

MIDWEST OHIO BASEBALL LEAGUE PLAYING RULES

1. All league play shall be governed by **Ohio High School Baseball Rules**. ONLY those exceptions specifically listed herein shall be applicable.
2. Player eligibility:
 - a. Players must be of the age, or younger, of their respective age level on April 30th of the current year. For example, a 10U player must be 10 years old or younger on April 30th of the current season; this player cannot turn 11 prior to May 1st.
 - b. No player is eligible to play unless his properly electronically signed MWOBL contract and birth certificate have been uploaded to the league prior to said player playing in his first game.
 - c. Players may be rostered on more than one team provided that they are not in the same age group. Players remain subject to days of rest due to pitch limits across both teams. Furthermore, it is the coaches' responsibility to verify any affiliation rules pertaining to players being on more than one roster.
 - d. No player may be added to the roster after **June 15** each year. Contact the league with emergency issues.
 - e. Each team is limited to a maximum of 25 players.
3. Field Dimensions: Pitching and base path distances shall be:

Age	Pitching Rubber	Base path
8U	40'	60'
9U	44' (43-46')	60' (60-65')
10U	46' (43-46')	65' (60-65)
11U	50' (48-52')	70' (70-75')
12U	50' (50-54')	70' (70-75')
13U	54'	80' (80-85')
14U-18U	60'6"	90'

4. Equipment

- a. Baseballs must be leather covered and not vinyl or rubber and must be rated for use within your teams' age range or older. If you have a question that the ball you are using is of sufficient quality, buy a better ball. The league will make available for purchase at reasonable rates age appropriate baseballs. Use good baseballs.
- b. There are no glove or bat length, barrel diameter or length/weight differential limitations in 8U-14U except the BPF 1.15 requirements (See website for more details on bat restrictions). Ages 15U and up use -3 BBCOR as in high school.
- c. N.O.C.S.A.E. approved batting helmets shall be worn by all batters, base runners, and on deck batters. Catchers must wear, at minimum, standard protective gear including an N.O.C.S.A.E

approved hockey-style mask-helmet combo, chest protector, shin guards and protective cup. Player/Bullpen catchers must at least wear protective mask (Full equipment is preferred and strongly encouraged by the league.)

d. Only rubber or plastic spikes are allowed from age 9-12. Metal spikes may be used at 13U and above.

5. Game play

a. A minimum of 8 players is required to begin a game.

b. Games shall be six (6) innings in duration for age levels 8U-11U, while 12U-18U shall be seven (7) innings, however innings necessary to break a tie are permitted.

c. Run Rules shall apply when the visiting team is behind 15 runs after 3 innings; 12 runs after 4 innings and 10 runs after the 5th inning .

d. In ages 8-11 only, there will be a 2 hour 15 minute time limit. This means that no new inning shall start after the 2 hour and 15 minute time limit; innings started within the 2 hour 15 minute time limit shall be completed.

e. A continuous batting order will be used for all Division II and Division III games and shall be optional in Division I games (see Division I Substitution Addendum). All players in uniform will be in the batting order. An injured player or a player being disciplined may be withheld from the batting order as long as the coach reports this to the opposing coach prior to the game's start. In the event a player is injured his spot is skipped without penalty. In the event of an ejection, that spot is an automatic out for the rest of the game. In a continuous batting order, the spot occupied by an ejected player is an automatic out for the rest of the game. Free substitution shall be used defensively, except for the pitcher. Once a pitcher is removed from the pitching position, he shall not return to the pitching position in that game.

f. A courtesy runner may be used for the pitcher and catcher at any time after reaching base. The courtesy runner may be anyone not having started or appeared in the game (when using other than continuous batting) or in the event that all players have been placed in the line-up, after that point, the courtesy runner may be anyone not in the game. A courtesy runner shall be the player who made the last out in a continuous batting situation. Note that this is an option and not a mandatory "speed-up" rule. Being a courtesy runner does not affect that player's ability to enter the game at a later point.

g. A trip to the mound will be charged once the coach crosses the foul line to talk to the pitcher or any other fielder. Two trips per inning (per pitcher) mean the pitcher must be removed from the game.

h. Base runners must **avoid violent or malicious contact** during league play. (For interpretation, this means high spiking, or the use of body parts for the purpose of dislodging the ball or causing bodily harm.)

6. Failure to start game on time:

a. There shall be a 15 minute **grace period** for a late start.

- b. The team that was on time shall notify the league of the infraction.
- c. This grace period shall only be afforded twice during a season, after which the on time team may elect a forfeit.
- d. If a team shows after the 15 minute grace period or it is their third or more infraction, the on time team may elect a forfeit win. However, if they choose to play the game, it shall be official and the grace period violation is waived in that instance only.
- e. If the **umpire fails to show** by at least 15 minutes after the scheduled game time, managers may elect any of the following:
 - i. Mutually agree to cancel the game
 - 1. Where the game is cancelled due to umpire no-show, there shall be no penalty to either team providing the host team did schedule an umpire.
 - 2. If it can be proven the host team failed to schedule an umpire and the game is cancelled, they shall forfeit that game.
 - ii. Mutually agree upon an extended length of time to delay the game before cancellation or the following alternatives are instituted.
 - iii. Appoint a mutually agreed upon individual to call the game or portion thereof (i.e.: until the assigned umpire shows)
 - 1. Where a replacement umpire is agreed upon prior to the start of the game, that game shall be official.

7. A **pre-game umpires/coaches meeting** shall be conducted prior to the start of every game in order to inform the visitors of all ground rules and to properly educate the umpire of all league specific playing rules. **No host team playing another MWOBL team may vary from league application of rules simply because the game is being played at their site.** Any variance from league rules must be agreed upon by team managers. Teams may agree to alter the rules under which they are playing a specific game, but only by mutual agreement and only for that game. At this meeting, coaches are to trade information about who is eligible to pitch that game.

8. Umpires:

- a. Age levels 8U-12U require at least one MWOBL approved umpire (approved list is available on the website), while 13U-18U require at least two MWOBL approved umpires. The use of additional umpire(s) are at the expense of the team electing to use additional umpires.
- b. Payment of Umpires
 - i. Umpire fees are payable in a form acceptable to the umpire, at the pre-game meeting or as arranged with the umpire.
 - ii. Teams shall split umpire expenses for any and all league games and there shall be no argument by the visiting team over the fee charged by umpires.
- c. If you cancel a game, call the umpire FIRST. Do not rely on email on the day of a game. Many umpires do not have access to email during the day and/or may leave work early to get to your game on time. Call them. IF you have to leave a message, ask them to call or text you so that you know that they got the message. Here is the rest of the protocol in the event that you do not reach them in time:

- i. If an umpire shows up at the site and there is bad weather prior to the start of the game and it is canceled the umpire is paid a \$20.00 show up fee.
- ii. If the games start (just one pitch thrown) the umpire is paid a full game fee because he fulfilled his contract obligation.
- iii. When you reschedule to resume or play a makeup game, that umpire gets full game fee.
- iv. If there is a rain delay prior to the start of a game or during the middle of a game we require that the umpire wait no more than 45 minutes to get the game restarted after fixing the field to make it ready to play.

9. Inclement weather or darkness

- a. Either the general or field manager of the home team may be designated by the team's league member as the **responsible party for determining the start of a game due to inclement weather or darkness**. Until the game is started, the umpire shall have no authority in this matter. Only the home team can call a game due to weather prior to the first pitch. Umpires fees may be due according to the host team's umpire agreement (such as a show -up fee) may be fully or in part payable by the host team only, if the game is cancelled prior to its start.
- b. No game shall be started or commenced where lightning is present or there is a tornado warning (As distinguished from a watch). Once the game is started, the umpire in chief alone shall be responsible for such determinations.
- c. If a game is called due to **inclement weather or darkness**, it shall be a completed game if official (4 completed innings for 6 inning games and 5 complete for 7 innings). If it is not yet official, it shall be picked up at a point of suspension prior to the start of the next scheduled game between the two teams or at a time agreed upon by the managers and played to completion or the run rule. Teams shall share all expense incurred for this make-up portion of the game including, likely, full umpire expense. If the completing of this game would not impact league standing, it need not be completed. In addition, the losing manager may elect a loss and the game need not be completed. However, if a game would impact league standings and thus post season tournament opportunities, the game must be completed or the manager refusing completion shall be suspended for a portion of the next season at the discretion of the Board.
- d. In order to help everyone understand and apply the difference between a Completed Game and a Suspended Game. These examples will be after the 5th inning for 7 inning games and after the 4th inning for 6 inning games. This will immediately be added to Rule 9 and should clarify many situations.

First, no game is ever "called" and "started over". When a game is interrupted or suspended for any reason, and cannot be resumed that date, the game will be SUSPENDED if the team behind in the score has not completed its turn at bat in the 5th inning (4th for 6 inning games).

Second, If a game is called prior to the completion of full inning after the 5th inning (4th if 6 inning game), the game becomes a suspended game only in the following situation: The visiting team has, in this inning, scored one or more runs to tie the score or to take the lead, and the home team has not retaken the lead and the game is called while an inning is in process but before the inning is completed. Otherwise it is a Completed Game.

Examples of Completed/Suspended Games:

In a game where the home team is ahead after 5 innings (4 if a 6 inning game) 2-0.

- The game is called prior to the start of the 6th inning due to darkness: Ruling: COMPLETED GAME
- The first batter in the top of the 6th inning is at bat with any count on the batter and the game cannot be completed: Ruling: COMPLETED GAME
- The first batter in the top of the 6th inning reaches base and the game is called: Ruling: COMPLETED GAME
- The visiting team scores one run in the top of the 6th inning and the game is called anytime during the 6th inning: Ruling: COMPLETED GAME
- The visiting team scores 2 runs in the top of the 6th inning and the sixth inning is NOT completed NOR does the home team retake the lead in the bottom of the 6th inning: Ruling: SUSPENDED GAME
- The visiting team scores 2 or 3 runs in the top of the 6th inning and the 6th inning is NOT completed NOR does the home team retake the lead in the bottom of the 6th inning: Ruling: SUSPENDED GAME

The visiting team scores 2 or 3 runs in the top of the 6th inning and the home team retakes the lead in the bottom of the 6th inning. The game is called later in the bottom half of the 6th inning or after 6 complete innings: Ruling: COMPLETE GAME

10. Rescheduling / Forfeits, etc.

a. Once scheduled, if a game is cancelled, the procedures are as follows:

- i. Coaches can jointly agree on a date within 48 hours of cancellation or
- ii. If coaches cannot agree on a date within 48 hours of the cancellation, the opposing coach shall, within 72 hours of cancellation, provide the cancelling coach with three (3) optional dates to reschedule.
 1. These dates must be shown as available to the opponent's schedule. Therefore, it is important to make sure you include all tournaments and non-league games on your website schedule. Also, update any changes
 2. No Mondays are allowed following tournament play.
 3. The canceling team must notify the opposing coach of their acceptance of one of the proposed dates or forfeit within 24 hours of optional dates being provided.
 - a. Forfeits will be a (-2) point penalty.
 4. If any of these timelines/procedures are not followed, coaches must notify the league immediate for resolution

b. Avoiding Forfeits:

1. Send a copy of your schedule with the specific game highlighted and asked the other team to compare your schedule to theirs.
2. Call each opposing coach a short time prior to your game to confirm that you both have the same date, time and place for the game.
3. Review the master schedule on the website to confirm that you both have the same information.

11. Reporting scores and pitch counts and Defining a Day of Rest

- a. It shall be the responsibility of the winning manager or his/her appointee to **submit the score and pitching record into the website within 48 hours of game time**. This is a direct report via the website.
- b. Teams shall receive one point for a win, ½ point for a ties and 0 points for a loss or unreported win. Forfeits will be a (-2) points.
- c. Losing teams are responsible to review those entries and report errors to their league.
- d. There is an entire standalone outline of the pitch count rules but for clarification purposes a **“Day of Rest” is defined this way: A day of rest is a full calendar day and not a 24 hour window. Therefore, if a player pitches a noon game on a Saturday and is subject to two days’ rest, then his required days of rest are Sunday and Monday and he is eligible to pitch again on Tuesday**. Many times we are asked if he can rest 48 hours and pitch again on Monday evening (effectively 52-56 hours of rest). This DOES NOT satisfy his rest.

12. Standings

Everything that we do is designed to maximize the certainty that final standings will be determined by games played on the field. However, while we do all we can to get 100% of games played, sometimes rain, or teams disbanding, or just other circumstances prevent this from happening. Thus, we need to protect teams that are doing all they can to get games in from these circumstances or teams' unwillingness or inability to get games completed. Thus, at times, it is necessary to award a forfeit. Below is the explanation of why forfeits are awarded and the process used to determine the final standings.

The forfeit only serves to prevent a team who has attempted to get games in from being penalized by other teams not being able or willing to play. **Thus, in determining standings the forfeit does only two things: 1. it establishes a game towards the 90% and 2. establishes a win for the sole purpose of "total" wins.....** Then, we protect the remaining teams by not allowing the forfeit to be used against them either. So, in the event that there are two teams vying for a final standings position and one of them has been awarded a forfeit, we remove the forfeited game(s) as well as the games against the same team(s) from the other teams schedule in order to equalize the schedules.

- a. Final standings will be based on winning percentage of league games, provided each team involved played at least 90% of their games. When teams have not played 90% of their games,

the League reserves the right to make administrative decisions in the best interests of the League including but not limited to using points, "equalizing schedules" or any other means to determine champions that the League views as acceptable.

b. Standings tie breaking procedure shall be determined in the following sequence:

- i. Head to head competition within your division or
- ii. Record against the next higher team in league standings
- iii. Record against the next lower team in league standings
- iv. . A one game playoff at a neutral site sharing expenses

13. Ejections, Issue Resolution and Sanctions

a. **Any player or coach ejected from a game will also be ineligible for the next game. Also both teams must report the incident to the league by completing the "Ejection Form" from the website. The league reserves the right to enforce further penalties as needed. Additional ejections in a single season, will likely result in more severe sanctions, including, but not limited to additional games suspended, or suspension for the balance of the season.**

b. Formal complaints must be filed with the league via the Issue Resolution Form on the website. Put all concerns, complaints and issues into the Issue Resolution Form and email them to the League as that allows us to forward the issue to the proper person to receive the timeliest resolution.

14. Discussion of line-ups in the event of make-up rescheduled or resumed games. Suspended games should be resumed at the point of suspension with the same line-up and batting order as the original game (if possible). That is the ideal world and rarely applies to us perfectly. But it is our benchmark if it can be met.

a. If a kid who was at the original game is not available when the game is resumed, the team should not be charged an out. Simply skip his turn at bat with no penalty. Likewise, if you need to place a runner on a base and he is not there, simply use the last out.

b. As a rule, any kid not available at the original game cannot play in the suspended game. This is one exception to the bat your roster rule. However, there is no problem if the two coaches involved in a suspended game decide together that they are willing to allow kids not available for the original game to play for both sides.....that is okay (it is always okay to get more kids in the game if both sides agree). But don't play the game and then complain about the results.

c. Pitching. These come up several times each year.

1. If a player was ineligible to pitch during initial game, but has satisfactory rest for the make-up game, is he eligible? Yes. He would be able to pitch as long as he did not pitch the first game.

2. If a player begins pitching in a game, but does not finish b/c of rain, etc. when the game resumes, assuming he has satisfactory rest, do we pick up original pitch count, or start back at zero? The pitch count is limited to his remaining per day pitch limits including the rain delayed pitches.

d. Please use common sense and try to resolve any issues among yourselves about issues involved with suspended games. Remember that we are all here for kids to play baseball.

Division I Substitution Addendum

In all Division I games, each team has the option of:

1. Roster Batting with Free Substitution
2. Using a Designated Hitter (DH)
3. Using an Extra Hitter (EH)
4. Using both a Designated Hitter (DH) and an Extra Hitter (EH)
5. Bat 9 play 9.

Both teams are not required to select the same option; however each team must play entire game with their respective choice.

Roster Batting with Free Substitution

A continuous batting order will be used. All players in uniform will be in the batting order. An injured player or a player being disciplined may be withheld from the batting order as long as the coach reports this to the opposing coach prior to the game's start. In a continuous batting order, the spot occupied by an ejected player is an automatic out for the rest of the game. Free substitution shall be used defensively, except for the pitcher. Once a pitcher is removed from the pitching position, he shall not return to the pitching position in that game.

Courtesy Runners:

A courtesy runner may be used for the pitcher and catcher at any time after reaching base. The courtesy runner may be anyone not having started or appeared in the game (when using other than continuous batting) or in the event that all players have been placed in the line-up, after that point, the courtesy runner may be anyone not in the game. A courtesy runner shall be the player who made the last out in a continuous batting situation. Note that this is an option and not a mandatory "speed-up" rule. Being a courtesy runner does not affect that player's ability to enter the game at a later point.

Notes on both Designated Hitter (DH) and/or Extra Hitter (EH)

If a team has used all eligible and healthy players in a game and a player is injured or ejected, the opposing coach shall choose from among the healthy players having played but not currently in the game to finish the game. If no healthy players are available, the game shall be forfeited at that point. The high school re-entry rule shall be in effect (Starters may re-enter once in their same spot in the batting order. Non-starters may not re-enter.

Designated Hitter (DH) rules are the High School D.H Rules

Extra Hitter (EH) rules

- a.) The extra hitter can play defense.
- b.) If the extra hitter is used, he must be used for the entire game.
- c.) The extra hitter must remain in the same position in the batting order for the entire game.
- d.) If an extra hitter is used, all ten (10) players must bat and any nine (9) players can play defense. Defensive positions can be changed, but the batting order must remain the same.
- e.) The extra hitter may be substituted for at any time, either by a pinch hitter or a pinch runner, who then becomes the extra player. The substitute may be a player who has not yet been in the game.

8U Rules Addendum

The following modification to the league rules shall apply to the 8U Division:

1. Ten fielders will be used. Normal positions with four outfielders. Outfielders must be approximately an equal distance from home plate; this means no "short fielders". Outfielders must have both feet in the grass.
2. One coach is allowed in the outfield when his/her team is on defense. The defensive coach should be positioned behind the outfielders.
3. The fielding pitchers must be within 5" of the pitching rubber until the ball is pitched. The fielding pitcher may stand to the right, left, or behind the mound, but not in front of the designated pitcher.
4. The designated pitcher will pitch overhand from the pitching rubber. The designated pitcher MUST make every effort to leave the playing field immediately after the ball is hit. The designated pitcher will use caution NOT TO INTERFERE with the ball, fielders, and runner, and will remain off the field until play is stopped. If the designated pitcher interferes with the play, all runners will return to the last base they were at. The designated pitcher shall refrain from coaching the runners; this is the responsibility of the base coaches.
5. There will be no more than seven pitches to the batter. If the ball is not put into play on one of those pitches, the batter will be called out, with the following EXCEPTIONS:
 1. A foul ball (unless caught) on the third strike, if it is also the 7th pitch, will not be counted as part of the seven pitches.

2. If a batted ball hits the designated pitcher, it shall be ruled a DEAD BALL; no pitch, no strike.
6. No walks
7. No infield fly rule is in effect
8. Batter cannot run on dropped third strike
9. No bunting. If the umpire judges that the batter bunted or attempted to bunt, the pitch is counted as a strike.
10. A base runner will be called out if they leave the base before the ball crosses the plate. This will not affect any other play that is being made on the batted ball.
11. No stealing.
12. Play is stopped when the ball is in control of an infielder and the lead runner has been stopped. Coaches, please don't send runners if the infielder is in control of the ball. We are trying to teach them how to play the game correctly. Infielders can request time, but ONLY the umpire can call time.
13. A half inning shall consist of three (3) outs or eight (8) runs, whichever comes first. Except, in the final inning (6th) when it shall be 3 outs only. 8u level teams will adhere to a **12 run after 5 inning rule.**

REVISED Bat Restrictions EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2017: Updated for the 2018 Season

Coaches and Parents:

We apologize for the confusion on this bat issue. Obviously, it has been confusing for all Leagues, Tournaments, Affiliations, teams, players and parents.

The Midwest Ohio Baseball League has always supported the decisions coming out of USA Baseball as the governing body of all baseball in the USA. **It was our understanding that player safety was one of the primary reasons for the new USA bat restrictions.**

And, while it is true that the USA bats will be "more wood-like", and thus, less rebounding (and thus safer from a standpoint that a ball batted with same velocity will reach a pitcher more slowly with the new USA bat rather than the current 1.15 BPF, we have discovered that USA baseball has said that "safety is not the reason for the change."

From the USA baseball website:

Is safety the reason for the change?

No. Youth baseball continues to be one of the safest of all sports for youth participants.

AS WE NOW UNDERSTAND THAT SAFETY (WHICH WE THOUGHT TO BE THE PRIMARY REASON FOR THE CHANGE) IS NOT THE REASON FOR THE CHANGE, WE HAVE MODIFIED OUR BAT RESTRICTIONS FOR 2018 AND 2019.

For the 2018 Midwest Ohio Baseball Season:

- Bats - The Official Bat shall be round in cross section of the barrel and taper, straight in length and measure not more than 34 inches long, including tape or other grip additions to the bat, shall have a knob at the end of its handle, and not more than 2- 1/4 inches in diameter for small barrel bats and not more than 2 and 3/4 inches for big barrel bats at its largest part. Its weight shall not exceed 31-ounces, including tape or grip addition to the bat. The bat shall have a grip of tape or some other material to facilitate holding the bat during the batter's swing (not mandatory on wooden bats). **All key graphics, including USSSA and BPF 1.15 markings, must be permanent and cannot be applied as decals or by any other method that would allow the key graphics to be easily removed or added to the bat.**

- Material. THE BAT may be made of hard wood of one piece, or laminated from sections of hard wood bonded together with adhesive in such a way that the grain directions of all the pieces are essentially parallel to the length of the bat. THE BAT may also be made of aluminum or other metals, fiberglass, graphite or composite materials.

For 15-18u only BBCOR certified for NFHS use, wood composite which is BBCOR certified or one piece wood bats will be legal for 2012 and beyond.

For 14 and Under: There will be no changes except to allow the USA Bats in addition to those with the 1.15BPF or USSSA bats with permanent markings made by the manufacturer.

The Midwest Ohio Baseball League will allow both the new USA, USSSA and the 1.15 BPF bats with permanent markings made by the manufacturer for 2018.

- **14u AND BELOW, for Midwest Ohio Baseball League play, there will be no mandatory bat drop AS LONG AS THE BAT HAS THE USA, USSSA OR BPF 1.15 PERMANENT MARKINGS FROM THE MANUFACTURER. It is strongly suggested, but is not mandatory, in order to assist players in making the jump to -3 BBCOR at 15 and above, to encourage those players capable of swinging -5 or -8 to do so at 13-14u.**

- **14U AND BELOW, For Midwest Ohio Baseball League play, A BIG BARREL BAT (no more than 2 3/4 inches diameter and no more than 34 inches in length) MUST HAVE THE NEW USA, USSSA or BPF 1.15 MARK ON ITS TAPER, OR ("USA, USSSA and BPF 1.15 marks and other graphics of the bat must be applied permanently and must be applied by the manufacturer. No stickers or decals are allowed and no one may add graphics to a bat once manufactured. Use of a bat with graphics not applied by the manufacturer will be use of an altered bat and subject to suspension under the National Federation and USSSA Altered Bat rules. These are our league rules effective for the 2018 season.**

Bottom line Considerations:

1. Some tournaments will have their own rules so check with them before you enter.

2. IF you are considering purchasing a bat today, which you intend to use for multiple years, we do not have very reliable information for you. The safest bet would be to go with the USA model but until we get a unified stance on bat rules, we will not be able to advise you with any certainty.
3. Bats are not to be tampered with by rolling or otherwise altering them. There is a complete article on the website about rolling bats.

We wish that there was total agreement among all affiliations on this issue as that would simplify all of our lives.

For the 2019 Midwest Ohio Baseball Season:

Unless, and until, there are substantive changes, such as a unified bat rule position, we will likely leave the 2018 rules in place. We reserve the right to modify league rules as the future positions regarding bat change.

We apologize for this revision, but we believe that since there is no safety issue, there is no reason to complicate our teams, players, parents and coaches lives while increasing (potentially) there costs to play by requiring a new bat this year.

Wade Westfall, President

Gregg Beemer, Baseball Operations