

SOUTHWEST OHIO LEAGUE PLAYING RULES

15 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, requirement for use of BBCOR 0.50 -3 drop bats and any other NFHS rule shall govern play.

2. Players may not have their **sixteenth 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). Exception: A player may be 16 if he was a freshman in High School the spring immediately prior to the season in play. 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 30 minutes prior to game time and never to exceed 30 minutes in duration. Requests must be made by the visiting team 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 shall make **an Emergency Medical And Pre-Game Schedule Information sheet (or provide comparable information)** and a game ball for the visiting teams pitcher to warm up with available to the visiting team upon their arrival. Note: This ball shall be returned to the host team upon completion of his warm-up period and will be one of the balls used to start the game. **(B) DETERMINING HOME TEAM** (1) Where teams play home and away league games at each others site, the host team shall be the home team (2) Where one team plays on the other team's field both games, the host team shall be home team the first game and the visiting team shall be home team the second. (3) Teams may agree upon who shall be home team, but it must be mutual. (4) When the schedule calls for the teams to play only one game, 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.
4 (C) (A) 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. (D) The host team shall take infield first unless the visiting team took batting practice first. (E) The clock shall start for a ten-minute infield for the visiting team if they have not taken the field at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the game. This shall be extended to mean that a team showing up for the game later than 15 minutes prior to the scheduled game time shall not have any field time beyond the above noted (15 minutes prior) time frame. (F) Neither starting pitcher shall use the game field mound/pitching rubber for pre-game warm-up unless specifically permitted by the host team.
4. (G) 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. (I) This grace period shall only be afforded twice during a season, after which the on time team may elect a forfeit. (J) 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. (K) 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. (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 (L). 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 (M). FORFEIT PROCEDURE: See and follow AVOIDING FORFEITS on pages 3 and 4 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 (N). (A) 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. (B) No game shall be started or commenced where lightning is present or there is a tornado warning (As distinguished from a watch). Once the game is started, the umpire in chief alone shall be responsible for such determinations. Except in an instance of malicious intent by an umpire, a coach pulling his team off the field due to such conditions shall forfeit that game, even when using sound judgement.

4. (O) 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) As an exception to the NFHS rule, The **Extra Player (EP)** Rule may be used at the discretion of either team. **(1)** The extra player may be anyone on the team's 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. (I.e.: 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.

(B) 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.

(C) Only wood or wood composite bats along with BBCOR .50 -3 drop rated bats will be permitted.

(D) 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 6th inning before being suspended, the score will revert back to the last fully completed inning and be official.

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(E) 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 there 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-MVP Wilson A1020 or comparable required as the minimum guideline, The Diamond D1-NFHS or comparable preferred. Commentary: If you question that the balls you use are of sufficient quality, buy a better ball.

(F) Protests shall follow NFHS procedures on the field. (I.e.: Stop play before the next pitch, no protest of a judgment 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 15-Year-Old level. A \$25 protest fee must be submitted to the coordinator or President. If the protest is won, the check is returned. If the protest is lost, the fee will be forfeited. The Protest Committee shall consist of at least 3 persons from among officers and coordinators with input from the director of an umpire group other than that involved in making the call in question. If the manager does not file his protest within the 48-hour time frame, the forfeit will be considered as dropped and no action shall be taken.

(G) 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. (1) 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.

(6) FORFEIT AND FORFEIT FEE GUIDELINES:

(A) FORFEIT FEE DEPOSIT (1) all teams shall have \$200 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.

(6 A 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) 235-9329 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.

(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.

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.

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(7) SOUTHWEST OHIO LEAGUE PITCH LIMIT RULES

After considerable input from the membership of the Southwest Ohio League, it has been made abundantly clear that the overwhelming numbers 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. In addition, we have provided the statement by in everyone's packet at today's meeting. Teams are encouraged to examine those statements and follow their spirit and intent. Because we have no ability or authority to police activities outside the regular SWOL season, we will focus entirely on our summer season activities.

PROCEDURE AND PENALTIES: Because the purpose of pitch limits is to protect kids and not gain a cheap forfeit, 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 teams 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 in order to monitor the situation. In addition, inform the age level coordinator of the difficulty experienced.
- 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.**
- 5) **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.

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Pitch Limit Chart

| | <u>Number of Pitches</u> | <u>Days Rest Required</u> |
|-------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 15 Year Old | 1-20 | No Rest Required |
| | 21-40 | 1 |
| | 41-55 | 2 |
| | 70. | 3 |
| | 71-85 | 4 |

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

Example: Pitcher throws 71-85 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.

(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 the 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 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.