

RULES AND REGULATIONS

RULES OF PLAY

Current MLB American League Rules with High School re-entry rule added will govern all play except where bylaws apply. See *Bylaws* on page eight (8).

BEHAVIOR AND SPORTSMANSHIP

Every player is expected to be familiar with league rules and regulations, and to abide by them. Players are to respect and cooperate with teammates, fellow players, umpires and league officials, and must regularly ensure any and all friends and family in the stands do the same. Players are to recognize that this is a community league—not a professional league—and as such additional responsibilities exist, such as regular field preparation/maintenance/improvement, supporting other local baseball organizations such as little league and high school teams, and always fostering a family-appropriate environment at league games and events.

It is the responsibility of the team manager to regularly communicate and confirm league rules and regulations to his players, and to encourage strong familiarity with this document. As much as possible, team managers are expected to enforce league rules before involvement by umpires and/or league officials becomes necessary.

The team manager is ultimately responsible to the *League Director* and *Board of Trustees* for the general conduct of his team.

PLAYERS' COUNCIL

The objective of the *Players' Council* is to weigh in on matters that represent the day-by-day tasks that are necessary to complete a season, such as field maintenance, rostering changes, additions/adjustments to rules and regulations, player recruitment through skills assessments and related drafts, and so on.

- Each team will have one seat at the players council
- Each member of the players council will have one vote
- Seat must be filled by either the team manager or an assistant manager
- The *Players' Council* is overseen by the *League Director* and advised by the *Board of Trustees*

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The objective of the *Board of Trustees* is to advise the *Players' Council*, provide input to the *League Director* on difficult matters, and engage and support the larger baseball community serving as the league's primary representatives.

LEAGUE DIRECTOR

The objective of the *League Director* is to oversee all league operations, facilitate player council meetings, superintend protests, ensure healthy competition, and foster fellowship and respect through the organized sport of baseball. He will decisively respond to any

inappropriate conduct which requires the penalizing of players, coaches, officials and/or spectators ranging from single game ejection to lifetime suspension. He may also rule that a game is forfeit when, during a contest, a team deviates from the rules and regulations contained in this document.

UMPIRES

League games are officiated by two umpires: one for home plate and one for the bases. In the event that only one umpire is available then he will be responsible for making all calls on the field.

The responsibilities of umpires are to officiate the game through the enforcement of league rules and by-rules. *It is not an umpire's job to 1) keep score, 2) receive/handle complaints, 3) convince players his calls are correct, 4) argue with players about a call, 5) convince managers his calls are correct, 6) argue with managers about a call, and so on.*

Umpires are never to receive any form of verbal abuse from or amongst players, coaches or spectators. Inappropriate conduct towards an umpire will result in penalties ranging from game ejection to lifetime suspension from the league.

PROTESTS AND CHALLENGES

Team managers—and only team managers—may raise a protest with umpires/officials. These and related conversations are expected to be kept to a minimum and to occur only when absolutely necessary.

Concerns about illegal players must be raised before the start of the game, preferably during or shortly after the plate-meeting between managers and umpires, and the exchange of lineup cards between managers. If an illegal player is discovered after the game begins, a separate protest may be made with the *League Director* upon conclusion of the game.

During the game all judgment calls will stand: only rule interpretation calls may be protested/challenged. During an active protest, only managers may address the umpire(s), and players may only address their manager; players absolutely ***MUST NOT*** address the umpire(s) during a protest/challenge. In the event there is a player-manager in the game, he must exercise extra caution when challenging a call or responding to a challenge from the other team's manager, *especially* when playing a position or batting/running the bases.

Managers may only address matters of rule-interpretation and/or essential game information and ***MUST*** do so in a courteous manner. If there is an issue with an umpire/official, a separate protest may be made by the manager to the *League Director* upon conclusion of the game.

Any verbalization directed toward an official other than what is outlined above may result in dismissal from the game, season, and potentially all other league-related activities.

SCOREBOOK

Both team managers will keep a scorebook to track the progression of the game, particularly the game score. *It is never an umpire's/official's duty to keep track of the game score*—this is solely the responsibility of the two participating teams.

If there is any uncertainty or discrepancy in the game score then the most consistent, legible, and complete scorebook will be used as the official record.

The final game score will be reported to *League Director* by the end of the next day to be added to official league standings.

ROSTER & LINEUP

To join a team roster, a player must receive a formal invitation from the team's manager, sign a league liability waiver, and satisfy all necessary team/league fees in full. Managers are expected to provide a copy of signed liability waivers to the *League Director*, and keep this information—which includes an emergency contact—on-hand during games and league events.

Managers are expected to maintain a formal roster of players, regularly report significant changes in the roster to the *League Director*, and respect any potential league insurance requirements that may be in effect.

A player may only be rostered with one team in the league at a time. Players found intentionally abusing this rule will be expelled from the league.

To avoid forfeiture, a team's lineup must have a minimum of eight (8) players. At least seven players in the lineup must be rostered with that team, and one may be borrowed. The borrowed player must be an active player from another team in the league. Random pickups are not permitted and instead must be formally added to your roster.

A borrowed player must appear at the bottom of the batting order and cannot pitch.

A team is not permitted to borrow a player when nine or more of its rostered players are in attendance.

Lineup cards should be kept by managers for the duration of the season, including the lineup cards of opposing teams. Managers are expected to share pictures of both team's lineup cards with the *League Director*, as well as any other parties determined by the *League Director*, before the end of the following day.

If a team with a borrowed player wins the game and the borrowed player is not clearly announced to the opposing manager before the game, the win can be challenged and will potentially be changed to a loss in the official standings. If it is discovered that the unannounced borrowed player appears anywhere except the end of the lineup, and/or pitches, the win will be immediately changed to a loss in the official standings.

POSTSEASON ELIGIBILITY

To qualify for postseason play, a rostered player must participate in one-third of regular season games, rounded up. For example, if there is a 13-game regular season then $13 \div 3 = 4.333$ games rounded up results in a five game required minimum to participate in postseason play.

Borrowed players participating in another team's game will not have that game count toward their postseason eligibility.

Note that exceptions may be made for the "minimum games played" rule for injured players, or well-established players with unusual or unexpected schedule conflicts, to qualify for postseason play. These players must be announced to the *Players' Council* at the beginning of the season, or immediately after the injury or scheduling conflict occurs, to appropriately assess the situation/request. A majority vote from the *Players' Council* will be required for approval.

MID-SEASON ROSTER MODIFICATIONS

Roster additions are not to occur after the remaining number of regular season games is less than the required minimum number of games for postseason eligibility. For example, in a 12 game season with the minimum number of games being four, a team may not make additions to the roster after the ninth game.

If a player changes teams mid-season, the number of regular season games which count toward postseason eligibility is reset to zero.

GAME DURATION

All regular season games will be concluded after seven (7) innings, or at the end of the current inning when the 2 hours and 15 minutes time limit has been reached. For example, if it is the top of the sixth inning when the game timer reaches 2 hours and 15 minutes, the game will end upon completion of the sixth inning and there will not be a seventh inning.

In the event of a tie after seven complete innings, extra innings will be allowed for as long as the time limit of 2 hours and 15 minutes is not exceeded, then the current inning will be played to completion.

All postseason games are nine (9) innings and do not have a time limit.

EQUIPMENT

- The *Home* team always supplies baseballs for the current game, and the league will provide six (6) baseballs per team per home game for the season. For example, for a 12 game season, each team will receive $6 \times 6 = 36$ new baseballs before the start of the season. If a team runs out of baseballs the team manager is expected to purchase more out of pocket. Any unused baseballs leftover at the end of the season become the property of the team and may be used for whatever purpose.

- Teams are required to provide catching equipment, bats and batting helmets
Batters and runners must always wear helmets
- Teams are responsible for keeping bats and equipment in the dugout
- First and third base coaches are expected to wear a protective helmet/skullcap whenever outside of a dugout during play.
- For catchers, hockey-style helmets are generally recommended over the traditional two-piece, but either may be used.

FORCE PLAY SLIDE RULE

This is both a safety and an interference rule, and exists to ensure the safety of all players.

On a force play, the baserunner is expected to slide directly into the bag, and the fielder is protected to the side of the base that is his choosing. If the runner goes outside the baseline and in the direction of the fielder, it's an automatic double play. Whether the defense could have completed the double play has no bearing on the applicability of this rule, and it pertains to a force-play situation at any base, regardless of the number of outs.

The baserunner may also slide or run in a direction away from the fielder's chosen side of the base, which further removes him as an obstacle to the completion of the play.

Elaboration of force play slide rule:

- On any force play, the runner must slide *on the ground* before the base and *in a direct line between two bases*. It is permissible for the slider's momentum to carry him through the base and into the baseline extended. Any contact that occurs here is legal and interference shall not be called.
 - "On the ground" means either a head-first slide or a slide with one leg and buttock on the ground.
 - "Direct line between two bases" means the runner's entire body (feet, legs, trunk and arms) must stay in a straight line between the bases.
- If contact occurs on top of the base as a result of a "pop-up" slide, this contact is ruled as legal.
- Actions by a runner are illegal and interference shall be called if any of the following occurs:
 - The baserunner slides or runs out of the base line in the direction of the fielder.
 - The runner uses a rolling slide, cross-body slide, or any other slide with extra and unnecessary movements relative to the play.
 - The runner's raised leg makes contact higher than the fielder's knee when the fielder is in a standing position.
 - The runner slashes or kicks the fielder with either leg.
 - The runner illegally moves towards and/or contacts the fielder, even when the fielder makes no attempt to complete the play.

Penalty:

- With less than two outs, the batter-runner, as well as the interfering runner, shall be declared out and no other runner(s) shall advance.

- With two outs, the interfering runner shall be declared out and no other runner(s) shall advance.
- If the bases are loaded with no outs, a double-play attempt is made, and interference is called, all other runners must return to their original bases.
- If the runner's intent to create interference is blatant, the runner shall be ejected from the game.

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND MARIJUANA USE

Chewing tobacco is not allowed—it makes a mess and the league uses tobacco-free high school fields.

Players under the influence of any substance—such as alcohol or marijuana—are not allowed to participate in a game and may not sit in the dugout.

Smoking, drinking, and vaping in and around the field will not be tolerated. We use public parks and high school fields that have very well-established rules on these matters. Any activities that conflict with these rules and/or interfere with a family-friendly environment will be reported to the local authorities.

WARNINGS, EJECTIONS, SUSPENSIONS, AND EXPULSIONS

The league has adopted the *3-Strikes You're Out* rule in regards to repeat negligent offenses by a player, coach or team manager.

- First Offense: Three game suspension
- Second Offense: Suspension for the rest of the current season and, depending on the number of games left, possibly the following season
- Third Offense: Expulsion

An *offense* is any unsportsmanlike conduct that is more serious than an ejection, but not egregious enough to justify expulsion. These determinations are to be made by the *League Director* with input from the *Players' Council* and *Board of Trustees*.

If a player or manager is ejected three times in one calendar year, this is equivalent to one offense.

Ejection from a game also results in automatic suspension for the next scheduled game. If the following game is rained out or for some other reason rescheduled then the suspension falls on the next scheduled game.

Intentionally taking off a helmet during a play results in a warning. If the same player repeats this a second time in the same game then that player is ejected.

Throwing a helmet or a bat on the field results in an automatic ejection. If the infraction happens with a helmet in the dugout then a warning is issued instead.

Use of an illegal bat (e.g. BESR aluminum) will result in an immediate warning with the batter being called out. Repeat offenders will be subject to more serious penalties, up to and including expulsion.

Two warnings in one game—regardless of kind—results in an ejection (e.g. throwing helmet in the dugout + using an illegal bat).

Intentionally interfering with a play results in an automatic ejection. More than one offense of this kind by the same team in the same game will result in an automatic forfeit.

Intentionally disrupting an SBL game or event will immediately result in expulsion from the league. Contributing in any way whatsoever to an unsafe environment will immediately result in expulsion from the league. In both cases, it is expected that league officials (when present), managers, players and/or attendees immediately report such infractions to the Sheriff's Department.

The logo for the SBL Baseball League is centered on the page. It features a large, stylized letter 'S' in a light purple color. Overlaid on the 'S' is the text 'SBL' in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. Below 'SBL' is the word 'BASEBALL' in a larger, bold, yellow, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the logo is the word 'LEAGUE' in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a white background.

BYLAWS

If both managers agree to a specific adjustment to the rules prior to or during the game (e.g. runner for injured player), and with the game's umpires serving as witnesses to the agreement, the game continues with this adjustment and counts towards the official standings as would any other game. Adjustments during the game should generally be avoided and only occur when a clear and reasonable need exists.

If game hasn't started 15 minutes from the official start time then the team with most legal players (8 or more) wins.

If a team starts the game with only 8 players, the team manager may add a late-arriving rostered player to the ninth spot in the batting order. The team will not be penalized for starting the game with a vacant position in the batting order—that is, the vacant spot does not count as an automatic out (unless it has been filled at some point during the game and then happens to become vacant again).

Mercy rule: If a team is up by 15 runs after five complete innings for a 7-inning game, and seven complete innings for a 9-inning game, the game is called.

When using a player from another team, he can play any position except pitcher and must appear at the bottom of the batting order. (See *ROSTER AND LINEUP* above.)

If a team has a player ejected and the roster drops to 7 players, the game is automatically forfeited.

Permissible bats are BBCOR—the 2011 NCAA aluminum standard—wood, or composite-wood. BESR aluminum bats are not allowed (see *WARNINGS, EJECTIONS, SUSPENSIONS, AND EXPULSIONS* above).

There is no limit on the number of extra-hitters (EH) in a batting order. However, if at any point during the game a spot in the batting order becomes vacant then that at-bat will automatically produce an out.

Each team may designate courtesy runners for up to three players. These designations may be announced before the start of the game, or during the game, but must always be communicated clearly to the opposing team manager. These designations cannot be reused—that is, they apply to a single person only and will be lost when the player is no longer in the lineup. With two outs, the current pitcher and catcher are always eligible to receive a courtesy runner, even when one of the three available designations was not given to them. Courtesy runners are always the last-batted out, and are not to appear more than once in a half-inning unless the team goes through the entire batting order.

Slide rule (see also *FORCE PLAY SLIDE RULE* above):

- Second Base (2B): No late slides
- Home Plate: Mandatory slide--no blowing up the catcher.

You can add a player to the bottom of the line up at anytime during the game, as long as that player does not have a prior at bat.

Re-entry rule: if a player exits the game, he must return to the same spot in the line up were he came out. If a pitcher exits the game, he may not re-enter as a pitcher.

The MLB *ghost runner rule* (or *tie-breaker rule*), where the last-batted out from the previous inning starts any extra inning on second base, applies to both regular season and postseason games.

