



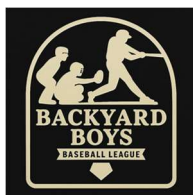
Official Playing Rules & League Handbook

Season: 2026

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Contents

BACKYARD BOYS BASEBALL LEAGUE	3
Official Playing Rules & League Handbook	3
1. League-Wide Rules.....	3
1.1 Application	3
1.2 Season Rosters	3
1.3 Game Day Rosters.....	3
1.4 Scores, Records & Postseason	3
1.5 Game Structure & Time Limits	3
1.6 Batting.....	4
1.7 Defensive Play & Substitutions	4
1.8 Glove Game Option (regular season only)	5
1.9 Mercy Rules	5
1.10 Dugout & Bench	5
1.11 Pre-Game Warm-Ups	6
1.12 Field & Equipment	6
1.13 Pace of Play	7
1.14 Umpiring & Scorekeeping.....	8
1.15 Game Scheduling & Rescheduling	8
1.16 Pitching Safety	8
2. Division-Specific Rules	9
2.1 8U Baseball – Official Playing Rules	9
Game Structure	9
Pitching.....	9



Base Running & Stealing	11
Batting & Special Hitting Rules	11
Coaches.....	12
2.2 10U Baseball – Official Playing Rules	12
Pitching	12
Base Running & Stealing	12
Batting & Special Hitting Rules	13
2.3 12U Baseball – Official Playing Rules	13
Pitching	13
Base Running & Stealing	14
Batting & Special Hitting Rules	14



BACKYARD BOYS BASEBALL LEAGUE

Official Playing Rules & League Handbook

1. League-Wide Rules

1.1 Application

All games shall be played by the rules specified under this section and the corresponding age group sections that follow. If a situation is not specifically covered within this **Official Playing Rules & League Handbook**, default to the Little League International rules:

<https://www.littleleague.org/playing-rules/rules-regulations-policies/>

1.2 Season Rosters

- Managers determine roster size. The recommended season roster is 11–14 players. Allow enough players to account for summer vacations, but limit so that all players receive maximum playing time.
- Season Rosters must be maintained in **PlayMetrics** and **GameChanger** and finalized 24 hours before the first game.

1.3 Game Day Rosters

- Teams may play with 8 players if necessary.

1.4 Scores, Records & Postseason

- Scores and season records will be kept for the regular season.
- Regular-season standings do not impact playoff seeding.
- A round-robin tournament concludes the season with seeding determined by a digital randomizer draw conducted by the President and Vice President.

1.5 Game Structure & Time Limits

- **Start of Game:** Managers meet the umpire at home plate 5 minutes prior to start to confirm the official start time and review rules.



- **8U Game Length**
 - Regulation game: 4 innings, maximum of 1 hour 30 minutes.
 - Soft stop: 1 hour 15 minutes. No new inning may start after this time. Any inning started before the soft stop should be completed, unless the Managers from both teams agree otherwise.
- **10U and 12U Game Length**
 - Regulation game: 6 innings; official after 4 (3½ if home team leads).
 - Soft stop: 1 hour 45 minutes. No new inning may start after this time. Any inning started before the soft stop must be completed.
- **Regular Season:** Teams may optionally extend play if no other games follow and both Managers agree, provided conditions remain safe.
- **Playoffs:** No time limits; full 4 innings (8U) or 6 innings (10U/12U) required. If the game remains tied at the end of regulation time, extra innings shall be played until a winner is declared.
- **Darkness:** If a game is delayed due to darkness or no lights, the game shall be completed at a later point, unless the Managers from both teams agree otherwise.

1.6 Batting

- All teams use a continuous batting order.
- Players that leave the game early or are injured during the game are skipped in the batting order without penalty.
- If a pitch touches the ground before it hits the batter and is a ball, the batter shall be awarded first base, but if the batter swings at such a pitch, it is a strike and first base is not awarded.

1.7 Defensive Play & Substitutions

- Free defensive substitutions.
- All players must play at least 50% of defensive innings.
- No player shall sit more than one inning at a time. Make best efforts to divide playing time equally.



1.8 Glove Game Option (regular season only)

- If a team is short-handed or the competitive balance is such that it would not be enjoyable, the Managers can elect (by joint agreement) to throw the player's gloves on the mound and randomly pick teams by picking a glove. This option is fun for the kids as they get to play with other kids, get coaching from different coaches, etc.

1.9 Mercy Rules

- **Per Inning**
 - Max 5 runs per half-inning, except the 6th inning, when runs are unlimited (the "unlimited run inning rule").
 - Managers, with confirmation by the umpire, may mutually agree to designate an earlier inning (4th or later) as the "last inning" for purposes of the unlimited run inning rule. The goal of this rule is for each game to have an unlimited run inning, even if the soft stop limitation comes into play.
- **Per Game**
 - Regular Season:
 - 15-run lead after 3 innings
 - 10-run lead after 4 innings
 - The game is final once the mercy rule has been triggered, but teams may scrimmage until the 2-hour mark (score frozen) upon agreement between the team Managers.
 - Playoffs: 10-run lead after 4 innings. The 15-run lead after 3 innings rule is NOT in effect. If the mercy rule is triggered, play stops immediately rather than Managers having the discretion to continue.

1.10 Dugout & Bench

- The home team uses the dugout on the first base side and the visiting team uses the dugout on the third base side.
- No food allowed in the dugouts other than sunflower seeds and gum.
- Only BYB-registered players or coaches may be on the field or in the dugout.
- Players must remain in the dugout unless they are batting, playing defense or using the restroom with coach permission.



1.11 Pre-Game Warm-Ups

- Assuming there is not a previous game occurring on the field, the following rules supply a guideline for how to split warm-up time
 - Home team: access to the infield until 20 minutes before the game.
 - Visiting team: access to the infield from 20 minutes prior to game until 5 minutes before the game.
 - The team not using the field is entitled to the batting cages (assuming the field has batting cages) while the other team occupies the infield.
- Managers can mutually agree a different warm-up schedule, but if no alternate agreement is reached, default to the above.
- Warmups must end 5 minutes before game start time for the umpire meeting.

1.12 Field & Equipment

- Dimensions
 - Bases: 60 ft
 - Pitching distance: 46 ft
- Field
 - Home team supplies field
 - Home team is responsible for pre and post-game field maintenance
 - The Managers of both teams shall agree on the fitness of the playing field before the game starts. In the event that the two managers cannot agree, the President, Vice-President or a duly delegated representative shall make the determination.
- Safety
 - Batting helmets required and 8U and 10U divisions must have a cage facemask properly attached.
 - Catchers must wear full gear including a mask with “dangling” type throat protector and a cup



- No on-deck swinging. Only the first batter of each half-inning will be permitted outside the dugout between half-innings. The next batter should be ready with a helmet on but may not pick up a bat until it is his/her turn to bat.
- No metal cleats
- Home team is responsible for supplying game balls

1.13 Pace of Play

- *These rules and suggestions are meant to speed up the pace of the game to keep players engaged.*
- Batting:
 - “In-the-hole” hitter (the hitter up after the on-deck hitter) retrieves bat
- Pitchers:
 - When the bases are unoccupied, encourage the pitcher to deliver the ball to the batter within 20 seconds after the pitcher receives the ball.
 - No half inning warm-up can exceed the lesser of 1 minute or 4 pitches
- Fielders
 - Managers should encourage limited infield warmups after the first inning. Once the pitcher’s warm-up is over, infield warmup should be over as well.
 - Catchers should be prepared to take the field as promptly as possible with the start of each half inning. If the catcher is on base with 2 outs, a courtesy runner is allowed. The courtesy runner shall be the player in the batting order who made the last out.
- Managers
 - Managers should encourage players to hustle on and off the field between innings. The expectation is a 90 second changeover.
 - A Manager or Coach may come out once in one inning to visit with the pitcher, but the second time out, the player must be removed.



- Managers should assign one coach to manage the catchers – making decisions on pinch running with 2 outs and helping with gear between innings.
- Umpire: The Home team Manager and Umpire should have several game balls ready to be put in play so that less time is spent chasing foul balls or out of play balls so play can continue.

1.14 Umpiring & Scorekeeping

- Umpiring
 - Home team provides umpires.
 - If no umpires are available, batting team's coach calls strikes from behind pitching mound.
 - Managers may mutually agree to use a volunteer behind-the-plate umpire.
 - Any umpire's decision which involves judgement, such as, but not limited to, whether a batted ball is fair or foul, whether a pitch is a strike or a ball, or whether a runner is safe or out, is final.
 - If there is reasonable doubt that any umpire's decision may conflict with the rules, the Manager may appeal the decision and ask that a correct ruling be made.
- Scorekeeping
 - All teams must designate a coach or team parent to use GameChanger to track pitch counts and scoring.
 - Team scorekeepers should check in regularly with the opposing team scorekeeper to ensure alignment on score and inning.

1.15 Game Scheduling & Rescheduling

- Schedules to be released one week before the first game of the season.
- Rescheduling of games will be handled by BYB, but will ultimately depend on field, coach, and player availability.

1.16 Pitching Safety

- Catcher/Pitcher Restrictions – restrictions on players that play both positions.
 - A pitcher that pitches 41+ pitches cannot catch that day.
 - A player catching 4 or more innings cannot subsequently pitch the same day.



- A pitcher that moves to catcher can only play catcher up to the maximum amount of pitches allowed. For example, if a pitcher has a maximum of 50 pitches allowed and throws 30 pitches before moving to catcher, player can catch 20 pitches maximum.
- A catcher who moves to pitcher starts with a total pitch count of however many pitches the pitcher made to the catcher in the game so far.
- A pitcher that has been removed from the pitcher position cannot return as a pitcher during the game or any other game played on that day.
- For pitch count limits and required rest – see the MLB pitch smart guidelines: Pitch Smart | Guidelines | MLB.com
- If a pitcher reaches the pitch limit while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until the batter reaches base or is put out or the inning ends otherwise.

2. Division-Specific Rules

2.1 8U Baseball – Official Playing Rules

Game Structure

- One-half inning will consist of 3 outs, batting through the full lineup or 5 runs scored, whichever comes first.
- 10 players are allowed to play on the field at one time, as long as both Manager's agree.
- Players should be rotated through positions by the Manager to gain experience at different positions. Recommendation is that players are not allowed to play more than two consecutive innings at one position.

Pitching

- Purpose: Most pitchers in this age group will not have faced kid pitch during their Little League season, so the purpose of these rules is to provide this age group the opportunity to hit kid pitch.



- Generally – The game shall begin and continue as kid pitch with coaches coming in to pitch after a pitcher throws 4 balls (as discussed below). However, the Managers can agree otherwise based on the best interests of the players and teams.
- Player Pitch
 - At the option of both Managers, the players can pitch from 35-40 feet, if both teams pitch from the same distance.
 - If the player pitcher gets 3 strikes on the batter, the batter is out and does not get any pitches from the coach pitcher.
 - If the player pitcher throws 4 balls, the coach takes over and throws a maximum of 3 pitches. The batter may receive an additional pitch if the 3rd pitch is a foul ball.
 - The coach must deliver the pitch with one foot inside of the pitching circle and must pitch overhand.
 - Coach can pitch from a standing or kneeling position, whatever is preferable for the players to see pitches at realistic angles.
 - If a player is hit by a player pitch, the coach immediately takes over and throws a maximum of 3 pitches (or more if the last pitch is a foul). In other words, a batter is not awarded first base on a hit by pitch.
 - Logistics - The coach from the hitting team will be on the field behind the pitcher's mound ready to pitch immediately if needed.
- Coach Pitch
 - Coach pitcher should leave the field of play when the ball is in play. If a fair batted ball hits the coach before a defender touches it, call it a dead ball/no pitch and replay. Otherwise, continue as a live ball.
- Pace of Play
 - Catchers should not chase passed balls. Position an additional coach behind home plate to chase passed balls.
 - Coaches should take at least 3 baseballs to the mound to reduce time between pitches.



Base Running & Stealing

- Background: The goal of these rules is to introduce the players to the game of baseball, but to advance one base at a time as opposed to every ball hit in play being a home run.
- No steals.
- No lead-offs. Runners can leave the base once the ball crosses home plate on a pitch that is put into play.
- One base on overthrow. An overthrow is defined as an attempt to make a play on a runner (including a throw to a base in the absence of a runner) that results in an error or errant throw.
- Outfield Return Rule: On a ball that is batted to the outfield, runners may continue to advance until the ball is returned to the infield. A ball is considered “returned to the infield” if the ball touches a player in the infield, even if the player doesn’t catch it. The purpose is to end the play and prevent running around the bases on overthrows.
- Infield Control Rule: When any defensive player has control of the baseball in fair territory within the infield and the pitcher is on the mound ready to receive the ball, no baserunner may advance.
- Catcher to Pitcher Throws: No baserunner shall advance if the catcher throws the ball past the pitcher following a pitch. Runners can only advance on a walk or ball put in play.
- Slides: No headfirst slides, except when returning to a base. A headfirst slide results in an out. The defense may not block the base or the baserunning lane without the ball.

Batting & Special Hitting Rules

- No bunting.
- Dropped third strike is an out.
- No infield fly rule.
- No walks.



Coaches

- Coaches may be on the field for instructional purposes.

2.2 10U Baseball – Official Playing Rules

Pitching

- Player Pitch
 - All games start as player pitch
- Coach Pitch
 - Trigger: after 4 balls by player pitcher, offensive coach completes the at-bat.
 - Strikeouts must be swinging during coach-pitch.
 - The strike count on the batter will carry over from player-pitch to coach-pitch and the at bat will continue until the batter strikes out or puts the ball in play.
 - Once the batter has completed their at bat, play for the next batter will continue as player-pitch.
 - No walks

Base Running & Stealing

- Steals: teams are allowed one steal per inning. Steals of home are not allowed.
- Leadoffs: Not permitted. Baserunner may attempt to steal after the pitch passes home plate.
- No Advance After a Walk: Runners must stay at first base following a walk.
- Overthrows:
 - Baserunners shall not advance more than two bases on an overthrow to a base that remains in play.
 - Baserunners shall not advance **home** as a result of an overthrow of second or third. A runner must be batted in to score or advance based on a bases loaded hit by pitch.
 - No extra bases allowed on an overthrow from the catcher to 2nd or 3rd base on a base-stealing attempt. Encourage the catchers to practice that throw.



- No extra bases allowed on overthrows back to the pitcher from an infield position player.
- Dead Ball: the following situations are considered “dead balls”, but this list is not exhaustive.
 - When catcher has thrown the ball back to the pitcher, whether the pitcher catches the ball or not.
 - Once the pitcher has the ball in possession within the pitching circle
 - Once the runner has given themselves up as it relates to advancing to the next base
- Passed Ball Rule
 - On a “passed ball” a baserunner may attempt to advance one base. There are no limits on the number of bases taken on a passed ball each inning; however, advancing to home on a passed ball is not allowed. Advancing on a passed ball is only allowed during player-pitch (it is not allowed during a coach-pitch period).
 - Definition: Each home team field shall be lined with a “catcher’s triangle.” The catcher’s triangle is no wider than the width of the batter’s boxes and is no deeper than 5 feet from home plate. If a ball lands in the catcher’s triangle, it is not a “passed ball” and thus runners are not permitted to advance under the passed ball rule.

Batting & Special Hitting Rules

- Bunting permitted against player pitcher
- Dropped third strike is an out.
- No infield fly rule.

2.3 12U Baseball – Official Playing Rules

Pitching

All player pitch, unless both Managers agree otherwise.



Base Running & Stealing

- Unlimited steals (including home)

Batting & Special Hitting Rules

- Bunting permitted
- Dropped third strike applies
- Infield fly rule in effect