



Minnetonka Big Willow Baseball Association

Rules of Play for Big Willow Farm Divisions

Revised April 30, 2017

INTRODUCTION

The National Federation High School rules shall be followed, except for the following modifications and exceptions, which have been adopted by the Minnetonka Big Willow (MBW) Majors and Farm Divisions for use in league play. Rules apply to all MBW house league teams (The rules of a specific tournament shall override these rules). The rules shall also apply to practice games.

Managers and Umpires are encouraged to read the rules before the season begins. If a rule is unclear it may be discussed with the Umpire during the course of the game. Only the Manager is allowed to enter the field of play to discuss the interpretation of the rules. An unclear rule should first be interpreted in the best interest of safety, then in the interest of providing the best experience for the participants. The decision of the Umpire shall be final during the game. Protests are not allowed under any circumstances, except where an illegal player was used in a game.

LEAGUE

MBW Farm Division

8, 9, & 10 years old

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1. General

1.1. OFFICIAL SCORER

- 1.1.1. Each coach is supplied with a scorebook. The home team's scorebook will be considered official in the absence of an official scorer. The visiting coach should verify the score after each inning.

1.2. HOME TEAM

- 1.2.1. The home team is designated on the schedule and sits in the third base dugout.

1.3. CONDUCT OF PARTICIPANTS

- 1.3.1. All participants will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with MBW Board Philosophy.
- 1.3.2. Coaches, players and spectators are expressly not allowed to "voice" or "demonstrate" their disagreement with any judgment call by the umpire. In the event that the questionable call relates to a rule interpretation, a coach may approach the umpire to ask for the umpire's perspective or an explanation, and to discuss the call **only** in the presence of the opposing coach.
- 1.3.3. No participant may question the ball or strike calls.
- 1.3.4. No coach, player or spectator may express a belligerent attitude toward an umpire. The manager shall control the attitude of the team players and the spectators who are partisan to the team. Any display of this behavior will result in ejection from the field of play. Any second display of this behavior will result in suspension from the program.
- 1.3.5. Should a coach deem an umpire to be ineffective or incompetent, a call should be made to the League Coordinator to discuss the specifics leading to the report.

1.4. PLAYER PARTICIPATION

1.4.1. PLAYING TIME

- 1.4.1.1. Within a given game, no player shall sit more than one inning over and above any other player. (Ex. If any player plays 6 innings in a regulation game, all players on that team must play at least 5 innings).
- 1.4.1.2. All players shall play both infield and outfield positions during each regular season game to facilitate player development.
- 1.4.1.3. All players must play at least two innings in the infield and 1 inning in the outfield by the end of the 5th inning. **Exception:** If a team plays with only 7 players for at least 2 innings, the outfield inning requirement is waived.
- 1.4.1.4. Violations of this "modified equal play rule" shall be reported by the Umpire to the League Coordinator for possible disciplinary action.
- 1.4.1.5. A player may play any position in the field, re-enter in a different position, and change positions during an inning, except for pitchers (see 6.2).

1.4.2. DISCIPLINARY SUSPENSION

- 1.4.2.1. If a player has missed the previous practice or game without giving prior notice to the coach, or violates a team rule established by the coach, then the coach, as a disciplinary action, may withhold the player from the next game or reduce the number of innings that the players plays. If a coach intends to withhold the player from the game or reduce the playing time for disciplinary reasons, the coach must notify the Division Manager, the player's parents, the umpire, and the opposing coach of his decision before the start of the game or as soon as the rule violation occurs. In this event, rule 1.4.1 shall not apply.

1.4.3. BATTING ORDER

- 1.4.3.1. All players on a team will be placed in the batting order and during the game will bat in order.
- 1.4.3.2. Once the lineup is set (exchanged between the coaches), there cannot be an interchange of players in the batting order. If a player is late he (she) must be inserted into the last place in the batting order.
- 1.4.3.3. If a player needs to be taken out of a game for any reason (injury or other), that player shall be replaced by the player who made the last out.

1.4.4. NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- 1.4.4.1. A team may start and play a game with only seven (7) players, including call-ups.

1.4.5. CALL-UP OF PLAYERS

- 1.4.5.1. Call-ups may be made if a coach knows that eight or fewer players will be present for a particular game.
- 1.4.5.2. The number of call-ups is limited to 3 players, unless receiving prior approval from Division Manager.
- 1.4.5.3. Call-ups shall be made only from players in their last year of the immediately lower house league.
- 1.4.5.4. A player may not be called up to play in more than 2 regular season and 2 playoff games for the same team.
- 1.4.5.5. If 9 or more regular team members are present for the game, only regular team players may start the game. Any player called up should be played equally, but in no case more than any regular team player.
- 1.4.5.6. A player's first responsibility is always to their assigned team. A player may not be called up if their assigned team has a game scheduled at the same time.
- 1.4.5.7. A call-up player may not pitch or catch and is expected to play at least one inning, but no more than three innings, in the infield.
- 1.4.5.8. Call-ups must bat last.
- 1.4.5.9. A call-up player must wear the uniform of his regular team.
- 1.4.5.10. The umpire will record the name of the called-up player on the game card.
- 1.4.5.11. The League's governing body shall approve any exceptions to the rules listed above.

1.5. FAKE TAG

- 1.5.1. A defensive player may not fake a tag when not in possession of the ball. A defensive player may not pretend to be in the process of receiving the ball when a play is not imminent resulting in an unnecessary slide by the runner. If this occurs the runner and any other runners will each advance one base.

1.6. PROTESTS

- 1.6.1. Only games in which an ineligible player has been used may be protested. If the protest is sustained the game will be declared forfeited by the team using the ineligible player or pitcher. The score of a forfeited game will be 6-0.

2. FIELDS

2.1. INFIELD DIMENSIONS

- 2.1.1. **MBW FARM DIVISION:** 60-foot bases, 46 feet mound to plate.

2.2. FIELD BOUNDARIES (*clarification*)

- 2.2.1. The first and third base lines are outlined in chalk and are official. If a ball lands on the line and throws chalk dust, it is a fair ball. The Umpire's judgment is final.
- 2.2.2. The "on-deck" circles shall be on the same side of the hitter in order to minimize injury and speed up the game. The on-deck hitter is responsible for removing the bats and weights if there is a play in the area. If the equipment or on-deck hitter interferes with the play the hitter shall be called out, and the ball shall be dead. The Umpire shall award the runners extra bases per the NFHS guidelines.

2.3. CLEAN FIELDS

- 2.3.1. The coaches of both teams must have the players police the field after games and practices to keep the field and dugouts clean.

2.4. CARE OF FIELDS

- 2.4.1. A League field that has been prepared for a regular game to be played later the same day **shall not** be used for practice.
- 2.4.2. All lights will be turned off at by 10:20 pm, or at 10:00 pm if Field D is turned off.

3. STARTING THE GAME

3.1. PRE-GAME

- 3.1.1. Prior to the start of each game the umpire will meet with both coaches to ensure that they have exchanged lineups.
- 3.1.2. The umpire will review any recent rule changes or rules that may need clarification.
- 3.1.3. The umpire will review all rules specific to the field the game is being played on.
- 3.1.4. The umpire will discuss how he intends to call the balls and strikes and how he expects the teams to conduct themselves.
- 3.1.5. Warm-up practice before game time will start at a minimum of 1 hour before game time.
- 3.1.6. The visiting team shall have the field first and the home team shall have the field 30 minutes before the game time.

3.2. GAME TIMES

- 3.2.1. All games will start at the time noted on the schedule. If a team doesn't have enough players by ten minutes after the official start of the game the team will forfeit. Because the field is available and the object is to play baseball, the teams are encouraged to loan players and begin a practice game. If the coaches mutually agree to do this, the umpire(s) will work the practice game.
- 3.2.2. A team will forfeit if it does not have an adult or approved youth coach in charge of the team during the game. It is up to each coach to be present at each game. If it necessary for a substitute coach to take over, it is the responsibility of the head coach to convey all rules and regulations to his substitute coach.
- 3.2.3. If the umpire is late the game will be delayed 10 minutes. If no umpire has arrived after 10 minutes, the game will begin. A coach from each team will umpire, calling balls/strikes from behind the mound and safe/out calls at the bases, and alternating positions after each complete inning.
- 3.2.4. Report all cases of umpire no-shows to the Division Manager.

3.3. INCLEMENT WEATHER

- 3.3.1. MBW will make the decisions on postponements of games by 4:30 pm or 1 hour before game time due to inclement weather. Check the Rain Status page of the Big Willow Baseball website for weather related updates. It will be the coaches' responsibility to contact their players to notify them of the change. It is suggested that opposing coaches keep in touch with each other so there is no misunderstanding.
- 3.3.2. A game may be called due to weather before the game starts upon mutual agreement of both coaches. If the coaches do not agree, the game will be started. After the game starts, the decision to call the game is solely up to the umpire.
- 3.3.3. An umpire must call the game if there is visible lightning or if the field is in a dangerous condition.

4. ENDING THE GAME

4.1. REGULATION GAME

- 4.1.1. Regular season games will be played to a complete 6 innings, unless the game is shortened due to exceeding the time limit, weather, or darkness.
- 4.1.2. TIME LIMIT: No inning may start if more than 1 hour and 45 minutes has elapsed between the official start time of the game and the third out of the previous full inning. A game can be ended due to the time limit and, if ended due to the time limit, shall be considered a regulation game.
- 4.1.3. WEATHER / DARKNESS: Only an Umpire may call a game due to weather or darkness. If a game is cancelled due to unsafe conditions and is not a complete game, an attempt to reschedule a make-up game shall be made.
- 4.1.4. COMPLETE GAMES: Games shortened due to weather or darkness will be considered complete after 3 ½ innings if the home team is leading or 4 innings if the game is tied or the visiting team is leading. Games not considered complete under this rule will be suspended.
- 4.1.5. TIE GAMES: If a regulation game that is a tie game is halted due to weather, curfew, or light failure the game shall be called a tie and is officially over. Note, however, that if a game is tied and the 1 hour, 45 minute time limit has not been reached, additional innings should be played. (Exception: All playoff and

tournament games will be played until there is a winner by runs scored.)

4.2. CONTINUATION OF A SUSPENDED GAME

- 4.2.1. Every attempt will be made to reschedule called or cancelled games. If the game is not a regulation game (See 4.1), it will not count in the league standings.
- 4.2.2. Suspended games will start from the point of interruption. Each coach should note the location of base runners, the number of outs, and the inning. All pitching restrictions will apply to the suspended game as applied to the original game.

4.3. REPORTING SCORES

- 4.3.1. After the game, both coaches and the Umpire must sign the Official Game Summary Score Card. The home team coach is responsible for sending the Division Manager the final score. All scores and league standings will be posted at the Big Willow web site with daily updates.

5. THE RUNNER

5.1. CONFERENCES

- 5.1.1. Each team, when at bat, may be granted not more than one charged conference per inning to permit any coach to confer with base runners and/or the batter. Coaches shall not enter the field of play to confer with the runners.

5.2. SLIDE RULE

- 5.2.1. With the exception of first base, a runner must slide into a base or avoid contact where the defensive player is holding the ball or is in the process of receiving the ball in an attempt to put the runner out. **A slide must be made feet first and the runner must be in a down position in contact with the ground.** If the runner creates contact during the play without sliding or attempting to avoid contact, a team warning shall be issued on the first incident only and any additional infractions will have the runner ruled out. If the runner does not slide or avoid contact, and, in the judgment of the umpire, intends to injure the defensive player, he shall be ruled out and ejected from the game.
- 5.2.2. **Note:** The intent of the rules is to eliminate injuries that have resulted from runners crashing into defensive players. If a player is going back to a base he (she) does not have to slide, and may dive back head first to that base.

5.3. COLLISIONS

- 5.3.1. A runner may not make contact with a defensive player that has a right to be in the base path. The defensive player has the right to be in the base path if he (she) has the ball or is setting up to receive the ball.
- 5.3.2. A runner may make contact with a defensive player by way of slide. A runner that is airborne while making contact with the defensive player is out, unless the defensive player is blocking the base path without the ball.

5.4. LEADING OFF AND STEALING

- 5.4.1. Leading off is not allowed. Runners may, at their own risk, attempt to steal 2nd or 3rd base only after a pitched ball has crossed home plate. Stealing home is not permitted. Players that round 3rd base, or are off the base at any time, are at risk and can be thrown/tagged out. This includes players who mistakenly attempt to steal home or are caught leaving the base early.

5.5. ADVANCING RUNNER

- 5.5.1. The hitter may NOT advance to first base on a dropped third strike. Runners may

advance at their own risk.

- 5.5.2. Once a runner has occupied any base he may score ONLY when the ball is put into play by the batter or when forced in by a walk or hit batsman.

5.6. **MAXIMUM RUNS PER INNING.**

- 5.6.1. A maximum of five runs per half inning is allowed.

5.7. **RUNNING FOR THE CATCHER**

- 5.7.1. A pinch runner may be substituted for the catcher if there are two outs, and less than six innings have been played. The batter that made the last out made shall be the substitute runner.

5.8. **INFIELD FLY RULE**

- 5.8.1. A catchable fair fly ball (not a line drive or attempted bunt) with ordinary effort by an infielder is an infield fly when first and second, or first, second and third base are occupied and there are less than two outs.
- 5.8.2. The Umpire shall immediately declare "Infield Fly if Fair" for the benefit of the runners.
- 5.8.3. If the umpire fails to declare the "**Infield Fly Rule**", and it is apparent that it should have been called the Umpire shall, at his discretion rule that the batter is out, and have the runners return to their original bases.
- 5.8.4. Once the infield fly rule is called the runners may advance at their own risk.
- 5.8.5. If the ball is foul it is treated as any foul ball.

5.9. **GROUND RULES**

- 5.9.1. When a live ball is thrown out of the field of play it is then DEAD. Each runner may advance based on the NFHS guidelines. The decision that the ball is out of the field of play is a judgment call by the umpire.
- 5.9.2. On fields fully enclosed by fencing, a live ball that stays within the field of play is not dead and the runners may advance at their own risk.
- 5.9.3. On fields which have outfield fences, a batted ball which bounces over or rolls under the fence will be ruled a two base hit and all runners on base will advance two bases.
- 5.9.4. When a live ball that is thrown hits inside the dugout or the bench area, the ball is automatically DEAD. Each runner may advance based on the NFHS guidelines. The dugout or bench area is defined as that area that includes the designated bat storage area, and equipment storage area.
- 5.9.5. A fielder may not enter the dugout or bench area to catch the ball for an out. However, if the ball is caught outside the area and momentum carries the fielder into the "out of play" area, the batter shall be called out. In this case, the runners shall advance one base.
- 5.9.6. Certain fields have natural hazards in the outfield. If a batted fair ball lands in a hazard of this nature, the ball is in play. Runners may advance at their own risk and the team in the field may retrieve the ball as quickly as possible to make a play.
- 5.9.7. If an accident occurs which prevents a player from further play and needs medical attention, the umpire shall immediately call "TIME", no runner may advance beyond the base he was running to.
- 5.9.8. On fields without fences, if a ball is hit past the outfielders it remains in play. The runners may advance at their own risk.
- 5.9.9. A ball that hits an obstruction such as a fence on the field of play and is caught is considered a live ball. A ball cannot hit a fence, be caught, and be considered an

out.

6. THE PITCHER

6.1. NUMBER OF INNINGS

- 6.1.1. No player may pitch more than two innings per game and no more than four innings per week. A pitcher cannot pitch more than a total of 3 innings in two consecutive days. (Ex: 2 innings the 1st day and 1 inning the 2nd day or 1 inning the 1st day and two innings the 2nd day).
- 6.1.2. **Double Headers:** Rules for double headers will be the same as back-to-back games. Rules 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 still apply.
- 6.1.3. Delivery of one pitch in an inning counts as one inning pitched.
- 6.1.4. All innings pitched in a suspended game are counted for this rule.
- 6.1.5. A pitching “week” runs Monday through Sunday.

6.2. RE-ENTRY

- 6.2.1. A pitcher taken out as a pitcher may not re-enter the game as a pitcher.

6.3. ILLEGAL PITCHES

- 6.3.1. Any breaking pitch (curve, slider, forkball, or a knuckle-curve) is an illegal pitch. Knuckleballs will not be allowed.
- 6.3.2. A sidearm pitch is legal, unless it is a breaking pitch.
- 6.3.3. The penalty for an illegal pitch will be to call it a ball unless the batter hits fairly and reaches first base safely. If he reaches first safely, the play will stand as is. Any subsequent base running is at the runner’s own risk.
- 6.3.4. After the **first** illegal pitch as noted above, a warning and an explanation will be given to the pitcher and coach. Any subsequent illegal pitch will be cause to award the batter first base and advance the runners.

6.4. WARM-UP

- 6.4.1. A pitcher entering the game shall be permitted a maximum of seven (7) pitches to warm up.
- 6.4.2. Pitchers are limited to five (5) warm-up pitches between innings.

6.5. INTENTIONAL WALKS

- 6.5.1. A batter shall not receive an intentional pass.
- 6.5.2. There shall be four balls before a batter is issued a walk.

6.6. BALKS

- 6.6.1. Balks will not be called in the Farm Division. However, if a balk results in an out, the runner will not be called out, and instead all runners will return to their original bases.

6.7. HIDDEN BALL PLAY

- 6.7.1. Hidden ball plays shall not be used.

6.8. TRIPS TO THE MOUND

- 6.8.1. A manager or coach may make only two trips to the mound before removing the pitcher from the game. On the third trip the pitcher must be removed. A trip is defined as crossing first or third base to discuss any action occurring on the field. Discussions regarding the balk rule are not considered a trip.

6.9. REMOVAL OF PITCHER

- 6.9.1. A pitcher shall be removed from pitching for the remainder of a game if they hit three batters in one game.

7. EQUIPMENT

7.1. CATCHERS

- 7.1.1. Catchers must wear a protective cup and supporter (it is strongly suggested that all players do this). Coaches shall see that this rule is followed. Catchers shall also wear the protective helmet and mask supplied by the league.
- 7.1.2. Only a team member or a coach may warm up a pitcher at home plate or in the bullpen. The warm-up catcher must wear a helmet and mask while warming up the pitcher.

7.2. PITCHERS

- 7.2.1. Pitchers are not allowed to wear wristbands or sunglasses and may not have light-colored tape on their gloves.

7.3. RUNNERS

- 7.3.1. Steel cleats are not allowed.
- 7.3.2. Runners must wear a batting helmet while on base.

7.4. UNIFORMS

- 7.4.1. Uniforms must be worn for official league games and for official practice games.
- 7.4.2. A complete uniform is a house league hat, uniform jersey, and baseball pants. The jersey must be worn inside the pants at all times.

7.5. BATS

- 7.5.1. A wood or aluminum bat is legal and may be used.
- 7.5.2. The bat must have a knob on the handle end.
- 7.5.3. All big barrel bats must have the NEW USSSA Approved 1.15 BPF stamp on its taper or BBCOR stamp. For small barrel bats (2 1/4"), use all of the above stamps or you can also use bats that have the old approved USSSA 1.15 mark or it can have any 1.15 stamped on the bat. There is no maximum weight differential.
- 7.5.4. The umpire will call any player using an illegal bat "OUT".

8. STANDINGS / PLAYOFFS

8.1. POOL PLAY

- 8.1.1. After pool play is over, the teams will be ranked based on winning percentage. Winning percentage is defined as total games won divided by total games played, taking into consideration that a tie game is deemed a 1/2 game win and a 1/2 game loss. For example, a record of 14-5-1 is a .725 winning percentage. The teams will be seeded based on winning percentage.

8.2. TIE BREAKER

- 8.2.1. Head of head between tied teams
- 8.2.2. Runs allowed between tied teams
- 8.2.3. Run differential between tied teams
- 8.2.4. Run allowed entire pool
- 8.2.5. Run differential entire pool
- 8.2.6. Coin toss

- 8.2.7. If at any point one team is eliminated from the tie and multiple teams subsequently remain, that tie breaker procedure starts back over between the remaining teams.

8.3. REGULAR SEASON AWARDS

- 8.3.1. No awards shall be given based on regular season standings.

8.4. POST SEASON AWARDS

- 8.4.1. All teams qualify for the playoffs.
- 8.4.2. If there are an odd number of teams, the #1 seed will receive a first-round bye.
- 8.4.3. During playoffs, teams with the best record during the regular season will have the home field advantage.
- 8.4.4. Trophies will be awarded to the top four teams.

8.5. CALL UP OF PLAYERS

- 8.5.1. Teams shall re-draft in the inverse order of the regular season standings for assigning call up players to a designated team. Juniors' coaches will submit a list of eligible players that will be available for the Farm playoffs.

8.6. POST SEASON REGULATION GAME

- 8.6.1. Playoff games will be played to a complete 6 innings, unless the game is shortened due to exceeding the run rule (see below), weather, or darkness. No time limit will be put in effect.
- 8.6.2. RUN RULE: Game will be declared over if at the end of the inning the trailing team cannot score, based on the maximum runs allowed per inning rule (5 for Farm), enough runs to tie or go ahead in subsequent innings.
- 8.6.3. PITCHING: No player may pitch more than two innings per game and no more than a total of 3 innings in post season pool play and a total of 3 innings in post season brackets.