



Minnetonka Big Willow Baseball  
Association

Rules of Play for  
Big Willow Juniors Division

Revised April 30, 2017

## Juniors/Machine Pitch

### GENERAL

1. All Machine Pitch Division games will be played within a **1 hour and 30 minute time limit** and will be considered complete regardless of the number of innings played.
2. No inning should start after 1 hour and 15 minutes.
3. All games will be played to the full time limit regardless of the score between the two teams. In addition, games will not be continued if a tie exists.
4. A half inning will end with five (5) runs or three (3) outs (whichever is achieved first).
5. A coach from the fielding team will stand behind the catcher (helmet recommended) to assist with passed balls and close plays at home plate.
6. Prior to the start of each inning, the coach should position his player/pitchers at least five (5) feet to one side of the dirt around pitching machine and no closer to home plate than the pitching mound.
7. A batted ball striking an adult/pitcher will be declared a "dead ball." The batter will be awarded first base and each base runner will advance one base.
8. The infield fly rule is waived in the Juniors/Coach Pitch League. Base runners must advance as forced.

### EQUIPMENT

1. Protective helmets shall be worn at bat and while a base runner during all practices and games. Any base runner that intentionally removes the protective helmet while running the bases shall be called out upon completion of the play.
2. All players are encouraged to wear a protective supporter cup to practices and games. The catcher during all practices and games shall wear a protective supporter cup and protective headgear, as well as chest and shin protection.
3. A wood or aluminum bat is legal and may be used. The bat must have a knob on the handle end. 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.
4. Metal cleats or spikes are not permitted by any player or coach.
5. Jewelry is prohibited. Players shall not wear jewelry. Medical alert and religious bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewelry.

## PITCHING

1. A coach or designated adult of the batting team will “pitch” using the sling machine.
2. The speed of the pitches should be around **35 MPH** for the first half of the season, gradually increasing to **40 MPH** by the end of the season. The intent is to ensure that the majority of the children are comfortably hitting the ball before increasing the speed.
3. The “strike zone” is defined as any pitch whose height is between the bottom of the batter's knees and his shoulders, and whose width extends one ball width on either side of the plate.

## BATTING

1. Balls and strikes, as such, are not called at the Juniors level. Therefore, no walks will be awarded, strike outs called or first base awarded if a pitch hits a batter.
2. Each batter will be given a maximum of six (6) pitches.
3. If a batter is unable to hit the ball into fair territory after six (6) pitches, the ball will be placed on a tee.
4. Bunting will NOT be allowed.
5. The batter and all base runners will be awarded one extra base if a fielding coach interferes with a hit ball.
6. Coaches shall take immediate and appropriate action when a batter throws a bat.
  - a. **Unintentional.** The home plate coach should explain the rule violation to the batter and his/her teammates.
  - b. **Intentional.** The home plate coach shall call the batter "out" and declare a "dead ball" situation and the runners may NOT advance. The batter shall be removed from the game if the coach considers the incident to have created an unsafe condition.

## BASE RUNNING

1. Base stealing and leading off will **NOT** be allowed at any time.
2. Play will be considered stopped ("dead ball") once the ball is under control and within 10 feet of the pitcher's plate. (NOTE: This does not mean that a player may run to within 10 feet of the pitcher's plate in order to stop play. Players are expected to make a play, i.e., throwing to a base, rather than throwing to the pitcher to intentionally end play. In addition, it does not mean that play is automatically stopped if the player/pitcher fields the ball within this radius. He/she, too, is expected to make a play.)
3. Play will be considered stopped ("dead ball") when a second overthrow is made.
4. The first overthrow of first, third, or home bases shall not be considered dead unless the ball travels beyond the sideline fence.
5. A base runner advancing to the next base when play is stopped will be awarded that base.

6. Obstruction shall be called on the catcher or any other player who blocks any base, particularly home plate, except when they are in possession of the ball or fielding a batted ball. In the case of obstruction, the runner shall be awarded the base to which he/she was advancing.
7. A base runner advancing to any base, particularly home plate, must attempt to avoid a collision. A base runner involved in a collision, who has not attempted to avoid the collision (in the coaches judgment) by sliding or other action will be called out for interference, even though the opponent may have been obstructing the base.
8. When a player who will be catcher in the next inning is a base runner and there are two outs, a pinch runner may be used to allow the catcher additional time to put on the equipment. This does not apply during bottom half of the last inning.

## **SUBSTITUTION**

1. All players may play in the field when a team is on defense. The infield shall be limited to the normal positions. All other players must be in the outfield and be situated no closer than the edge of the outfield grass.
2. Every player will be included in the batting order. A player arriving after the start of a game will be placed at the end of the batting order.
3. Coaches are allowed free substitution throughout the game. **Furthermore, coaches are REQUIRED to move players around to different positions during the course of a game. No player should play the same position for more than two innings in a game.**
4. During the course of a season, each player should be given the opportunity to play the widest range of infield and outfield positions possible. At least 1/3 of each player's playing time should be spent in the infield and 1/3 spent in the outfield. The coach will determine the balance. However, player safety and confidence must be given consideration in making position assignments (i.e., catching, first base).
5. A clear disregard of player rotation guidelines will constitute grounds for coach suspension or removal, and impact future coaching considerations.

## **OFFICIATING**

1. The coach that is pitching will make all "safe/out" calls in the field with input from 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and home plate coaches for close plays at their respective bases. The coach that is pitching has the final ruling on all plays.
2. There are **NO PROTESTS** at the Juniors level. Coaches are expected to reach a quiet mutual resolution to rule interpretation questions at the game. If coaches think that additional action is appropriate, they should refer the question to the Division Manager. Remember that there are no Juniors League "standings." There are no official winners or losers in any game. Each game is essentially a scrimmage.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

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
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.
3. The coaches must call the game if there is visible lightning or if the field is in a dangerous condition.
4. Every attempt will be made to reschedule called or cancelled games