

SOUTHWEST OHIO LEAGUE PLAYING RULES

12 YEAR OLD DIVISION

1. All league play shall be governed by **National Federation Of State High School Associations (NFHS) rules**. ONLY those exceptions specifically listed herein shall be applicable. Rules such as the HS re-entry, designated hitter rule, slide rule, hazardous weather guidelines, the required use of batting helmets in good condition being NOCSAE approved at purchase, 7 inning game length, 10 run mercy rule and any other NFHS rule shall govern play unless specifically amended herein. **Bat Restrictions:** In ages where the NFHS bat rule does not yet apply, bats must bear either the 1.15 BPF (or less) or USA Baseball insignia somewhere on the bat and may not exceed a barrel size of 2 3/4". This is subject to change for the 2019 season as more national organizations seek uniformity.
2. Players may not have their **thirteenth birthday** prior to May 1 of the current year. (I.e.: A player's age on April 30 of the current season is his official age). Exceptions will only be permitted for a comparable class student that has had to deal with physical or mental issues and a majority of age level managers vote to permit the exception. It is understood that such player will not be permitted to be in violation of the age rule guideline in nationally affiliated tournaments, except where the tournament is a SWOL sanctioned qualifying tournament solely populated by SWOL teams.
3. (A) It is not the responsibility of the host team (Meaning: The team whose field is being utilized for the game) to provide **batting practice** time for the visiting team. Doing so would strictly be considered a courtesy. (B) If this courtesy is extended, it should commence in a time slot from somewhere between 90 to 45 minutes prior to game time be 15 to 30 minutes in duration ending no later than 30 minutes prior to game-time. The visiting team must make requests at least 48 hours prior to game time. (C) If the home team does not take pre-game batting practice, it would be highly unusual for the visitors to be allotted time. (D) If batting practice time is scheduled, the host team **MUST** provide a pitching screen and the batter must wear a NOCSAE approved helmet. If a player throws batting practice, he must wear a NOCSAE approved batting helmet as well.
4. **PRE-GAME PROCEDURE:** (A) The host team **should** make **an Emergency Medical And Pre-Game Schedule Information sheet (or provide comparable information)** Teams shall provide their own ball for pitcher warm-up and teams will share equally the furnishing of baseballs for games vs Southwest Ohio League teams. (B) **DETERMINING HOME TEAM** (1) Where teams play home and away games that count in league standings, the host team shall be the home team (2) Where one team plays on the other team's field only one or both games, the host team shall flip a coin and the visiting team shall make the call. The winner of the coin toss will have their choice of home or visitors. In cases where teams play more than one game against each other and only one counts in league standings - unless otherwise agreed in writing by the official team representative, the first game between the teams shall be the official league game between the teams. (C) Both teams shall have an equal length of on field time for pre-game **infield/outfield practice** to commence not more than 35 minutes prior to the scheduled game time. (C 1) The host team shall take infield first unless the visiting team took batting practice first. (C 2) Each team shall have an equal amount of pre-game field time unless the visiting team arrives at the game site at a time making an on-time game start impossible. If so, their time shall be reduced accordingly (C 3) Neither starting pitcher shall use the game field mound/pitching rubber for pre-game warm-up unless specifically permitted by the host team. **This does not refer to pitchers warmu-ps upon taking the field to start the game.**

4. (D) There shall be a 15 minute **grace period** for a late start. (H) The team that was on time shall notify the age level coordinator of the allowance. **(1)** This grace period shall only be afforded twice during a season, after which the on time team may elect a forfeit. **(2)** If a team shows after the 15-minute grace period or it is the third or later 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.

4 (E) If the **umpire fails to show** by at least 10 minutes after the scheduled game time, managers may elect any of the following: (1) Mutually agree to cancel the game (2) Mutually agree upon an extended length of time to delay the game before cancellation or the following alternatives are instituted. (a) Appoint a mutually agreed upon individual to call the game or portion thereof (ie: until the assigned umpire shows) (b) Where a replacement umpire is agreed upon prior to the start of the game, that game shall be official **unless agreed otherwise in writing**. (c) 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. (d) If it can be proven the host team failed to schedule an umpire and the game is cancelled, they shall forfeit that game.

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4 (F) PAYMENT OF UMPIRES: (A) The host team shall pay any and all umpire assignors fees. (B) Teams shall split umpires expense for any and all non-sanctioned tournament games with a SWOL team and there shall be no argument by the visiting team over the fee charged by umpires once it is agreed upon where the game will be played. Umpires fees are payable in a form acceptable to the umpire, at the pre-game meeting.

4 (G) FORFEIT PROCEDURE: **See and follow AVOIDING FORFEITS** on pages 4 and 5 of Playing Rules. If a team fails to show for a scheduled game, the following procedures **MUST** be followed. **(1)** The host team shall **pay the umpire a full game fee** as though he had worked a game. **(2)** **Notify your age level coordinator immediately** so he can contact the team who reportedly forfeited to insure their schedule indicted they had the game listed on their schedule or so they will not forfeit their next or subsequent game/s. **(3)** Your coordinator will notify Mike Montgomery immediately in order for him to mail you a check for the entire umpire expense, which will be deducted from the forfeit fund of the offending team. **IMPORTANT: DO NOT DELAY IN THESE NOTIFICATIONS**, it could cost you and others money (Firm Rule: No forfeit fees will be paid beyond a teams deposit balance) **SEE FORFEIT GUIDELINES** page 4 and 5 of Playing Rules. (4) It is vital that teams compare schedules and make contact with each other in the days leading up to the scheduled game date to insure their schedules are identical. It is impossible for league leadership to determine which team had it right and which had it wrong and will not rule in favor of either team.

4 (H) (1) Either the general or field manager may be designated by the team as the **responsible party for determining the start of a game in in-climate weather or darkness**. Until the game is started, the umpire shall have no authority in this matter. Umpires fees as 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. **(2)** 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 game suspension. Except in an instance of malicious intent by an umpire, a coach pulling his team off the field due to such conditions because he believed the umpire used poor judgment shall forfeit that game, even when using sound judgment.

4. (I) A **pre-game umpires/coaches meeting** shall be conducted prior to the start of every game in order to inform the visitor of all ground rules and to properly educate the umpire of all league specific playing rules. **No host team playing another Southwest Ohio League team may vary from league application of rules simply because the game is being played at their site.** Variance from league rules may 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.

(5) LEAGUE SPECIFIC RULES AS EXCEPTIONS TO NFHS RULES:

(A) Games shall be 7 innings in duration. (Innings necessary to break a tie are permitted)

(B) A **ten** run rule shall apply after the losing team has batted both an equal number of times as the winning team and at least five times. **(C)** Hollywood or tie-down bases are optional, but recommended.

(D) The visiting team shall give the host team 2 new **baseballs to start the game**. The host team should then give the umpire 4 balls of the same manufacture for game use and throw in all subsequent balls so as to keep balls in good game condition in play at all times. Note (1) This typically involves the host team storing the balls received from the visiting team and turning these 2 balls over to the host team at their away games if they wish. Note 2: If supplying all additional balls at your host games is a burden, play all away games. Note 3: Balls must be leather covered and not vinyl or rubber. Diamond DOL-1 (DOL-MVP for higher level play), Wilson A1030 (A-1020 for higher level of play) or comparable required as the minimum guideline. Commentary: If you question that the balls you use are of sufficient quality, buy a better ball.

(E) The **Extra Player (EP)** Rule may be used at the discretion of either team. (1) The extra player may be anyone on the teams official league roster. (2) Application of the rule is optional. One team may choose to employ the option, the opposing team may choose not to do so. (3) The extra player is simply an additional person in the lineup who may be placed anywhere in the 10 man batting order (4) Defensively, there will only be 9 players in the field at a time, but the he E.P. is an interchangeable part with anyone in the lineup. (Ie: If, for example, the E.P. is moved to 2B in the second inning, the 2B then becomes the E.P. with no change in the batting order.) (5) If a team begins a game using the E.P., they must do so for the duration of the game. (6) When the EP is used and the team fails to have a 10 man batting order, an out is recorded each time the vacated spot in the batting order is scheduled to appear. (A team with only 10 players would be advised not to employ the E.P.) **Note:** This is a league rule and “may not” be in effect if you travel to other cities. **(Note: The employment of both the DH and EH is permitted)**

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(F) An age level may, by a 2/3-majority vote, elect to use the continuous batting order or an additional EP. If the extra EP is used, the same rules apply, as does the use of the single EP. If the continuous batting order is used, the age level will develop rules and guidelines of it’s own that shall be in effect for the current season only.

(G) A **courtesy runner** may be used for the pitcher or catcher at any time after reaching base. Note: This is a courtesy rule that is optional, **not** a speed-up rule that is mandatory. The courtesy runner may be anyone not having started or appearing in the game, OR, in the event all players have been placed in the lineup, after that point, the courtesy runner may be anyone not currently in the game. Note: Being a courtesy runner does not affect a player’s ability to enter or re-enter the lineup at a later point in the game. If a continuous batting order is used, the last player to make an out will serve as the courtesy runner “if” the team elects to use the courtesy runner in that event.

(H) If a team has **used all eligible and healthy players** in a game and a player is injured or ejected creating a situation where the team cannot put 9 players in the field, 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 may continue, but an out will be recorded at each event that the vacated spot is scheduled to bat. (1) The team who is placed in this position by injury may elect to forfeit.

(I) **Pitching distance** shall be 50’ and the **base distance** shall be 70’ unless agreed upon by the managers. Coaches shall adhere to the pitching guidelines on page 6 herein.

(J) **Metal spikes** shall not be permitted at this age level.

(K) A violation of any of the following six pitching rules should be the only reason to

call a balk in the 8- 12 year old age divisions.

(1) The pitcher, while touching his plate, makes any motion naturally associated with his pitch and fails to make such delivery (2) When a pitcher steps on the rubber before the set position, one hand must be at his/her side with the other hand free. The ball can be either in the bare hand or in the glove. (3) While in the set position, before going to the plate pitchers must hold the ball in both hands in front of his/her body and come to a complete and discernible stop with both feet on the ground. A complete stop shall not be construed as occurring because of a change in direction of the hands and arms. However, the pitcher may throw to any base before or after the stop. The stop is necessary only before throwing to home plate. (4) While in the set position, a pitcher must step, with the foot that is not directly in contact with the rubber, directly to the base that he/she is throwing to. (5) While in the windup position, the pitcher must step back off the rubber with the foot in contact with the rubber, not free foot, before attempting to pick a runner off base. (6) While on the rubber, the pitcher fakes a throw to first base and does not complete the throw.

(L) Protests shall follow NFHS procedures on the field. (I.e: Stop play before the next pitch, no protest of a judgement call or game outcome, only a perceived error in rule interpretation. Umpire must sign both scorebooks and site game situation) The manager then has 48 hours to present his protest, citing the specific Baseball or League rule to justify his protest to the President and the coordinator of the 12 year old age level. A \$25 protest fee must be submitted to the President. If the protest is won, the deposit is returned. If the protest is lost, the fee will be forfeited. The Protest Committee shall consist of at least **3 members of the league board**, with input from the director of an umpire group other than that involved in making the call in question. **To be a valid protest, a team must file the intent to protest with the opposing team and head umpire prior to the next pitch being thrown. The protesting team must, within 48 hours of making the protest must notify the league President, who will schedule the hearing. The forfeit will be considered as dropped and no action shall be taken if these steps are not followed.**

(M) If a game is called for reasons of weather, darkness or safety concerns, it shall be final if official (The losing team has had 5 complete at bats minimum). If it is not yet official, it shall be picked up at the 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. (A) Teams shall share all expense incurred for this make-up portion of the game including, likely, full umpire expense. If the completion of this game would not impact league standings, it need not be completed except as in B (below). In addition, the losing manager may elect a loss and the game need not be completed. (B) However, if a game would impact league standings and thus post season tournament opportunities, the game must be completed or the manager refusing completion MAY be suspended for a portion of the next season at the discretion of the league board if the attitude is flagrant. In addition, the team willing to complete the game shall be awarded a forfeit win. If a game reaches the 5th inning before being suspended, the score will revert back to the last fully completed inning and be official.

(6) (A) It shall be the responsibility of the manager of the winning team or his/her appointee to **post scores on the league web site in a timely manner**, or as otherwise directed by the coordinator. In determining league standings, teams shall receive one point for a win, 1/2 point for a tie and 0 points for a loss or unreported win. **(B)Standings** tie breaking procedure shall be determined in the following sequence: (1) head to head competition (2) Winning percentage in countable league games. (3) Record against the next higher team in league standings. (4) Record against the next lower team in league standings. (4) A one game playoff at a neutral site sharing expenses.

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7) FORFEIT AND FORFEIT FEE GUIDELINES:

(A) FORFEIT FEE DEPOSIT (1) All teams shall have \$100 on deposit. (Multiple team organizations at any level shall have \$200 on deposit to cover all teams in that organization) If not on deposit from a previous season, it must be submitted not less than 15 days prior to the start of the season. **(2)** If a team refuses to submit an appropriate forfeit fee deposit, all teams in that age level will be notified and teams are

not forced to play the violating team until an appropriate forfeit fee deposit is submitted. Any team scheduling a team that does not have a forfeit fee on deposit will be fully financially liable for all expenses incurred in the event of a no-show. **(3)** Most teams elect to leave the forfeit fee on deposit until they drop out of the league. Some others elect to contact Mike Montgomery (513)398-4572 mmonty@mindspring.com at the conclusion of their league schedule for full return of the deposit not forfeited **(4)** Each forfeited game will result in the loss of the full umpire expense incurred from that team's forfeit fee deposit. (A) If a team forfeits this fee, that team must submit immediate payment to bring their forfeit fund back to the required level to playing their next league game, or their next opponent is not obligated to play them.

(B) AVOIDING FORFEITS: In order to avoid the possibility of a forfeit, there are some simple steps each team should take. We strongly encourage each team to do the following: (a) Send a copy of your schedule with the specific game highlighted, or a form which informs your opponents of what your schedule says to every team on your schedule, asking them to compare your information with theirs. (b) If mailing a copy of your schedule is not best for you, call each manager or scheduler and verbally confirm your schedule. (c) Some time shortly prior to your game with each team, make contact with the coach to confirm that everything is as scheduled and that they intend to show. (d) Post your schedule on the SWOL web site. The league has no way of knowing who made the scheduling mistake and both teams will share any incurred umpire expense.

FORFEIT AVOIDANCE (Continued)

(C) WHAT CONSTITUTES A FORFEIT (of the game and/or forfeit fees)

- (1)** Not showing up for a confirmed, scheduled game would result in a forfeit loss and loss of forfeit fee deposits.
- (2)** Not notifying an opponent and the umpires about a non-weather related cancellation prior to 5:00 PM the night before a game would result in forfeiture and loss of forfeit fee deposits.
- (3)** Notification given an opponent, but not the umpire/s by 5:00 PM the day before a game would result in forfeiture of forfeit fee deposits.
- (4)** Cancellation of a game for illegitimate reasons (such as not having the pitcher you want available or any pitcher available, or not enough players available to show up is grounds for forfeit and loss of forfeit fee deposits if canceled after the required umpire notification deadline.

NOTE: NEVER ASSUME THAT YOUR OPPONENT IS ON THE SAME PAGE WITH YOU.

In the event two teams have submitted schedules with different information to the coordinator, it is next to impossible to catch the glitch or determine fault and impose liability. Having a master schedule merely determines clear fault.

SOUTHWEST OHIO LEAGUE PITCH LIMIT RULES

(8) After considerable input from the membership of the Southwest Ohio League, it has been made abundantly clear that the overwhelming number of teams are in favor of continuing with pitch limit RULES (not guidelines) during the upcoming season. That being a fact, the board has developed as precise a program as realistically possible to serve as our guide. What follows is the result of some intense research. The USA Baseball Medical Advisory Committee's statement on pitcher abuse, as well as a statement by Dr Henry Stiene, of Beacon Orthopedic, are available on the league web site. They speak of ages at which it is appropriate to begin throwing specific pitches as well as how many pitches should be thrown in a season, as well as in a year (thus including their school and fall seasons). In league contracts, we attempt to get parents more involved in policing their son's participation.

PROCEDURE AND PENALTIES: Because the purpose of pitch limits is to protect kids and not gain a cheap win, the following procedures have been adopted. It is vital, if this thing is going to work, that teams follow these procedures precisely.

- 1) Prior to the start of each game, communicate with the opposing team as to who is eligible to pitch and how much. A checks and balances process is in place by examination of a team's record on the

web site, where pitching records will be reported, as well as communication with other coaches that played your opponent in the days leading up to your contest.

- 2) Each pitch thrown in the game counts as a pitch. That includes pitchouts, foul balls, (including those hit with two strikes on the batter), as well as ball four. It does not include warm-up pitches.
- 3) Compare pitch counts with the opposing team after each inning. If someone is consistently difficult regarding this matter-or if, particularly, they are combative, report this to the umpire and as soon as possible to your age level coordinator. Get witnesses to corroborate your experience. After comparing pitch counts, come to a resolve as to what a pitchers pitch count is after each inning.

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4)As a pitcher approaches his limit, insure that the other team and the umpire are made aware of the fact. And when a pitcher reaches his limit, announce the fact at the point he has done so. If you fail to notify the umpire, there is no penalty to pitcher or coach because the rule is designed to protect kids not get a cheap forfeit.

(a) At the moment the umpire is notified the pitcher has reached his limit and this is verified, he is to stop the game and inform the potentially offending coach. It is only if the coach refuses to remove the pitcher that there is a penalty. That penalty is forfeiture of the game at the instant of refusal to remove the pitcher. Note: Failure to notify the umpire of the infraction or the umpire to enforce the rule results in no penalty to the offending team.

5) At the conclusion of every game, teams are to sign off on each other's pitch count form to verify accuracy. It is then the responsibility of the winning team to immediately report both the score, as well as the pitch counts for everyone that pitched in that game. Failure to post scores and pitching results by midnight two nights following the game, will result in the winning team not getting credit for the win.

6)It is the responsibility of the losing team to verify the accuracy of the score and the pitch counts entered by the winning team and report any discrepancies to the age level coordinator.

7)If a field manager is found to have exceeded a pitchers limit through late or inaccurate reporting, he will be notified that his actions have been recorded. If it becomes a pattern of behavior, the manager will receive a three game suspension. If it happens again, he will be suspended until the end of the season or 6 games, whichever is more severe (penalties can run into the start of the next season.) If it happens one more time, the field manager will be suspended from the league and may not coach in this league until his appeal has resulted in reinstatement. He shall not be eligible for a reinstatement hearing until one year following his final suspension.

GUIDING OUTLINES: In a seminar at the 2007 American Baseball Coaches Association annual convention, Dr. Tim Kremcheck, of Beacon Orthopedic and team surgeon for the Cincinnati Reds, stated that the most simple and he felt acceptable guide for pitch limits was 6 times the player's age. Attempting to be consistent, yet considering our other sources such as the USA Baseball Medical Advisory Committee, we have developed the following chart as a body of RULES (not guidelines) for pitch counts. The higher pitch maximum is an acceptable guideline for the more mature, stronger, more highly conditioned athlete, while the lower end of the daily scale should be the guideline for the less mature, physically weaker, less physically developed athlete.

NOBODY in ages 18 and under in this league may pitch 3 consecutive days, no matter how little in game competition they have pitched. The pitch Limit chart on the following page will serve as the official pitch limit chart for the Southwest Ohio League.

Pitch Limit Chart

Number of Pitches

Days Rest Required

12 Year Old	20	No Rest Required
	21-35	1
	36-45	2
	46-60	3
	61-70	4

Special note: Days rest means days between pitching outings, not nights sleep.

Example: Pitcher throws 61-70 pitches on Monday; the next eligible day to pitch is Saturday

(9) TAMPERING AND PLAYERS SWITCHING TEAMS

The problem of predator parents and coaches allowing themselves to be caught in the middle of a player looking for what he thinks is a “better deal”, has gotten out of hand. As a result, the following is being incorporated in this body of rules rather than in less accessible or lesser read documents.

(A) Once a player is under contract with a Southwest Ohio League team, there shall be no contact “initiated” BY ANY member or representative of any other team in the league until the team to whom the player is under contract has completed their SWOL schedule, including sanctioned post season play in the state, regional or World Series of a national organization with which the SWOL charters. This does not include outside invitational tournaments or games that appear to be scheduled, but seldom played at the conclusion of the league season OR August 15, whichever occurs first.

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(9) TAMPERING AND PLAYERS SWITCHING TEAMS (Continued)

(B) If a player or his parent initiates contact, the contacted coach or team representative may show simple civility, but MUST first come to understand if the player is under contract. If so, the coach or team representative MUST inform the player or his parent that he cannot discuss the matter further until the player has received a release from the existing team. **(Debate)** While a significant question about this issue is very relevant to the discussion: What can a team accomplish by acting vindictively by attempting to force a player to play with the current team or sit out the remainder of the season, teams are not required to grant a release. (1) Note: The SWOL appeal board may invoke a release in the event there is evidence that a player was materially misled to sign with the team ((a) example: Our team is going to take a trip to Hawaii and they really intend to go to Hillsboro or (b) you will play every inning of every game and he plays sparingly (c) physical abuse that will get the manager or coach will be suspended or verbal abuse will also be grounds for he imposition of a release.

(C) If a team releases a player of their own accord, that player will immediately be eligible to play with another team. **(C)** In the event it is discovered that what we have come to call a “predator parent” acted to manipulate coaches in any manner, the releasing coach shall sign a release with the either of the following words: “Without prejudice” meaning the situation was just not a good one for the team or player. In such a case, the player will not be permitted to participate with any new team for a period of 4 days from the release date. If the releasing team signs the release with the words “With prejudice” would indicate the wholesale prostitution of the player by parents and the player shall be barred from competing with a new team for a period of 7 days from the date of the release.

(D) If another team has orchestrated the matter, the releasing coach will sign the release with the words “tampering alleged”. In this event, if substantiated, the player shall be ineligible for a period of 10 days and the offending head coach of the offending team shall be suspended for a period of one week even if it was another coach or a person associated with the team that orchestrated the tampering.

(E) Teams in the SWOL will be notified of the infraction and involved parties. If it is a violation of (C) above, teams are to stop play and gain a forfeit if the involved player appears in the lineup. If D above, if either the offending head coach appears in proximity to the field when play begins or the affected player appears in the lineup, the opposing team shall call a halt to the contest and collect a forfeit win.

(F) It should be completely understood that the burden of proof in allegations of tampering or parent misconduct rests with the team from whom the release is sought. If allegations are made, the implicated team or individual will be given adequate time to respond. Failure to respond to the allegations will indicate agreement with the complaint and will result in the punishments above.