

WBA Rookies / 8U Rule Book



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WBA Rookie League Rule Book

The primary goal of the Rookie Baseball Program for 7 and 8 year olds is to teach the fundamentals and rules of the game. At this level the coaches will focus on individual skills improvements and the basics of team strategies. Players will be introduced to competition at this level; however, the primary focus remains on skill development and the enjoyment of participation.

In order to properly teach the basics of baseball the game played at this level will resemble the 'true' game of baseball as closely as possible. Rule modifications are made at this level to give every player the opportunity to develop their pitching, fielding, and hitting skills.

The game shall be played in accordance with the Little League Rule book **except for the rules contained herein.**

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Batting Helmets

Batting helmets with face protectors must be worn when batting or running the bases. No player will be allowed to bat with a helmet that does not have a face protector. Any player that removes his helmet while the ball is in play shall be called out. Batting helmets must also be worn while practicing. Chin straps must always be fastened.

Gloves/Bats

In the Rookie League, a field player may use any legal glove regardless of the position played. However, only the catcher may use a catcher’s glove. Bats can be no larger than 2 5/8” in diameter.

Batting Line Up

The complete lineup will be batted with no exceptions. All players must be in the lineup at the start of the game and remain in the same order for the remainder of the game. Once the first pitch is thrown, the lineup is set.

If a player shows up after the lineup has been set the player entering the game will be placed in the next spot at the bottom of the order. (ex. if the initial lineup had 10 players the new player would be placed in the 11th position). If a team has gone through the complete lineup, the player is still placed in the next spot at the bottom of the lineup.

If a situation occurs where batters in your lineup, due to a low scoring game, only were able to bat 1 time, in the next game coaches should make every effort to move that player/s a few spots up in their order so that this does not occur 2 games in a row.

Batting: Warm-Up Swings

Absolutely no warm-up swings allowed in the dugout. Players must wait until they approach the batter’s box to take warm-up swings.

Bunting

Bunting is not permitted in the Rookie League. If this occurs a strike would be called regardless of whether contact was or wasn't made with the ball.

Five Run Rule

No more than 5 runs will be scored in any inning. Any additional runs that may score on the continuation of play will not count. For example, if a team has 4 runs already in, the bases are loaded, and the next batter hits a grand slam, only 1 run will count. When the 5th run scores the umpire shall declare timeout and the batting team will take the field. During the regular season the five run rule applies regardless of the score in the final inning. However, during the post-season tournament, a team trailing by more than 5 runs, in the final inning, may continue to play until making 3 outs. Under this rule teams should continue to bat at least through the visitor's at bat in the final inning even if it is mathematically not possible for enough runs to be scored for them to win the game. This is in place so that the players will continue to still get the at bats needed to improve their skills. This rule is always superseded by the time limit or weather rules.

Hit by the Pitch

If the pitcher hits 2 batters in the same inning the pitcher must be removed from the game. This is not a manager's or umpire's discretion rule, and it should be applied consistently. Even if the batter makes no attempt to avoid getting hit, it still counts as getting hit by the pitch. However, in the event a batter leans into a pitch, within the strike zone, and is subsequently hit by the pitch, then this would not be counted against the pitcher. If the player hit by the pitch needs a pinch runner the player making the last out will be used. If the player hit by the pitch is removed for a pinch runner that player may return into the lineup without penalty.

Slide Rules

Players must avoid contact or slide on any close play. Headfirst slides are not allowed and will result in an out; however, dives back to the base are allowed. **Defensive players must not block the base path without the ball. Please have the kids stay out of the base paths when they are not involved in a play.**

Stealing & Base Running

Stealing is not allowed in the Rookie League. A runner must not leave the base until the ball is hit. If this occurs when no ball is hit the runner is always returned to the base they left. If on a hit ball coaches will be asked to remind their players of this rule and depending on how grossly the rule was violated (ex. Runner halfway to next base) umpires will use good judgement to decide whether or not to call the runner out. The intent here is to keep the integrity of the rule without punishing players who and teams who are still learning the game.

Throwing the Bat

If a player throws the bat, after hitting the ball or in frustration, the umpire shall warn the offending player and team. If a subsequent player from the offending team throws the bat after the warning, the umpire will immediately declare the batter out with no runners advancing. Each manager is responsible for recording umpire warnings. The umpire will not track the warnings.

Courtesy Runner Rule

Each team will have the option of using a courtesy runner for **the catcher or pitcher**. The player used will be the last player to make an out. Courtesy runners will help speed up the game, especially with kids that need help with the equipment or a pitcher that needs to warm-up. Teams are encouraged to use this rule consistently to help ensure games move on a timely basis which helps to allow for less games that are shortened by time limit rules.

Please keep this rule in mind when pitchers and catchers are batting by having the last batter who made an out have their helmet on and be ready. If a game is delayed looking for the runner then the purpose of a courtesy runner is defeated.

Dead Ball Rule

The ball becomes dead when:

1. It leaves the field of play.
2. **An infielder has possession in the infield dirt** and all base running has stopped.
3. The ball is in possession of a fielder and the fielder is positioned within the infield dirt.
4. A pitch hits the batter. Batter is entitled to first base unless hit by the coach.
5. An overthrown ball goes out of the field of play or hits the first or third base protective fence.

When the ball becomes dead the following will occur:

1. The umpire shall call time out at the conclusion of play.
2. The umpire will determine whether an advancing base runner has gone beyond halfway to the next base at his/her own risk (can still be thrown out). If the base runner has, then the runner is entitled to that base. If not, the base runner returns to the previous base at the conclusion of the play. ****See Overthrow Rule**

In the event that a player overthrows first base, the runner is not allowed to proceed to second base. **Overly aggressive base running will not be tolerated in this league.** Remember that these are 7 & 8 year olds. Use common sense to maintain the integrity of the Rookie game.

Overthrow Rule

1. Players may **not proceed any base on an overthrow**, unless the ball is thrown into the infield by the outfielder, and the ball is not in possession by a fielder on the dirt. Once the overthrown ball is in possession runners who have not passed the halfway marker must return to the previous base.

Fielding

10 defensive players are permitted in the field. Only 6 defensive players are allowed to play in the infield and should play in the standard baseball positions. 3 outs per inning. Free substitution is allowed. Coaches are encouraged to rotate positions among players as much as possible. Given that some players may not have the ability to play all positions please take safety consideration when assigning positions.

Infield Fly Rule

Will not apply in the Rookie League.

Pitching Rules

The use of a pitching machine in combination with kid pitching will be used throughout the season. Weekday games will consist of 6 innings of machine pitch only. Weekend games will start with 4 innings of machine pitch followed by 2 innings of kid pitch. If extra innings are required in any game, the pitching machine will be used to finish the game. Any batted ball that hits the pitching machine while in use will be considered a live ball, and the

No walks – The pitcher will pitch to the batter until the batter has struck out, put the ball in play or receives ball 4. If the pitcher delivers ball 4, a coach for the batting team will come out and pitch to the batter until he/she puts the ball in play or strikes out. For example, if the batter has a 3-2 count, the coach would begin pitching if ball 4 is delivered, Then with a 4-2 count the coach will continue until the batter puts the ball in play or receives the third strike.

Each team will designate a manager/coach that will pitch prior to the game. The coach must pitch to all hitters. If the team changes coaches during the game, then the new coach must continue to pitch to all batters and the replaced coach may not reenter. Each pitch by the manager/coach shall be delivered overhand and on a straight line. If the umpire judges the pitch to have too much loft, they have the right to call a “no-pitch”. If the batter hits a “no-pitch” the play will not count, however if the batter swings and misses or fouls off a “no-pitch” the strike will count.

The manager/coach pitcher must not interfere with the play. If the ball is hit up the middle, they must attempt to get out of the way. If the manager/coach is hit by the ball and tried to get out of the way, the play will be considered live. If a manager/coach forgets and does by accident field the ball without an attempt to get out of the way, the umpire may, at his/her discretion call the batter out with no runners advancing. If the ball is hit anywhere in the infield they should remain on the mound and duck if needed. **If the ball goes to the outfield, they should make their way out of play without interfering with the play.** Under no circumstances should they follow the runner around the bases and coach.

When the designated manager/coach pitcher comes into the game the kid pitcher must position him/herself no more than 5 feet away from and even with the pitching rubber. The pitchers should continue to cover the middle of the field and should not cheat towards the foul line.

Mound Visit Rule

On the second visit to the mound, in 1 inning for an individual pitcher, by the manager, coach or any combination of the same, the pitcher shall be removed.

Pitching Restrictions

A player shall not pitch more than 2 innings per game (innings must be consecutive), with a maximum of 6 innings per week. A pitching week begins on Saturday and ends on Friday. Each coach must keep a record of innings pitched per week. There are no fractional innings. If you pitch one pitch in an inning then that counts as pitching the whole inning. Once a pitcher is removed they may not pitch again during that game.

Leaving the Game

If a player is injured or gets sick during the course of the game the manager must decide, when the player's spot in the batting order occurs : whether the player is removed from the lineup or will stay in the lineup. If the player is removed from the lineup no out will be recorded and the player cannot reenter the game offensively or defensively. If the manager elects to keep the player in the game an out will be recorded if the player is unable to bat. As long as the player is not removed from the lineup, they may reenter the game at any point and resume their position in the batting order.

Note : If a player is unable to take his spot in the order in the last inning an out will be recorded regardless of the circumstances which led to the player missing his/her spot in the order with one exception : If a player is scheduled to leave the game early (Boy Scouts, Church, etc.) and the manager notifies the opposing manager prior to the start of the game then an out will not be recorded for this at bat in the last inning. The last inning would be inning 6.

At no time will a manager use this rule to strengthen the batting order!!

Minimum # of Players Rule

A team must play the game with at least 7 players of their own team. If at any time the number of players falls below 7 the game will be considered a forfeit. Teams can still play if coaches agree, but the result is still a forfeit.

Must Play Rule

Each player must play 3 defensive innings per game. Coaches should avoid sitting players in consecutive innings, however if it is not possible due to roster size then a player will not sit for more than 2 defensive innings in a row. Free substitution is allowed at any point in the game (except pitcher, if that player has already pitched in the game).

Defensive Coaches

Each team is allowed up to 2 coaches in the outfield. Coaches should be positioned behind the deepest outfielder so as not to interfere with play.

Fair Play Rule

Fair play will be the rule of the game. Good sportsmanship will be exhibited **at all times**. The umpire will have final say in any and all field circumstances. The game umpire will enforce good sportsmanship from coaches, player, and fans. The umpire has the right to ask any person not adhering to proper conduct, as determined by the umpire, to leave the field after first warning the coach of the offending team. The umpire shall also have the right to declare a forfeit if the situation so merits.

Length of Games

Games will consist of 6 full innings or limited by the 90 minute rule. The 90 minute rule simply states; no new inning will be started 90 minutes from the actual start time of the game (not scheduled start time). This start time will be determined and tracked by the umpire. The game may be continued for as many innings as necessary to determine a winner as long as no new inning is started after the 90th minute. (e.g. if the game is tied after complete innings and the 90th minute mark has not been reached then extra innings are allowed).

If the game is interrupted due to weather or darkness prior to the 90th minute being reached, and the trailing team has not batted at least 3 times, the game will be resumed at the point of suspension and completed. The league commissioner will determine the continuation date based on field availability. If the trailing team has batted at least 3 times the game will be declared complete and official. If both teams have batted at least 3 times and the game is tied, the game will be declared complete and official. The continuation would be played still using the 90 minute rule as a continuation from last game.

If the game makes it to the 90th minute and is suspended due to weather or darkness then the game will be declared official by reverting back to the last completed inning. There is no minimum number of innings that must be played if the 90th minute is reached.

****At all times managers / coaches / and umpires should work to keep the pace of the game moving. This includes between innings and having players prepared to switch from offense and defense.**

Team Standings

Win – Loss records will be kept to determine the season champion and for tournament seeding. Each win will be worth 2 points and each tie will be worth 1 point. It is the responsibility of both managers to report the outcome of their games to the league commissioner.

After the regular season schedule is completed a League Champion will be determined based on the won / loss point system. If 2 teams have the same number of points a champion will be determined by the following tiebreakers :

1. Head to head competition
2. Head to head run differential
3. If there is still a tie then co-champions will be declared and a coin flip will be used to determine post season seeding.

Tournament

Each team will participate in the season ending tournament. Teams will be seeded based on their regular season win / loss point totals. Ties will be determined using the criteria above. Games during the tournament will be 6 innings and split with the first 4 innings being machine pitch followed by 2 innings of kid pitch. In the event of a tie extra innings would be played using the pitching machine.

Umpiring

An umpire schedule will be developed using managers and coaches from the Rookie League. Managers are responsible for switching umpiring dates with another manager or finding a suitable replacement if they are unable to umpire on their assigned date. In the event of a substitution the league commissioner should be informed.

Volunteer umpires should become familiar with the Rookie League rules and the rules of Major League Baseball.

Coaches must treat the umpires with the utmost respect at all times. Baseball requires judgement calls and mistakes will be made. There is generally only 1 umpire and they can't see everything. Discuss all calls in a controlled manner and set a good example for the kids and the parents. **Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated.**

Baseballs

Each manager will provide the umpire with 3 game baseballs per game. Please award a game ball, 1 per player, during each game and keeping mind that each player should receive 1 throughout the season.

Playing Field / Pitching Machine

Base paths will be 60 feet

The rubber will be 40 feet from home plate with no mound.

Ground rules will be determined by the umpire and reviewed with each manager prior to the game. Field circumstances may dictate the ground rules (e.g. hole in a fence). If a situation occurs which is not covered by the ground rules, the decision will be at the umpire's discretion.

A hash mark approximately 3 feet long should be painted halfway between all bases except home plate and first base.

A circle painted with approximately a 5 foot radius from the center of the pitching rubber.

4 marks, 10 feet off the infield grass should be painted as a guide for where each outfielder should stand, evenly distributed around the outfield.

Field Responsibilities

Home team prepares the field prior to the game. Visiting team cleans up after the game. Clean up includes raking the field, plugging bases, and locking up equipment.

