

West Hartford Youth Baseball League - Instructional Division (Revised – March 1, 2025)

The following "Local" Rules supersede any applicable Rules contained in the Babe Ruth League Official Baseball Rules Book and shall govern for play in the WHYBL Instructional Division.

1. A regular Cal Ripken hardball (not safety or a RIF 5 ball) will be used for all games.

2A. Games are to be (6) full innings of play (5 1/2 innings if home team is ahead). Games are official after 4 full innings (3 1/2 if the home team is ahead). 2B. A two hour time limit will be enforced for games. No new inning shall be started after 1hr and 45 mins have passed. For clarification, this means that no new inning shall be started after one hour and 45 minutes have passed from the time of the first pitch (not scheduled game time, if the two differ). Any inning that has started before this time limit will be finished in its entirety under the regular rules. 2C. If the game is tied at the end of the final inning, no extra innings will be played if the two hour time limit has been reached. The game will end as a tie. Managers can agree to play extra inning, as long as the game does not violate the 2-hour max rule. Ways to be sure games are completed: a) minimizing player warm-ups between 1/2 innings (eliminating warm-ups if necessary); b) moving along "at bats"; c) courtesy runners for catchers, etc. 2D. If games are called due to inclement weather during an inning, which are official, the game will revert back to the last complete inning played.

3A. Only ten (10) Players can play in the field, with 4 Players spaced equally in the outfield. Outfielders must be a minimum of fifteen (15) feet from the infield-outfield grass line and must be spaced in a typical LF, LCF, RCF, RF positions. Outfielders are not permitted to field plays at any base (i.e., the outfielder must throw the ball to the infielder to tag the runner or the base). In addition, no "defensive shifts" are permitted – infielders must remain spaced across the field of play in standard baseball positions. Pitcher position should be approximately five (5) feet to left or right of pitching machine, not halfway to 1st or 3rd base. 3B. During the course of the season, the goal is to provide each Player with equal cumulative playing time in the field. If a team has 12 or less players attending the game, that team needs to ensure that each player plays 4 to 5 total innings in the field, including 2 to 3 innings in the infield (includes catcher), and 1 to 2 innings on the bench. If a team has 13 or more players attending the game, that team needs to ensure that each player plays 3 to 4 total innings in the field, including 1 to 2 innings in the infield, and 2 to 3 inning on the bench. If a player is on the bench for a defensive inning, they must play in the field in the following inning. 3C. Players should be rotated every inning among the infield, the outfield, and the bench in order to give all players an equal opportunity to try many positions over the course of each game. No player should play the same position more than ONE time during any regular season game or TWO times during any playoff games. The only exceptions are a safety concern or the player has chosen not to play a certain position(s). 3D. Substitutions can be made freely and players can be inserted into the field more than once and coaches should try to equalize playing time in all games.

4. All Players on the Team must bat in a CONSECUTIVE batting order.
5. An inning is over once three (3) outs are recorded or five (5) runs have scored, whichever comes first. However, this rule will be waived in the 6th inning and both teams may score as many runs until (3) official outs have been recorded.
6. It is required that each team designates and uses a catcher, which will give those players the opportunity to experience / grow in that position. Cups will be mandatory for all catchers and highly recommended for all players.
7. In order to get the scheduled games played, please play with the players that you have. Any team can play with as few as 7 players. Managers should work together to provide a consistent even number of fielders. For example, if a team has 7 players and the other has 9 players, the team with 9 can provide the other with a player each inning for defense (can rotate this player, last to make the out the previous inning, for example).
8. If a courtesy runner is required, due to injury or otherwise, this runner shall be the player on that team who made the last out. Also, each team has the option to pinch run for their catcher should he/she be on base with two (2) outs in order to get the catcher's gear on and expedite the game.
9. There will be a mercy rule and the game will end if a team is up 15 runs after four innings or 12 runs after five innings. If the home team is ahead by that run amount, it will not bat in the bottom frame and the game will be over. Both managers can decide to continue playing if under the 2-hour limit but the results will not count nor affect the outcome of the game. No more than 5 runs per inning
- 10A. Pitching shall be done using a Louisville Slugger Ultimate Pitching Machine or similar for all games. There will be no called balls or strikes but (3) swinging strikes will designate an out. Once the batter has received and not swung at about 2 hittable pitches, than his pitcher should tell the batter he must swing at the next pitch that is reasonably hittable or it will be a strike. If batter has 2 strikes already he/she may be called out looking. 10B. Home team will provide the pitching machine for each game - For clarity if you look at your schedule, Game vs. [Other team's name] means home game. Game @ [Other team's name] means away game. Visiting team's pitching machine may be used if the Home team's is broken, missing, or not functioning properly. The front "T" of the Pitching Machine will be placed at a distance of 40 feet from point of home plate. Machine settings need to stay set at "Micro Adjust" – level 3; Release Arm Block – level 4; Power Pedal starting season at level 4 (speed) and adjusted to level 5 (speed) approximately halfway through season which is to be announced by division VP. The foot Power Pedal is required to stay fully pressed down until the pitch has been completed.

11A. There will be NO Umpires for any game during the regular season. Coaches are on the field to be the “umpires” and instructors for every game. Coaches should stop the game for teaching (tag v force, tagging up, etc). 11B. Play in the field will be called dead when in the umpire’s (coach’s) opinion the ball has been returned to the pitcher and/or is in the controlled possession of an infielder within the infield area, or reaches the infield from the outfield per rule 15B. Umpires may be provided by the league for semi final and Championship games. In the event umpires are provided, the umpire will be responsible for making calls and enforcing rules.

12. Sliding should be encouraged if there is a play at any base but it is not mandatory (Players are to slide or attempt to avoid contact). Remember INSTRUCT.

13. There are to be NO walks, NO hit by pitch free bases, NO stealing of bases and NO leading off bases for this Division. A runner may only leave a base once a batted ball is put in play. In the event of a hit by pitch situation, because a hitter’s own coach is pitching, no free base will be awarded. A hit ball that hits the pitching machine is considered a live ball.

14. Coaches are to instruct their Players NOT to throw their bats after hitting the ball; teach them how to drop it when running to first. We do not want to see any injuries of this nature.

15. No extra base will be allowed on an overthrows. Existing Base runners can advance a base as they would on a standard ground ball Ex. Runner on 2nd base. Ground ball to pitcher - over throw to 1st. Batter cannot advance to 2nd. Runner on 2nd base may advance to 3rd.

15B. Runners may advance as many bases if the ball is hit into the OF. Once the ball is in the infield the runner can no longer advance. Once the ball is in the infield in any manner the play is now dead even if the ball is on the ground in the IF. Remind outfielders they must throw the ball in to the infield.

16. NO bunting allowed for this division, have your Players hit away. If a player swings and the ball lands 1 foot into fair territory the ball is live.

17. NO Slash Bunting: This is when a Batter shows intent to bunt, drawing the infielders in towards the plate. The Batter then draws his bat back and takes a full swing at the pitch. Instruct the player that this is not allowed.

18A. The Home team manager shall in the event of a postponement, immediately notify the League Vice President to reschedule the game 18B. Within 24 hours of the completed game, the winning team manager will input game results into the league website and write the "article". The losing team's manager should supply the winning manager with content for his/her team. 18C. If on Eisenhower, Fern or Wolcott field, both teams should spend fifteen (15) minutes after each game to rake the field and fix

the pitching mound. Always clean up the dugouts. NEVER RAKE DIRT ONTO grass anywhere 18D. Home team gets 1st base dugout.

19. The league play-offs will be played as follows: Single elimination based on records. Tiebreakers will be decided by League Vice President based on: 1) head to head result; 2) wins last 5 games; 3) runs against; 4) coin flip.

20. 21. Play-off Game Protocols – In the event of a tie at the conclusion of a playoff game, the following rules shall apply, as applicable.

Step 1 - Play 1 extra inning, normal rules. Continuing batting order where it left off in the 6th inning.

Step 2 - If no run in Step 1 or tied, start next inning with runner on 2nd. Each team will get an at bat.

Step 3 - If no run in Step 2 or tied, start next inning with runner on 3rd. Each team will get an at bat.

Coaches may mutually agree to start on Step 2 or 3, especially if time constraint is an issue or teams are locked in a 0-0 or 1-1 struggling to hit game.

21. Coach Interference – No coach on offense or defense may make contact with a player or the ball in way that would facilitate or prevent a play from happening or creating or preventing an out. In the event of coach interference the offending team may be issued an out or the runner may be awarded a base.