

RULE HIGHLIGHTS / LOCAL RULES SWBBL SOFTBALL FALL 2021

Please read through all information, paying attention to each section header which will alert to a particular league or all of the leagues.

Rules used are:

1) Local Rules 2) National Federation of High Schools 3) USSSA rules
Local rules supersede NFHS rules, that which is not governed by Local or NFHS is governed by USSSA. USSSA rules are available on the League's website.

LOCAL RULES

BATTING AND LINE UP 8U – HS LEAGUES (rev. 6/20)

DRAFT TEAMS

All Draft Teams (8U – 10U) will use a continuous batting order of all present, eligible, uniformed players. Each player will also play at least 6 defensive outs in the field. *(See additional rules regarding draft players)*

SELECT TEAMS (12-u, 14- u , HS)

Teams may bat a **nine (9) player line-up** or **continuous line-up** of all present, eligible, uniformed players. Such line-up must be declared before the start of the game and shall be used for the entire game. See USSSA for option to bat 10 with FLEX.

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. (rev. 8/19)

ALL TEAMS

If a team uses a continuous line-up, all players may move freely in defensive positions with the exception of 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. 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. A ninth (9th) player and all subsequent players may be added to the line-up as soon as they become available. (rev. 8/19)

LINE UP CARDS 8U – HS

Leagues *U 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 card will be prepared by 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 game being forfeited by offending team. (rev. 8/19)

STARTING AND ENDING A GAME 8U – HS

A regulation game consists of:

Five (5) innings for age divisions 8U;

Six (6) innings for 10U – 12U;

Seven (7) innings for age division 14U – HS;

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 (8U, 10U Draft), or shortened because an imposed Time Limit has been met. (rev. 6/20)

TIME LIMITS

A new inning will not start with less than 5 minutes remaining in the game. An inning started before time has expired will be finished.

Coach Pitch 1:15 10U: 1:15 12U 1:30 14U-HS 1:45

At completion of home plate conference, Plate umpire will begin the countdown game timer clock. (rev. 6/20)

RUN RULES

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

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

14U, HS - 15 after 2 innings, 12 after 3 innings, 10 after 4 innings, 8 after 5 innings (rev. 6/20)

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.

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. 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. 8/19)

SOFTBALLS

The League supplies all games with softballs. The ball used is:

8u - 10"

10u - 11"

12u, 14u, HS - 12"

UNIFORMS 8U – HS

All players of each team will 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 from 0 to 99, 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 player from lineup unless doing so causes team to have less than 9 players. Player may be inserted into line up upon acquiring 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. 2/18)

MISCELLAENOUS (rev. 2/18)

Slide/Avoid Contact 8U- HS

Whenever a tag play is evident, a runner should slide or seek to avoid contact with the fielder and / or catcher. 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. 8/19)

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, Coach pitch teams may have 5 coaches, on field/bench during game. All coaches (over 18 yoa) must be registered and have current background check on file with SWBBL. No other persons on field/ bench allowed. Coaches shall confine themselves to the dugout, 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 fence. Roaming the foul lines is not allowed. There will be a limit of 4 coaches / scorekeepers, etc. allowed on field. No person may coach players from behind fences. All coaches not occupying a field position will remain in bench area. Exceeding maximum will result in coaches being removed from bench/field. (rev. 2/19)

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. (rev. 8/17)

All player or coach will be reviewed by the League Vice President, Umpire in Chief & League Director and will review ejections and administer further or lesser penalties. Typically, an ejection will bring at least an additional 1 or more games suspension. (If the League Director has an interest conflict, another Director will be assigned) (rev. 3/21)

Head coaches 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. (rev. 8/17)

Bat safety rule – throwing of bat by batter. To protect catchers, on deck batters, umpires and others, a batter who 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.

Equipment/buckets/bats outside of bench area: No equipment, buckets, bats will be outside of bench area.

INFIELD DIMENSIONS

AGE GROUP	BASE PATHS	PITCH DISTANCE	AGE GROUP	PITCH DISTANCE
8 u	60'	25 ft (player at 40')	8u	
10 u	60'	35 ft (player at 40')	10u	
12 u	60'	40'	12u	
14 u and HS	60'	43'	14u +	

PITCHER ELIGIBILITY; PITCHING LIMITS: (Rev. 03/21)

LEAGUE	1 DAY MAX
10U / 12U	4 innings
14U	5 innings
HS	6 innings

Pitcher must be removed from pitching position after max innings.

Playoff Pitching Rules:

- One day maximum to pitch next day: 10U/12U – 3 innings; 14U/HS- 4 innings
Over requires 1 day rest
- Three consecutive day maximum: 10U/12U – 7 innings; 14U - 8 innings; HS – 9 innings
Over requires 2 days rest
A pitcher who pitches 3 consecutive days requires 2 days rest regardless of number of innings pitched

8U COACH PITCH LOCAL RULES

Safety Area: Infielders will position themselves no closer to the plate than the player who is occupying the pitcher position. (rev. 7/14)

Pitching Circle: There shall be a ten (10) foot diameter circle with the front edge set at Forty (40) feet from the rear point of home plate. (rev. 8/17)

Pitcher Coach Line: Pitching Coach shall be in contact with the Pitching Circle line at 25' when releasing the pitch and pitch must be performed underhand.

Approved ruling: The coach pitcher may step beyond the line when releasing the ball as long as 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 batter. (rev. 6/20)

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. (rev. 8/17)

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 Catchers 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. (rev. 8/17)

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. (rev. 8/17)

The batting order shall consist of all present players on the team roster at the beginning of the game. Late arrivals shall be inserted at the bottom of the batting order. All players on the roster shall bat before returning to the top of the batting order.

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.

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. (rev. 8/19)

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.

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. (rev. 6/20)

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. (rev. 8/19)

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.

10U DRAFT LEAGUE LOCAL RULES MODIFICATION:

A pitcher will perform 3 pitches and either a strikeout or hit by batter and then the coach will provide 3 underhand pitches at above listed distance for a hybrid model. The batter cannot walk off coach or player and after 6 pitches either an out or hit will be achieved. If after the coaches 3 pitches the batter does not hit they are out. The coach must move off the field of play immediately following the hit.

Runners shall not lead-off or advance off a passed ball.

There shall be a run limit of 7 runs per inning including the final inning.

12U, 14u and HS DRAFT LEAGUE LOCAL RULES

Will follow local HS and USSSA rules as provided on webpage. Metal cleats are allowed for HS division only.



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 / situation 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 reschedule 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 game that is to be rescheduled will be made by 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 team 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 minimum number of players to start the game will result in a forfeit for the team short of players. Forfeits are entered as 6 – 0 win/loss (7 – 0 for 14-HS) (rev. 6/20)

TIE-BREAKERS

Standings are based on W-L percentage to games played. Ties are included.

1. Number of games won
2. Total runs allowed
3. Runs Scored
4. 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 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 may cause a disqualification of the coach for the next 3 team games. A third ejection in season will require action by the league's Board of Directors for reinstatement. 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 forfeit of game.*** (rev.

3/21)

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

Rules of the game will be National Federation of High School Rules current edition (NFHS), except where 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 call 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 also be required to post a \$50 protest fee at the concession stand and obtain a receipt. Fee may be paid after the game. If fee is not paid after 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 at a later time. 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 decide 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 decide 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) on April 4th, 10:00PM, 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 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 **3**-game 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. (rev. 5/21)

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 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 **3 game** 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. 6/20)

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 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 perceived lack of talent or ability. Any person doing so will face suspension from the League as decided by the Board of Directors. (Rev. 8/19)

PRE-GAME

Home team will occupy 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.**

Head Coach will meet with 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 that they have all players' first name, last name, jersey number, and starting positions. 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. 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 Select League**
- 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 ***more than 5 minutes*** left on the game clock. An inning starts as soon as the 3rd out is recorded in the previous inning.
- 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 has 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 late, the coach may add the late comers. The coach should announce the late comers to the umpire in chief and to the scorekeepers. The late comers 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 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 manager 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 publically 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.

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 teams official roster with the league
- Or was an eligible player at the start of the game but has gone thru 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.

An illegal substitution arises when you reenter an eligible player in the wrong order of the batting lineup. Say you have (Batter)B1, B2, ...B9 and (Sub) S1, S2. If B4 gets subbed for by S1 and then reenters, he must reenter in the B4 spot. If he reenters in any other spot say B2, this may result in various negative consequences if brought to the attention of the umpire by the opposing team in a timely manner. Here are some possible scenarios:

- B4 reentered in B2's spot and is at bat. This is an illegal substitution that results in a batting out of order situation. While at bat with a 1 strike count, the opposing team calls time to point out the illegal substitution lineup error. B4 would be penalized by being declared ineligible for the remainder of the game. B2 (if eligible) or a proper substitute enters and assumes the plate appearance with whatever the count is which would be one strike in this case. If there is no eligible substitute, then batter B2 is declared out and the next batter, B3, is up.
- B4 reentered in B2's spot and is at bat. He completes the at bat with a double which scored a run. The defensive team calls time prior to another pitch being made to the succeeding batter and protests the lineup error. The umpire calls the batter out who is B2 not B4. B4 is declared

ineligible for the remainder of the game. The base runners return to their bases at time of pitch and no runs are scored. The next batter (B3) is up.

- B4 has completed his at bat in the above situation. One pitch has been made to the succeeding batter and the defensive team protests. The protest is too late and all play will stand as played, but B4 is removed from the game and declared ineligible for the remainder of the game. B2 takes B4's spot on base. B4's batting spot must be occupied by an eligible substitute. If there isn't an eligible substitute for B4, then it will result in an out when it is his turn to bat. The correct batter at the plate should be B5 now since the team batted out of order and it wasn't caught in a timely manner. If B3 is at plate, he should be replaced by B5 with whatever the count is at. Unfortunately B3's at bat has been skipped due to this error.
- Team A's manager subs in S1 for B4 in the 3rd inning. In the 5th inning, B4 reenters defensively in the right spot, but fails to report to both the scorekeeper and umpire. Team B's manager protests.
- There is no penalty for unreported proper reentry. However, the manager is warned the 1st time about not declaring the substitution and will be ejected from the game if a 2nd offense occurs. If B4 reenters offensively without being reported, opposing manager may make a correct batting out of order appeal.

DESIGNATED HITTER RULES – (Select 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. 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 previous designated hitter assumes a defensive position. 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). However, if a player who starts the game as a P/DH is relieved as the starting pitcher, he may not return to the mound even if he remains in the game as DH, and he may not play any other defensive position after being relieved as the pitcher.

POST GAME

Coaches need to confer with the umpire while postgame to ensure that:

- the score is recorded correctly.
- Pitchers innings are correctly recorded

The umpire turns these records into the league for official recording.

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.

LEAGUE EQUIPMENT

Draft teams are offered and provided equipment for use during the season. You have signed for the equipment. Please take care of it and return all of it. If any equipment is broken or becomes worn, please contact the equipment manager for an exchange. After your final game of the season, please bring your equipment to the concession stand to have it checked in for return.

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.

Also keep in mind – it is only a game. The MLB scouts are not here, 9, 12 and 15-year old's 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 39 years, no more than a handful have gone on to the professional ranks. Have fun, instruct and teach, and really...have fun. That's what a game is about.

Umpires are in the same position as coaches; they 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 on a play, may interpret a rule improperly. On a judgment play you cannot argue the call. 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 leading to his call. 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. Umpires are instructed to be polite and respectful to all players, coaches and spectators. Although you may not agree with their decision or ruling, you should accord them the same conduct.