not be assigned to more than one player. Players without a proper jersey or number on jersey will be removed from lineup upon appeal by opposing head coach. Appeal must be made at players first at bat or earlier. There is no penalty for removing players from lineup unless doing so causes team to have less than 9 players. Players may be inserted into line up upon acquiring a proper team jersey. All players must wear baseball pants, and pants should be similar in color. (a mix of white and light gray color baseball pants will be acceptable) (rev. 2/22)

MISCELLAENOUS

Slide/Avoid Contact TB+ - HS (rev. 7/22)

Whenever a tag play is evident, **and** a fielder has clear possession of the ball and is waiting to make the tag, a runner must slide **or** seek to avoid contact with the fielder.

Attempting to jump, leap, or dive over the fielder and / or catcher is not interpreted as seeking to avoid contact.

Malicious contact shall supersede all obstruction penalties. (rev. 7/23)

Penalty: *The runner shall be called out.*

Comment: *When enforcing this rule, the umpire should judge the runner's intent. If the umpire feels that the contact was unintentional, then the runner should only be declared out. If the umpire feels that the contact was intentional and / or malicious, then the runner should be declared out and ejected.*

Maximum of 4 coaches, Tee Ball + and Coach pitch teams may have 5 coaches, on field/bench during game.

All coaches (over 18 years old) must be registered and have current background checks on file with SWBBL. No other persons on field/bench allowed. Coaches shall confine themselves to the bench area, except for a third base coach and first base coach on offense. Coaches not occupying the first or third base coach's box (or for Coach Pitch, additionally Pitching Coach and Catcher Coach) shall remain at the bench/dugout area within arm's reach of the bench fence. Roaming the foul lines is not allowed. There will be a limit of 4 coaches / scorekeepers, etc. allowed on the field. No person may coach players from behind fences. All coaches not occupying a field position will remain in the bench area. Exceeding maximum will result in coaches being removed from bench/field. Any person serving as a field coach or bat boy/girl, who is less than 18 years of age shall wear a helmet when not inside the bench area. (rev. 7/23)

Any coach or player ejected from a game shall immediately remove himself from the vicinity of the playing field, to include bleachers, for the remainder of the game. In effect, out of sight and out of sound. A player ejected who does not have a parent/guardian in attendance shall be confined to the dugout area for the remainder of the game and under supervision of their coach.

All player or coach ejections will be reviewed by the League Vice President, Umpire in Chief & League Director, and will review circumstances and administer further or lesser penalties. A coach who is ejected a second time in the current season will be required to meet with Discipline Review Committee. (rev. 2/22)

Head coaches (HC) will be held responsible for the conduct of their player’s parents and spectators. HC will assist the umpire in all situations that the umpire deems appropriate. Failure to act by the HC and/or failure of spectators to comply may result in forfeiture of game.

A parent, guardian or spectator that is ejected from the park will take their child/ballplayer with them. The HC will assist League Officials in identifying the player connected to the ejected person. If unable to identify the connection or HC refuses to assist, a player from the team will be selected at random to be removed from the game. (rev. 2/22)

Slap or Slash Hit - When a runner stationed at 3rd base is intending to advance home, any attempt to execute a "slap or slash hit," characterized by either showing or faking a bunt and then swinging at the pitch or swinging at a pitch without showing a bunt, shall result in an automatic dead ball ruling and the batter called out. Additionally, both the hitter and the 3rd base coach shall be ejected from the game, regardless of whether the batter contacts the ball. (rev 01/24)

Bat safety rule – throwing of bat by batter. To protect catchers, on deck batters, umpires and others, a batter who carelessly throws a bat after contact with the ball, regardless of whether the bat strikes a person, will on first offense in a game be warned by the umpire that a repeated incidence of throwing the bat will result in an out being called on the batter. The umpire will also notify the batter’s head coach. On all subsequent incidents of throwing a bat by a warned batter, the ball is dead, the batter will be declared out by the umpire, all base runners return to base at time of pitch. (rev. 2/22)

Equipment/buckets/bats outside of bench area: No equipment, buckets, bats will be outside of bench area. In the case of a live ball being interfered with by equipment, buckets, bats being left outside of bench area, the umpire may impose a ball out of play rule versus the offending team.

INFIELD DIMENSIONS

AGE GROUP	BASE PATHS	PITCH DISTANCE	AGE GROUP	BASE PATHS	PITCH DISTANCE
TEE BALL	60’	N/A	12U	70’	50’
8U	60’	41’	14U & HS	90’	60’
9U & 10U	65’	46’			

PITCHER ELIGIBILITY; PITCHING LIMITS: (rev. 01/24)

LEAGUE	1 DAY MAX
9U-10U	3 innings
11U - 12U	4 Innings
14U	5 innings
HS	6 innings

Innings pitched are counted in whole innings. Each completed inning, regardless of the number of outs recorded within that inning, contributes one unit to the pitcher's total innings pitched.

Pitchers are allowed to participate in games on the same day, but they must adhere to a daily maximum limit on their pitching activity. If a pitcher's performance meets the one-day limit, they must observe a mandatory rest day (one full calendar day) following that pitching session. However, if the pitcher's performance remains below the daily maximum, they are not required to take a rest day and may pitch again the following day.

Southwest Baseball strongly encourages coaches to follow Pitch Smart Guidelines

AGE	DAILY MAX (PITCHES IN GAME)	REQUIRED REST (PITCHES)				
		0 Days	1 Days	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days
9-10	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
11-12	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
13-14	95	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
15-16	95	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+
17-18	105	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-80	81+

The new Pitch Smart guidelines organized by MLB and USA Baseball include pitch count recommendations and suggestions per age groups that can provide useful information that can lead to the improved health of youth baseball arms.

Pitch counts can act as a hard stop for workload for baseball players in a pitching outing of any age based on skeletal maturity development as well as the physiological limits of that athlete.

These recommendations can be helpful for youth athletes, but they must be enforced by both coaches and parents to ensure that they are being fully met.

To learn more and check out the new Pitch Smart guidelines for yourself, visit <http://m.mlb.com/pitchsmart/pitching-guidelines>.

9U LOCAL RULES: (rev. 01/24)

A batter is out on a dropped / missed third (3rd) strike by the catcher.

Runners shall not lead-off but may advance at their own risk (attempt to steal) once a pitched ball **is caught or goes past the catcher**. When a runner leaves the base prior to the pitched ball being caught or going past the catcher, or the ball being batted and in play, the following shall apply:

- a) *Approved Ruling: If the runner advances safely on a steal or passed ball/wild pitch, the umpire shall call "Time" and the runner shall return to the base last legally occupied at the time of the pitch. If the runner is called out, the call shall stand, and the runner is out. If the ball is fair hit, the defensive team shall have the option of the result of the play or a no pitch.*
- b) *Approved ruling: A team will receive **1 TEAM warning** for a runner leaving base before the pitched ball being caught or going past the catcher, or the ball being batted and in play, thereafter all instances will result in runner being declared out and a no pitch declared.*

Play comes to a halt when the pitcher gains control of the ball and makes contact with the pitcher's mound.

There are no balks.

If a pitcher begins his pitch motion from either set or windup position and stops his motion or hesitates on delivering the pitch, a ball will be called.

- a) *Approved ruling: If the pitcher stops motion, hesitates, or fails to deliver the pitch due to batter stepping out of the batter's box or requesting time, or, if the umpire calls time, there is no penalty to the pitcher.*

Batting line up may be 9 players with subs or continuous batting order.

There shall be a run limit of 5 runs per inning including the final inning.

8U COACH PITCH DRAFT/SELECT LOCAL RULES

Draft League all players present on the team lineup shall play 2 innings on defense.

Select League does not have a mandatory playing of defense. (rev. 7/23)

The batting order shall consist of all present players on the team roster at the beginning of the game. Late arrivals must be declared as substitutes in the lineup provided during the pregame conference, and the player shall be inserted at the bottom of the batting order upon arrival. (rev. 01/24)

Teams may begin a game with 8 players but batting position 9 will be an out until filled by a rostered player. Teams may use free substitution on defense, but the batting order shall remain the same.

If a player leaves the game and batting order due to injury/sickness, they may not return to the game. The missed spot in the batting order will not be an out unless the player leaving causes the team to drop under 9 batters.

Safety Area: Infielders will position themselves no closer to the plate than the player who is occupying the pitcher position.

Pitching Circle: There shall be a ten (10) foot diameter circle with the front edge set at Forty-One (41) feet from the rear point of home plate.

Pitcher Coach Line: Pitching Coach shall be in contact with the Pitching Circle line when releasing the pitch.

Approved ruling: The coach pitcher may step beyond the line when releasing the ball if any part of one foot is in contact with or behind any part of the line.

Penalty: One (1) warning and pitch declared "no pitch" for first offense. Subsequent offenses will be dead ball and pitch counted against the batter.

Pitching Coach: The pitching coach shall not verbally coach batters but may make hand movement /gestures to the batter to move them closer or further in the batter's box. Pitching Coach will not coach base runners at any time. The pitching coach shall position himself so not to interfere with the defensive team on any possible play once the ball has been hit and will immediately move to foul territory on first or third base side and remain there until time is called by umpire. Should the pitching coach fail to move into foul territory: First offense will be a warning; Second offense the batter/runner shall be declared out and all runners return to base at time of pitch; Third offense the pitching coach will be removed from pitching for the remainder of the game.

Catcher: The catcher shall receive the pitch in the catcher's box in a normal baseball manner. If in the umpire's judgment, the catcher is not receiving the ball in a normal baseball manner, there will be a warning issued. If the act continues after the warning, the catcher must be replaced. A team must have a player in the catcher's position. Catcher's must wear full protective gear, may use catcher's mitt or field glove.

Catcher Coach: A coach from the defensive team may be positioned as a backup to the catcher only for uncaught pitches. The coach will position themselves in contact with the backstop behind home plate and will remain there except to retrieve missed pitches. The coach may give verbal instructions to the catcher only for positioning on pitches and plays. The coach may not speak to the catcher when pitcher is in motion to pitch, or ball is in flight. This is to prohibit distracting the batter. The coach may not direct defensive players. First offense, warning, second offense removal from Catcher's coach for remainder of the game. The general purpose of this rule is to allow coaching of the catcher and to keep pace of game moving.

Fielders: Ten (10) defensive players shall play in the field with four (4) outfielders. The fourth (4th) outfielder shall not assume an infield position. All outfielders will be positioned in the outfield grass.

The defensive player listed as pitcher shall not leave the pitching circle until the ball is hit.

Penalty: The play continues. After the play has ended, the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or no-pitch. Additional Penalty: First Offense: Warning; Second Offense: Removal of player from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.

Defensive coaches shall not be allowed on the field of play and shall coach from the dugout and remain within an arm's reach of bench area, with exception of catcher's coach.

8U Draft only - Overthrow to First Base: Umpire will call time; the batter is awarded one base. Runners will be positioned by the umpire, ensuring placement at least one base beyond the base they occupied at the time of the pitch, with a maximum limit of two bases. The umpire retains discretion in cases of a trouble ball. (rev. 1/24)

Batter shall receive six pitches or three strikes. A foul ball on the sixth pitch shall not be counted as a pitch. The batter may continue to bat on a sixth pitch foul ball until such time that the ball is put into play, or the batter strikes out. It should be noted that a ball in play on the sixth pitch that is caught by a defensive player prior to contact with the ground or other object shall be ruled to be an out. Furthermore, a sixth pitch foul tip (caught by the catcher) is considered strike three and the batter shall be declared out.

Runners shall not lead-off or steal bases. A runner is out for leaving the base before the ball is hit.

Approved ruling: A team will receive 1 warning for runner leaving base before ball is hit, thereafter all instances will result in runner being declared out. Runner leaving early is immediate call of time by umpire.

Stoppage of Play: The umpire shall declare TIME when any of the following conditions, in his/her judgement, have been satisfied:

- The ball is controlled by any fielder who is within the pitching circle*; *Approved ruling: Defensive player need only to be in physical contact with chalked line to be considered within pitching circle.*
- The lead runner has stopped running, hesitated or broken stride.
- The defense has possession and control of ball in the infield and lead runner or following base runners have no reasonable chance to advance.

The umpire will judge placement of runners who are between bases at call of TIME, and this placement is not open for discussion by Head Coach.

**Umpire may judge intent of player in a case where defensive player merely runs through the circle or part of the circle while actively chasing down a runner and will not call time in that instance. This is a judgment call on the part of the umpire.*

When a batted ball hits the Pitching Coach, if in the umpire's judgment, the coach did not make a legitimate attempt to avoid contact, the batter is declared out and no runners shall advance. If in the umpire's judgment, the coach did make a legitimate attempt to avoid contact, a batted ball that strikes the Coach-Pitcher shall be considered a dead ball, foul ball.

Miscellaneous:

A team may score a maximum of seven (7) runs per inning, including the last inning.

A player may not be intentionally walked.

Bunting shall not be allowed.

The Infield Fly Rule shall not be in effect at any time.

TEE BALL PLUS LOCAL RULES (rev. 02/23)

Team Creation

Teams are comprised of players 5 and 6 years of age. Players 4 years old may play with a parent submitting a play up waiver and Head Coach approval.

Game Play General Team Rules

The game time limit is 2 times through the batting order, drop dead.

1. Regular season games can end in a tie.
2. Every player present must have at least 1 inning on defense.
3. Coach will provide lineup at plate meeting, first and last name, jersey number.
4. Teams may start with 8 players. 10 minutes allowed at game time for 8th player to arrive, game clock will be started at conclusion of plate meeting.
 - a. Teams will have an equal number of at bats each inning.
 - i. If one team has more players than the other, the team with the lesser number of players will send, in order per the lineup, extra batters to match the number of at bats that the team with more players has.
5. Maximum of 5 coaches allowed on field/bench.
 - a. Offense – 1B Coach, 3B Coach, Batter’s Coach
 - b. Defense – Catcher’s Coach, Infield Coach, Outfield Coach

Batting Rules (rev. 7/23)

1. Team will bat entire line up each inning on offense. Once an equal number of players have batted one time the half inning is finished, and teams switch out.
2. All bats must be T-Ball bats and imprinted as such. Bat may be wood, or composite, half and half and must have the USA Baseball or USSSA imprints on it.
3. Each batter is out after 3 strikes. A foul ball after 2 strikes is not an out. A ball that is hit into fair territory but does not go past the minimum distance (home plate diameter circle) line is a strike.
4. Batter can only “measure up” twice. On third try, the batter must hit the ball past the home plate diameter circle, or it will be called a strike. If the ball or tee is contacted and the ball is dislodged from the tee, it will be called a strike, only if the ball does not leave the home plate diameter circle.
5. Each time the team at bat makes three (3) outs or has scored 5 runs, the bases are cleared of any base runners.
6. Intentional walks and bunting are not allowed.

Base Running Rules (rev. 7/23)

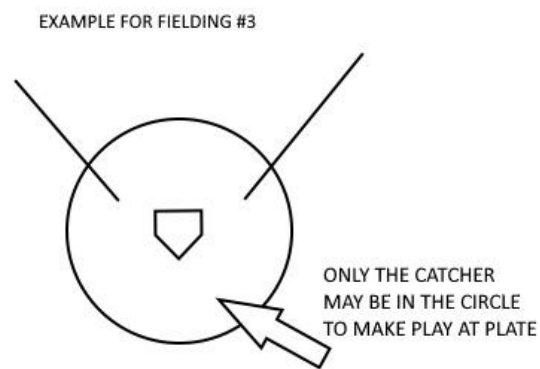
1. Tagging up is not allowed. The infield fly rule does not apply. The ball is live until umpire calls “time out” or “time”.
2. A base runner is out for leaving the base before the ball is hit. (One warning will be allowed per team, then runner is out in all following violations.)
3. Runners must slide, avoid contact or give up when fielder has ball, and a tag is eminent.
 - a. The following rules shall govern the situation involving contact between fielders and baserunners at any base including home:

- i. A base runner is not required to slide at any time. However, if a fielder clearly has possession of the ball and is waiting for the base runner, then it is the responsibility of the base runner to avoid contact with the fielder. If contact is made, it must be to slide.
 - ii. A fielder cannot block the base or baseline without clear possession of the ball. When waiting for a thrown ball, the fielder (including the catcher) must be positioned out of the baseline. Straddling the base is not out of the baseline. A fielder can move toward the base runner only when in clear possession of the ball.
 - b. Penalties
 - i. If a base runner contacts a fielder in clear possession of the ball other than sliding, an immediate dead ball will be called. The base runner will be called out. If the base runner deliberately contacts the fielder with great force, (malicious contact) the base runner is subject to ejection in addition to being called out. All other base runners are returned to the last base touched at the time of the dead ball.
 - ii. If a fielder is blocking the baseline and does not have clear possession of the ball, any contact (other than deliberate contact by either player) shall be ruled obstruction; and bases shall be granted accordingly.
 - iii. When the fielder, base runner, and ball arrive simultaneously at a base, umpire will rule if any illegal or unnecessary contact occurred. In any case, no player may initiate deliberate contact without being subject to penalties.
- 4. On a batted fair ball, all players will advance at their own risk. The runner that made the hit, plus the runners on base, may take as many bases as possible until the ball is returned to the interior infield or until the play is deemed complete as determined by the umpire.
 - a. Time will be called by umpire when:
 - i. The ball is controlled by any defensive player within the pitchers' circle.
 - ii. When a player in the outfield, after fielding the ball, releases the ball on the throw. (rev. 7/23)
 - iii. The lead runner is no longer advancing or there is no play to be made at which point all runners shall return to the last legally touched base without being put out.
 - b. *The judgement and call of the umpire in respect to the calling of time will not be debated.***
- 5. On an overthrow of the first thrown ball which gets past a fielder covering a base, time will be called, and the base runners will be placed one base beyond the base which they were traveling to at the time of the release of the throw.

Fielding Rules

1. The game must be played with 6 infielders (including pitcher) and 4 outfielders. (Provided there are 10 players available) All must play assigned positions (no rovers). (rev. 7/23)
2. All players on the field will play one position per inning and cannot switch to another position until the next inning. Example: The Shortstop can only play that position for the inning and only move either after the inning, or if the player is hurt and a substitution is in place.
3. During a play at home, only the catcher may be in the home plate circle to make the play and no other position players. (See example below)
 - a. If players other than catcher are in circle on play of runner, runner will be declared safe.

4. Players must be at least 5 feet apart from each other and each must play his or her designated position (or area). Therefore, second base cannot play Shortstop or pitcher at the same time.
5. Infielders will begin play in dirt area (base paths) of infield and outfielders must be in grass area of outfield.
 - a. On field 1, outfielders will play behind the 90' baseline. Use the whisker markers locating the place of the 90' bases as a reference.
6. Pitchers must remain in the pitcher's circle until the ball is hit.
7. If there is direct hit "on the ground" to the pitcher having full possession of the ball and both feet in the circle, time will not be called until the batter reaches first base, or a play is made.





GENERAL LEAGUE POLICIES FOR COACHES

Coaches, this is a general policy guide for the Southwest Baseball League. It is not meant to be all encompassing for every possible situation that could arise. It covers the most basic and frequent questions / situations that may come up. The League Director and / or the League Board of Directors or Committees will decide any other questions / situations as they become apparent. Thank you for your support of SWBBL and youth baseball.

SCHEDULE POLICY

Once published, schedule changes will not be made except for a rescheduling of games due to weather, unusual & unforeseen events, etc. In some instances where both teams show up to play and one or both teams cannot field the minimum number of players to start a game, the game may potentially be rescheduled. Consult your League Director for more information.

- Playoff games will not be rescheduled except for weather or unforeseen situations.
- The date for playing of a playoff game that is to be rescheduled will be made by the league.
- Any failure to play as scheduled will result in forfeit of game.
- A team forfeiting more than 2 games during this season will be ineligible for playoff rounds.

FORFEITS

Not having the minimum number of players to start a game will not necessarily result in a forfeit. The non-forfeiting team has the option to win the game via forfeit or to let the game be rescheduled. Forfeiting teams will be required to pay umpire fees and field setup fee prior to a reschedule. Before the final two weeks of the regular season, every effort will be made by SWBBL to reschedule the game. This does not mean the game will be rescheduled, just that we will attempt to reschedule the game, especially for the draft league. If there is no possible way for the league to reschedule the game, the non-forfeiting team from the original game day will be awarded the win. In the final two weeks of the regular season, not having a minimum number of players to start the game will result in a forfeit for the team short of players. (rev. 7/22)

TIE-BREAKERS

Standings are based on the MLB style of order, ties are included.

1. Games Behind
2. W-L percentage
3. Wins
4. Run Differential
5. Coin Flip

Note: A team that has a forfeit loss on record cannot win a tie-break with a team that has no forfeits. A team with more than 2 forfeits is not eligible for the post season playoffs.

GENERAL CONDUCT

Communicate with all players and parents or legal guardians regarding your coaching style, philosophy, position assignment decisions and any team activities outside practices or games. Stress parental involvement in improving their child's baseball skills.

Use of profane, insulting, harassing or otherwise offensive language while coaching is grounds for game ejection with subsequent infraction resulting in dismissal from SWBBL. Do not tolerate the use of profane language or player taunts towards opposing team by your players, parents, spectators, or assistant coaches.

Treat opponents, umpires and SWBBL officials with respect, both in victory and defeat and encourage athletes to act accordingly.

Avoid arguing judgment calls and/or continued running commentary on judgment calls, as this will likely lead to your being ejected from the game. Realize, every close call will not go your way (and a portion of those close calls will go your way) and umpires will make errors in judgments and rule applications.

Only the head coach / team manager may discuss rules or other pertinent points with the umpire. Assistant coaches who seek discussion with umpire will be politely refused. This is not to mean a base coach cannot ask what the count is or how much time is left in the game. AC's that seek to argue with or criticize an umpire on the field risk ejection.

All ejections of managers / coaches **may** cause that coach to be **disqualified for the team's next game.** A second ejection in the season, the manager/coach is disqualified for remainder of season. Coaches/managers who are disqualified may be present for future games they are disqualified from but **may not go on field or in dugout/bench area at any time before, during or after game, must remain in bleachers and may not communicate with coaches or players. Failure to adhere may result in forfeiting of game.** (rev. 02/22)

A player ejected from a game may result in that player being disqualified for the team's next game. A second ejection in season will require action by the league's Board of Directors for reinstatement.

RULES

The rules of the game will be National Federation of High School Rules current edition (NFHS), except when superseded by Southwest Baseball League Local Rules and policies. Official Baseball Rules as printed, current Edition will be used for rules not specific to Local Rules/Policies and NFHS.

PROTESTS

You may not protest a judgment call; safe, out, fair, foul, etc. Protests will be allowed for roster violations or rule interpretations only. Further discussion of the play is useless if the timing of a protest does not comply with the following:

- Protests must be declared to the umpire crew chief **before** the next pitch following the dispute.
- If a ruling to be protested is the last recorded out of a game or on a game ending play, the protest **MUST** be filed prior to the umpires and the protesting team leaving the field of play.

You will be required to post a \$50 protest fee at the concession stand and obtain a receipt. If concession is closed see the Game Day Supervisor. **To keep game moving, Fee may be paid after the game.** If the fee is not paid after the game the protest will not be considered. If the protest is upheld, the fee will be returned. If the protest is not upheld the fee will be donated to charity.

Protests will be handled by a protest committee consisting of UIC, League Director, League Vice President, and their decision shall be final (a replacement board member will be used if any of those have a conflict).

The committee will first verify with the umpires that the protest was filed at the time the infraction took place and not later. If not filed timely, the protest is not upheld, and the protest fee is not refunded. The committee will review the ruling in question as well as if the ruling significantly affected the outcome of the game. The following course of action can take place by the protest committee (they) when reviewing a protest:

1. They may decide that the rule was enforced properly, and the protest is not upheld. The protest fee will not be returned and will be donated to a charity. The outcome of the game stands.
2. They may have decided the rule was enforced improperly and that it significantly affected the outcome of the game. The protest will be upheld, and the game is replayed from the point of the disputed ruling. Player stats, lineups and substitutions prior to infraction remain intact and post infraction become null. The protest fee will be returned.
3. If the protest involves whether a player was ineligible, the committee will verify the eligibility of the player in question. Ineligible players are players that are not on the team's official roster with the league or have become ineligible during a game due to substitution rules (both offensive and defensive). If the board finds the player was ineligible, the ineligible player rule would be applied, and the game would be forfeited by the violating team. The protest will be upheld, and the protest fee will be returned. Managers should know the difference between an ineligible player and an illegal substitution.
4. The committee may have decided the rule was enforced improperly but that the mistake did not affect the outcome of the game. Game results stand and the protest fee will be returned.

ROSTERS

Select – Rosters are closed (frozen) at the end of the 14th day from the commencement of the season, and players may not be added after that date. (Players may be dropped anytime by alerting Registration) Only players who are on your roster and who have registered through SWBBL's registration vendor, Sports Engine, have paid in full league fee, are recognized as rostered players. Roster checks may be done by league officials prior to the start of game. Please have players available for this function. A player found to be ineligible **before or during** a game because they are not registered on that team with the league will result in team forfeiture of the game and a **366-day** suspension of head coach/team manager. Head coach/team manager will go into their Sports Engine account and ensure roster is correct and that all rostered players' jersey numbers are listed. Teams are limited to a maximum of 15 rostered players. The League has the discretion to allow a team to register and add a player to the roster in extreme circumstance, e.g., a team roster falls under 9 players due to injury or relocation, etc. (rev. 01/24)

Draft – Rosters are closed at conclusion of draft. A team that is short of players will contact their League Director, who will assign players from the waiting list to the team as needed. Coaches do not

have the ability to request specific players to be added to the team after the draft. All Draft teams in a League will carry the same number of players as determined by the League Director and the total number of players available. The maximum number of players on a draft team will be 12. In some instances, with league approval a coach may carry more than 12 players. Roster checks may be done by league officials prior to the start of the game. Please have players available for this function. A player found to be ineligible ***before or during*** a game because they are not registered on that team with the league will result in team forfeiture of the game and a **366-day** suspension of head coach/team manager. Head coach/team manager will go into their Sports Engine account and ensure roster is correct and that all rostered players' jersey numbers are listed. (rev. 02/22)

Minimum Play - Draft players are to be part of continuous batting order and play 2 innings (6 outs) of defensive play (provided that the game is not shortened due to rules) in each game. A player who did not play two innings (6 outs) defense due to game shortened because of rules, **must be** a starter in the team's next game and play at least 4 innings. Draft minimum play is not a protest item. Coaches and parents should report this issue to the League Director for resolution.

Team coaches and / or parents shall not overtly or covertly dissuade a player from participating in any games due to a player's perceived lack of talent or ability. Any person doing so will face suspension from the League as decided by the Board of Directors. (Rev. 02/22)

PRE-GAME

The home team will occupy the third base bench. (If a team is playing a double header on the same field, they will remain on the bench they occupied for the first game)

Teams will restrict their pre-game activities to their half of the outfield, ***and will not use the infield for any purpose, including pitcher warm up.***

The home team should take the field at the time the umpires arrive to field so once the plate meeting is concluded teams may start play without delay. (Rev. 07/22)

The Head Coach will meet with the opposing Head Coach and umpires 5 minutes prior to scheduled game time to go over rules, any ground rules and exchange fully completed line up cards. Items umpires and coaches need to discuss are:

- Ensure line-up cards are complete and contain the first name, last name, jersey number, and designated roles of both the pitcher and catcher. Substitutes should be listed. See info below on late player rules. Only players on the official team roster with the league should be listed. If a nonregistered player is listed on the line-up card or found during a pregame roster check by the league, the game is immediately forfeited by that team.
- Declare if you will be using a designated hitter (DH) or not. SWBBL allows a DH when you are batting 9 and using subs. It also allows a continuous batting lineup. You may not bat more than nine and use substitutes. (You may not use an EH or XH) For example, if you have 11 players, you may either bat 9 with two subs or use a continuous lineup. ***NOTE: This only applies to 9U and up.***
- Let the umpire and opposing coach know who will be keeping the score book for your team. Both teams are strongly encouraged to keep a book so that disputes can be reviewed against each other. The home team must keep a book and it shall be the official score book. The official Score book will

supersede the visitor's book when a clear recollection/agreement cannot be determined by the umpire in chief and score keepers.

- Review league time limits. A new inning starts if there is ***time*** left on the game clock. An inning starts as soon as the 3rd out is recorded in the home half of an inning. If a new inning is started when there is less than 5 minutes remaining on the clock, teams will start with 1 out and 1-1 count on all batters.
- If 8 players are not present at the official start time of the game, the team is allowed a 15-minute grace period for other players to show up. The umpire in chief will start the game clock and once the 15 minutes have transpired, the game may be forfeited at that time or the non-forfeiting team may elect to have it rescheduled, per rescheduling policy.
- If you have at least 8 players and are expecting more players to show up, the coach may add the late comers. The coach should announce the late comers to the umpire in chief and to the scorekeepers. The latecomers will be added to the bottom of the lineup. If the coach declares a starting lineup of 9, the late comers will become substitutes.

Teams will make players available in the area outside of bench for a roster check performed by league personnel. Teams will be ready to begin play at the scheduled time.

DURING GAME

Players, coaches, and managers will comply with all directives of umpires. Head coach/manager will assist umpire with any "unruly" parent/guest spectator as directed by umpire or league personnel. Coaches will conduct themselves in a manner of self-control, good sportsmanship, and respect to umpires, opposing players, coaches, and spectators. Coaches will require the same of all players, assistant coaches, and parents/guest spectators.

Coaches will be aware that they may be ejected without warning for arguing, complaining, and otherwise publicly commenting on judgment calls and / or umpires; or for any other untoward behavior as determined by umpires or league personnel.

SUBSTITUTION RULES

Courtesy Runner Exception: A courtesy runner may be used for the catcher at any time -- if the team does not have an eligible sub, the last batted out may run for the catcher. In addition to this exception, "regular" courtesy runner rules per the **NFHS Rule Book** still apply for pitcher and catcher.

The umpire ***may*** allow a batter in 9U/10U/12U who is hit by pitch and is in obvious pain to have a courtesy runner. Defense may choose the courtesy runner from one of last 3 batters who did not reach base.

Pitchers may not return to pitch once they have been removed for another pitcher.

Coaches / Score keepers should verify substitutions (both offense and defense) as they happen, and the score at the end of each half inning.

Coaches should become considerably acquainted with the substitution rules if they plan on batting 9 and using subs. If not, the league suggests the coaching staff stick to a continuous lineup as substitution errors may result in a forfeiture of the game and/or unneeded outs.

Coaches should know the difference between ineligible players and illegal substitutions.

Any attempt to play an ineligible player whether knowingly or accidentally may result in forfeit.

An ineligible player is a player that –

- Is not on the team's official roster with the league.
- Or was an eligible player at the start of the game but has gone through the allowed substitution cycle already and therefore is ineligible. A player who starts as a sub, enters the game, and subsequently gets subbed out is now an ineligible player. Also, a player who starts on the field and gets subbed out and then reenters will become ineligible if subbed out of the game a second time.
- Or started the game as an eligible player but has been ejected from the game.

On the occasion that the League comes into evidence that an ineligible player participated in a game, any time after the game was played, the League reserves the right to forfeit any wins the team had when using such ineligible player.

DESIGNATED HITTER RULES – (9U and up Leagues only)

A hitter may be (not mandatory) designated for any one starting player (not only pitcher) and all subsequent substitutes for that player in the game. A starting defensive player can be listed as the designated hitter in the starting lineup.

A designated hitter for said player shall be selected prior to the start of the game, and his name shall be included on the lineup cards presented to the umpire-in-chief and to the official scorer.

The designated hitter and the starting pitcher may be the same person. If the pitcher opts to bat for himself, he is treated as two separate positions – a pitcher and a designated hitter (abbreviated P/DH on the lineup card) – and may be substituted for as such (i.e., if he is removed as the pitcher, then he may remain as the designated hitter and vice versa). This scenario is the same for any player who is listed in a defensive position as DH.

Failure to declare a designated hitter prior to the game precludes the use of a designated hitter in that game.

If a pinch hitter or pinch runner for the designated hitter is used, that player becomes the new designated hitter. The player who was the designated hitter may re-enter as the designated hitter under the re-entry rule.

A designated hitter and the player for whom he is batting are locked into the batting order. No multiple substitutions may be made that will alter the batting rotation.

The role of the designated hitter is terminated for the remainder of the game when:

- A. The defensive player, or any previous defensive player for whom the designated hitter batted, subsequently bats, pinch-hits or pinch-runs for the designated hitter: or
- B. The designated hitter or any previously designated hitter assumes a defensive position. If the DH later enters the game defensively, he keeps his place in the lineup and the pitcher (or another player for whom he's batted) takes the spot in the lineup that was occupied by the player the DH just subbed in

for. However, if a player who starts the game as a P/DH is relieved as the starting pitcher he may not play any other defensive position after being relieved as the pitcher.

POST GAME

Please do not leave your mess for the next team to deal with! A little courtesy goes a long way for all involved. Please have your players put trash in the trash cans provided.

If there is a game following yours and a team is waiting, please vacate bench as quickly as possible and hold your post-game meeting outside of the field. Conversely, teams waiting to come in should wait until bench area is cleared of all equipment and players before coming in.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Remember – this is a game, for kids, played by kids. SWBBL has organized this league solely for the purpose of having a well-organized league for these kids to play, and for their parents to enjoy watching them play. We hope that you as a coach volunteered your time, effort and likely a few of your own dollars for the kids and the love of the game only.

Keep in mind – it is a game. The scouts are not here, kids are not being signed to contracts. Of the tens of thousands of children that have gone through the Frank Manning/Southwest Baseball league over the last 43 years, no more than a handful have gone on to the professional ranks.

Umpires, same as coaches, don't do this for a living. They have day jobs to go to or they may be students. They want to do a good job for the kids, the teams, and the league. New umpires are trained and given assignments at the lower levels. All umpires are expected to study rules, situations, and interpretations of rules. The league Umpire in Chief spends a fair amount of time observing umpires and assessing their skills, offering constructive advice and direction as needed.

Umpires do not have a stake in games. They do not care who wins or loses. They are there to fulfill a role in the game. Yes, they will on occasion make an incorrect judgment or interpret a rule improperly. You may ask for time and respectfully inquire as to the reason an umpire made a call. The umpire will explain to you what he saw on the play and that will be the end of it. If an umpire misapplied a rule, you may ask that a correct ruling be made, or you may protest the application of the rule.