

2026 Rulebook



Northeast Indiana Youth Baseball League Rules 2026

League Overview & General Rules

1. The league shall be the smallest unit of the organization and shall be governed by the league's constitution and bylaws.
2. The Northeast Indiana Youth Baseball League will offer 8U, 10U, Quarter Pint(12U), and Half Pint(14U) divisions of baseball for Noble and LaGrange County teams and potential surrounding communities.
3. Teams joining the league forfeit any and all rights to seek judgment against the league for any accident or incident while a participant in a league-sanctioned game.
4. The league, by a majority vote of the Board, reserves the right to allow exceptions to any and all rules contained herein, on a case-by-case basis.
5. All teams will be grouped by community. Communities without an adequate number of players may recruit from another community once the other community has filled their teams. If you wish to recruit from another community, you must first secure permission from that community.
6. Players may move from one community to another if their parent is going to be the head coach. Such players may not play on more than one team.
7. Ejection – any player or coach ejected from a game will also be suspended from play or coaching for the following game. A second ejection will be reviewed by the board and further discipline will be discussed.
8. General Sportsmanship – Throwing any equipment will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and may result in an ejection from the game. Any verbal abuse of players, coaches, or umpires or use of foul language will result in automatic ejection from the game.
9. Responsibility of Fans – coaches will assume the responsibility of monitoring their fans within reason. Any coach found agitating or instigating a fan base to become unsportsmanlike will be ejected. If a particular fan(s) is an issue the fan will be asked to leave. If a fan is asked to leave, the Coach may be asked to leave as well; at the discretion of the umpire.
10. Any rule interpretation not expressly defined in this rule book will fall under rule definitions of the Indiana High School Athletic Association.
11. Any game tied at the completion of the final inning will proceed to the international tie breaker. The last batter of the previous inning will assume 2nd base. There will be 1 out and the batting order will resume. Both teams will bat under the same structure.

Equipment

1. **Ball :** Game balls will be provided by the league. Each team will be provided 2 dozen baseball and are responsible for using those balls for home games. The home team is responsible to provide 2 new balls or gently used balls per game
2. **Bat:** All bats for 8U, 10U, and ¼ Pints must be stamped with the “USA” bat logo. For ½ Pints, only BBCOR bats and all Drop 5(-5) bats with the “USA” logo are permitted. USSA and Wood bats are prohibited from being used.
3. **Equipment:** Gloves or mitts for all positions must meet the requirements of the NFHS rules. Umpires are responsible for having bats, gloves, and mitts that do not meet requirements removed from the playing field.
4. **Helmets:** A standard helmet without cracks must be worn by any offensive player at bat, on the bases, or warming up on the on-deck circle. A helmet must also be worn for any player warming up a pitcher on the field of play, or if a player is needed to coach a base.
5. **Athletic Supporter:** It is recommended at all levels of play that players become familiar with wearing an athletic supporter with a cup. It is required at all levels that a catcher wear a cup.
6. **Cleats:** At no level will a player wear steel spikes, all levels must wear plastic/rubber spikes or athletic shoes.
7. **Sliding:** Sliding is required at home plate if there is a play being made. If the runner does not slide, they will be called out. Sliding is not required at any other base, but the runner must make effort to avoid contact with the defensive player. Purposeful contact will result in the runner being called out at the discretion of the umpire.

Game Time/General Rules

1. **Umpires:** The home team is responsible for providing umpire(s) for the game. It is highly recommended that a “patched” umpire works behind the plate, but this may not always be possible. Base umpires are recommended for ¼ & ½ pint levels but are not required.
2. **Lineups:** Starting lineups must be exchanged by the coaches prior to the start of the game. Any player leaving after the lineup is turned in will be considered an out for the remainder of the game in 8U and 10U, and for ¼ and 1/2 pint if a substitute isn’t available.
3. **Warmups:** There will be NO infield practice in 8U, all games must start on time; pre-game warmups will need to be done in a location other than the field of play. There will be no warmups between games. In all other divisions if you must take infield practice; the visiting team would take infield practice first in all cases unless they were running late. In that case the coaches can switch and let the home team take first infield but the game will start on time in any manner. Any final preparations needed to be done to the field will take place 5 minutes before game time.
4. **Game Time:** Both teams must be ready to start the game within 10 minutes after the game time start. If a team is not able to field a team at that point, it will become an automatic forfeit by the offending team. The forfeiting team will receive an 18-0 loss in 8U, and a 10-0 loss in all other divisions (the limit of a run rule).
5. **Weather:** In the case of inclement weather, the home team will be responsible for communicating a rain out to the visiting team within an hour before game time if possible. In all cases, the home team should try to play if possible.
6. **Makeup Games:** In the case of a rain out (except for 8U), the home coach will offer (3) three possible makeup dates to the visiting coach. If the opposing coach refuses those dates, the home team will notify the League who will make a decision regarding a forfeit. In the event that the league is required to intervene, all communications regarding the attempt to reschedule will be shared with the league to assist in rendering a decision. If the league decides a forfeit is necessary, the scoring will be subject to rule 4 above.
7. **Scorebook:** The official scorebook will be held by the home team.
8. **Courtesy Runners:** If a catcher reaches base with two outs in an inning, the offensive team will immediately call for a courtesy runner for the catcher to allow the catcher to return to the dugout and get the catching gear on in order to keep the game moving. The courtesy runner will be the last batter that made an out.
9. **Inning Transitions:** Teams will have 3 minutes to get to their dugouts and be ready for the next ½ inning.
10. **Mercy Rule:**

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| 10U | 15 after 3 innings; 12 after 4 innings |
| 12U | 20 after 2 innings; 15 after 3 innings; 12 after 4 innings, 10 after 5 |
| 14U | 20 after 2 innings; 15 after 3 innings; 12 after 4 innings, 10 after 5 |
11. **Minimum Players:**

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| 8U | 6 players needed to start game |
| 10U | 7 players needed to start game |
| 12U | 7 players needed to start game |
| 14U | 7 players needed to start game |
12. **League Schedules:** League schedules will be circulated prior to the season. Once the first pitch of the season happens, no adjustments to the schedules will be made without due cause and approval of the league.

End of Game

1. **Tie:** No games in any division will end in a tie.
2. **Reporting:** Final scores will be reported by the winning team coach within 48 hours of the completion of the game. If the score is not reported, both teams will be assessed a loss.
3. **Protests:** Protests for anything other than player eligibility of a player will not be heard. If a team questions a player's eligibility, they must make their intention clear to the umpire(s) that they are protesting the game.

Tournaments

1. **Preseason:** Preseason tournaments for each division will be hosted by and played in Kimmell as a tribute to the founders of our league; Tom Steele and Al Sprague. Logistics for the pre-season tourney are solely the responsibility of Kimmell Baseball. Rules and scheduling will be the responsibility of Kimmell.
2. **Post Season:** 8U/10U are double elimination
12U/14U are single elimination
* the league may change this based on the number of teams in a division
There are no time limits on post season semis and final games.
3. **Post Season Sites:** Post Season Championship game locations will be designated by the league prior to the season. Games prior to the championship will be played at the site of the higher seed.

8U RULES

1. **Playing Field:**
 - a. The pitching distance will be measured from the back of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber.
 - b. The base path distance must be measured from the back of home plate to the location of the base.
 - c. The pitching rubber, plate, and bases must meet NFHS rules/standards.
 - d. Standard chalk must be used to line the following:
 - 1.1 **Base paths** – home plate to first base and home plate to third base
 - 1.2 **Batter's box** – all divisions should have a 3'- 4' wide by 6' long batter's box on both sides of the plate.
 - 1.3 **Halfway marks** – marks between first and second, second and third, and between third and home plate in the base paths to determine the progress of runners when play is stopped.
 - 1.4 **Catcher's box** – a box 43" wide and 8' from the back of home plate will be considered the catcher's box. Any balls outside of this box on a standard pitch from the **machine only** (Not a coach) will be considered a passed ball and will permit the runner to advance one base (except for home).
 - 1.5 **Pitcher's Circle** - A 12" circle will be chalked around the pitching rubber. Centered to the center of the pitching rubber.
2. **Postponements:** If a game is postponed before the end of the 2nd inning, the game will be picked up at the point in which the postponement occurred. If the game was beyond the 2nd inning, the game will be considered final.
3. **Run Rule:** There will be a 6 run rule per inning limit or three outs recorded whichever comes first in the first 3 innings. If a team scores 6 runs, their turn at bat will be over and the other team will bat. In the fourth inning a team can score an unlimited amount of runs up to a point that they reach a 20 run lead over the defensive team. At that point their inning will be over and the other team will bat if they are the visiting team.
4. **Third Strike:** Dropped 3rd strikes do not apply.
5. **Time Limits:** **No new innings will start after 75 minutes UNLESS the game is tied.** In the event of a tie, international tie breaker rules apply.
6. **Wildcat Batting:** Every player that is present at the game that is not injured must bat in the lineup. The batting order must remain the same throughout the game and cannot be altered. Late-arriving players should be placed at the bottom of the lineup and be able to bat.

7. **Stealing:** Stealing is not permitted, however UNLESS a ball leaves the catcher's box in the back or one of the sides. Runners cannot advance when a ball leaves the catcher's box in on the side closest to the pitcher.
8. **Stealing Home:** Is not allowed at the 8U Level.
9. **Defensive Positions:** Teams may play 10 players in the field defensively
10. **Infield Fly Rule:** Does not apply.
11. **Substitutions:** Defensive substitutions are unlimited; however, they must maintain their place in their batting order. You do not need to report a defensive change to the opposing coach.
12. **Runner Limitations:** Fielders have the right to the base paths until the ball goes beyond the baseline. While making a fielding play, base runners cannot interfere with the fielder. If the fielder has the ball, they have the right to block the line/base from the runner. If a fielder is not making a play on a ball, they are not permitted to interfere with the progress of a runner and/or block the basepath or bases. Any forceful or purposeful physical contact by either a fielder or a runner will be grounds for an ejection; at the discretion of the umpire. Baserunners are not required to slide into a base when a play is being made provided that they make a reasonable effort to avoid contact with the fielder. Baserunners are not permitted to leave their feet to avoid a tag. While head-first slides are not recommended; players are not prohibited from sliding head-first into any base; including home.
13. **Dead ball:** Time will be granted when the ball is inside the pitcher's circle in the control of a defensive player. At that point, any runners that have advanced past the halfway marks in the base paths will advance to the next base; any runner that hadn't advanced past the halfway marks will need to return to the previous base.
14. **Overthrows:** A runner may only advance one base on an infield overthrow (catcher included), once an overthrow has been established.
- **Example****
- If a player overthrows first base and the first basemen makes an errant throw back to the pitcher, only one base will be rewarded even though there were two overthrows. An overthrow from the outfield to the infield will not follow this rule; the player must have possession in the infield and ask for time before runners stop progressing. A passed ball by the catcher is NOT to be considered the first overthrow.
- **Example****
- Runner on 2nd goes to third after the ball gets by the catcher. Catcher goes halfway back to the back stop, picks up the ball, overthrows 3rd base, the runner will be allowed to advance home on an overthrow by the catcher. One base on an overthrow still applies to the catcher. A passed ball by the catcher is NOT to be considered the first overthrow.
15. **Eligibility:** A player must currently be in 1st or 2nd grade to be eligible

16. **8U –Machine Pitch Specific Rules**

- A. Pitching machines will be set at 35 feet with a speed between 24-26 mph or at a rate that the pitch crosses the plate without bouncing or floating across the plate. Umpire will load pitching machine
- B. Batters will receive 5 pitches or 3 swinging strikes. If the batter has received 4 pitches and does not swing at the 5th pitch; the batter will then be out. There will not be foul ball outs, if the batter fouls off the 5th pitch the batter will receive additional pitches until he either strikes out or puts the ball in play. **In case of a completely clear ball that sails over the head of the batter or falls short of the plate, the umpire may make an exception within reason to void that pitch.**
- C. Any ball that hits the pitching machine or any component that may be used with the machine or the umpire loading the machine will be called a dead ball and the batter will take first base and any base runner will advance one base only.
- D. In the case of pitching machine failure or inclement weather causing the machine not to work to Standard performance; a coach pitcher will then be used. The offensive team's coach will pitch to his own team. During coach pitch the catcher's box (passed ball) will be eliminated; but the normal 5 pitch rule will still be in play.
- E. A defensive coach can be positioned in the outfield to instruct players between plays. Once a ball is in play the coach must be positioned either in foul territory or behind the outfielders out of range. It will be mandatory that one defensive coach stand in the proximity of home plate to speed the game up in the case that balls get by. The coach will be assisting the umpire with calling passed balls that make it outside the catcher's box. If a coach interferes with a ball outside of the catcher's box with runners on base will automatically allow the runners to advance.

10U RULES

1. **Playing Field:**
 - a. The pitching distance will be measured from the back of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber.
 - b. The base path distance must be measured from the back of home plate to the location of the base.
 - c. The pitching rubber, plate, and bases must meet NFHS rules/standards.
 - d. Standard chalk must be used to line the following:
 - 1.1 **Base paths** – home plate to first base and home plate to third base
 - 1.2 **Batter's box** – all divisions should have a 3' - 4' wide by 6' long batter's box on both sides of the plate.
2. **Postponements:** If a game is postponed before the end of the 3rd inning, the game will be picked up at the point in which the postponement occurred. If the game was beyond the 3rd inning, the game will be considered final.
3. **Run Rule:** There will be a maximum 10 batters, 7 runs, or three outs per inning whichever comes first during the first 4 innings. During the fifth inning the defense will be required to record three outs.
4. **Third Strike:** Dropped 3rd strikes do not apply.
5. **Time Limits:** No new innings will start after 90 minutes UNLESS **the game is tied**. In the event of a tie, international tie breaker rules apply.
6. **Wildcat Batting:** Every player that is present at the game that is not injured must bat in the lineup. The batting order must remain the same throughout the game and cannot be altered. Late-arriving players should be placed at the bottom of the lineup and be able to bat.
7. **Stealing:** Baserunners may attempt to steal a base on the release of the pitch. The baserunner may not steal home but can advance to home on a passed ball. Baserunners leaving early are to be called Out.
7. **Defensive Positions:** Teams may play 10 players in the field defensively. There must be 4 outfield players and 6 infield players when playing 10; no more than 6 on the infield in any occasion. Outfield players must be positioned on the grass and not on the infield. In the case of a very large infield; the coaches may agree to a location that suits both sides on the dirt for the kids to play. All teams must use a standard defensive alignment with (1) First Baseman, Second Baseman, Shortstop, Third Baseman, Pitcher, and Catcher. NO shifts are allowed.
10. **Infield Fly Rule:** Does not apply.
11. **Substitutions:** Defensive substitutions are unlimited; however, they must maintain their place in their batting order. You do not need to report a defensive change to the opposing coach.

12. **Runner Limitations:** Fielders have the right to the base paths until the ball goes beyond the baseline. While making a fielding play, base runners cannot interfere with the fielder. If the fielder has the ball, they have the right to block the line/base from the runner. If a fielder is not making a play on a ball, they are not permitted to interfere with the progress of a runner and/or block the basepath or bases. Any forceful or purposeful physical contact by either a fielder or a runner will be grounds for an ejection; at the discretion of the umpire. Baserunners are not required to slide into a base when a play is being made provided that they make a reasonable effort to avoid contact with the fielder. Baserunners are not permitted to leave their feet to avoid a tag. While head-first slides are not recommended; players are not prohibited from sliding head-first into any base; including home.
13. **Coach Pitch Rule:** In the event that the bases are loaded, and the hitter reaches ball 4, the hitter does not walk. The hitting team's coach will come in and throw pitches until the batter either strikes out or hits the ball. Pitches from the coach are to be similar to the pitches that are being thrown by the opposing pitcher. The spirit of this rule is to keep the game moving, not for coaches to encourage hitters to take pitches until they can get in to pitch to them.
14. **Dead ball:** Play will stop once the ball is in control of the pitcher inside the base paths. Time will only be granted is the runners progress have all stopped.
15. **Overthrows:** A runner may only advance one base on an infield overthrow (catcher included), once an overthrow has been established.

****Example****

If a player overthrows first base and the first basemen makes an errant throw back to the pitcher, only one base will be rewarded even though there were two overthrows. An overthrow from the outfield to the infield will not follow this rule; the player must have possession in the infield and ask for time before runners stop progressing. A passed ball by the catcher is NOT to be considered the first overthrow.

****Example****

Runner on 2nd goes to third after the ball gets by the catcher. Catcher goes halfway back to the back stop, picks up the ball, overthrows 3rd base, the runner will be allowed to advance home on an overthrow by the catcher. One base on an overthrow still applies to the catcher. A passed ball by the catcher is NOT to be considered the first overthrow.

16. **Eligibility:** A player must currently be in 3rd or 4th grade to be eligible

12U RULES

1. **Playing Field:**
 - a. The pitching distance will be measured from the back of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber.
 - b. The base path distance must be measured from the back of home plate to the location of the base.
 - c. The pitching rubber, plate, and bases must meet NFHS rules/standards.
 - d. Standard chalk must be used to line the following:
 - 1.1 **Base paths** – home plate to first base and home plate to third base
 - 1.2 **Batter's box** – all divisions should have a 3' - 4' wide by 6' long batter's box on both sides of the plate.
2. **Postponements:** If a game is postponed before the end of the 4th inning, the game will be picked up at the point in which the postponement occurred. If the game was beyond the 4th inning, the game will be considered final.
3. **Run Rule:** There is no inning rule limit at this level.
4. **Third Strike:** Dropped 3rd strikes does apply at this level.
5. **Time Limits:** There is no time limit at this level.
6. **Wildcat Batting:** There is no Wildcat batting at this level.
7. **Stealing:** Base stealing is permitted at this level without any special restrictions.
8. **Defensive Positions:** Teams are permitted to play 9 players in the field defensively. There are no restrictions on how those defensive players are lined up.
10. **Infield Fly Rule:** Does apply at this level.
11. **Substitutions:** Defensive substitutions are unlimited; however, they must maintain their place in their batting order. You do not need to report a defensive change to the opposing coach.
12. **Runner Limitations:** Fielders have the right to the base paths until the ball goes beyond the baseline. While making a fielding play, base runners cannot interfere with the fielder. If the fielder has the ball, they have the right to block the line/base from the runner. If a fielder is not making a play on a ball, they are not permitted to interfere with the progress of a runner and/or block the basepath or bases. Any forceful or purposeful physical contact by either a fielder or a runner will be grounds for an ejection; at the discretion of the umpire. Baserunners are not required to slide into a base when a play is being made provided that they make a reasonable effort to avoid contact with the fielder. Baserunners are not permitted to leave their feet to avoid a tag. While head-first slides are not recommended; players are not prohibited from sliding head-first into any base; including home.

13. **Dead ball:** Play will stop once the ball is in control of the pitcher inside the base paths. Time will only be granted is the runners progress have all stopped.
14. **Overthrows:** Follow the IHSAA Rule Book
15. **Eligibility:** A player must currently be in 5th or 6th grade to be eligible

14U RULES

1. **Playing Field:**
 - a. The pitching distance will be measured from the back of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber.
 - b. The base path distance must be measured from the back of home plate to the location of the base.
 - c. The pitching rubber, plate, and bases must meet NFHS rules/standards.
 - d. Standard chalk must be used to line the following:
 - 1.1 **Base paths** – home plate to first base and home plate to third base
 - 1.2 **Batter's box** – all divisions should have a 3' - 4' wide by 6' long batter's box on both sides of the plate.
2. **Postponements:** If a game is postponed before the end of the 4th inning, the game will be picked up at the point in which the postponement occurred. If the game was beyond the 4th inning, the game will be considered final.
3. **Run Rule:** There is no inning rule limit at this level.
4. **Third Strike:** Dropped 3rd strikes does apply at this level.
5. **Time Limits:** There is no time limit at this level
6. **Wildcat Batting:** There is no Wildcat batting at this level.
7. **Stealing:** Base stealing is permitted at this level without any special restrictions.
9. **Defensive Positions:** Teams are permitted to play 9 players in the field defensively. There are no restrictions on how those defensive players are lined up.
10. **Infield Fly Rule:** Does apply at this level.
11. **Substitutions:** Follow the IHSAA rule book
12. **Runner Limitations:** Fielders have the right to the base paths until the ball goes beyond the baseline. While making a fielding play, base runners cannot interfere with the fielder. If the fielder has the ball, they have the right to block the line/base from the runner. If a fielder is not making a play on a ball, they are not permitted to interfere with the progress of a runner and/or block the basepath or bases. Any forceful or purposeful physical contact by either a fielder or a runner will be grounds for an ejection; at the discretion of the umpire. Baserunners are not required to slide into a base when a play is being made provided that they make a reasonable effort to avoid contact with the fielder. Baserunners are not permitted to leave their feet to avoid a tag. While head-first slides are not recommended; players are not prohibited from sliding head-first into any base; including home.

13. **Dead ball:** Play will stop once the ball is in control by a player (can be outfielder or infielder) with the ball in possession between the base paths calling for time. At that point, any runners that have advanced past the halfway marks in the base paths will advance to the next base; any runner that hadn't advanced past the halfway marks will need to return to the previous base.
14. **Overthrows:** Follow the IHSAA Rule Book
15. **Designated Hitter:** Teams are permitted to use a Designated Hitter at this level.
16. **Eligibility:** A player must currently be in 7th or 8th grade to be eligible