

WESTERN OHIO BASEBALL LEAGUE

Minor League Rules

Revised 3-19-19

ALL GAMES SHOULD BE STOPPED AT THE SOUND OF THUNDER OR THE SIGHT OF LIGHTNING; PLAY MAY RESUME THIRTY (30) MINUTES FROM THE LAST SOUND OF THUNDER OR SIGHT OF LIGHTNING. THIS IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COACHES AND THE UMPIRE.

Unless specified below, rules shall follow those depicted in the National Federation Baseball Rulebook:

General Rules and Information

1. Minor League players cannot be 11 years old before or on January 1st of the current year; exceptions can only be approved by the WOBL Board. If a Minor League player is moved up to play in the Major League, that player must remain at the Major League level and is ineligible to participate in any further Minor League games. Once the tournament begins, Minor League players cannot move up to the Major League level.
2. Players must reside in or attend the local school; or meet WOBL Criteria; exceptions can only be approved by the WOBL Board.
3. Coaches will refrain from the use of alcohol & tobacco at all WOBL games & practices and will not attend WOBL games or practices after having consumed such an amount that said use is obvious to other coaches, players, and fans and presents an unhealthy message to the kids you are coaching. Suspected use of either can be grounds for removal from the league, all decisions regarding this issue will be made by the WOBL Board.
4. Coaches will not argue with the umpires. Coaches can discuss rule infractions only. The strike zone and other judgment calls are not rule infractions and cannot be discussed with the umpire. ***Head coaches are reminded that they are responsible for the behavior & actions of the assistant coaches & players. Unacceptable behavior can be grounds for removal from the league; the WOBL Board will be the final decision-maker regarding this issue.
5. The umpire will set the ground rules as he/she feels necessary, and on judgment calls, **THE UMPIRE'S DECISION IS FINAL.**
6. In case of rainouts, all games should be made up as soon as possible.
7. The home team must supply one new game ball and one good used game ball.
8. The playing field shall have 65 feet between all bases. The distance between the front of the pitching rubber and the back point of home plate will be 46 feet.
9. The length of the game is 6 innings. For the game to be official, at least 4 complete innings must have been played. A game that is rained out while in progress is also complete after 4 innings (3 ½ if the home team is winning).

10. On single games, the Visitors shall use the infield for practice from 5:45 to 6:00 and the home team from 6:00 to 6:15. GAME TIME IS 6:15 PM. Prior to 5:45 scheduled teams have priority on a first come, first served basis for the diamond use.
11. If a team does not have 7 registered players available at game time, the game will be forfeited to the opponent.
12. If neither team has 7 registered players available at game time, the game will be a double forfeit. Both teams will be charged with a loss.
13. The defense will play four outfielders (left, left-center, right-center, and right) for a total of 10 defensive players.
14. Unsportsmanlike conduct by players or coaches may be cause for them to be removed from the game, or the game to be forfeited by the umpire. Foul language is considered unsportsmanlike conduct. Players and coaches shall not call the opposing team members by their name or nickname for harassment. Anyone ejected from a game will be suspended for the following league game. Any time a parent/guardian is ejected from a game their child will also serve the one game suspension.
15. Each registered player that is present must play at least 2 innings in the field and bat once during each game (except for unusual situations, such as game called for rain or darkness or discipline). Free defensive substitutions of all players will be permitted.
16. **All players present must be placed in the batting order. Late arriving players must be placed at the bottom of the order. Anytime there is an injury, there will be no penalty (out occurring) in the batting order.**
17. No steel spikes.
18. All catchers must wear a protective cup, a one-piece catcher's mask and throat protector.
19. Game Delay Rule – A member of the coaching staff may make only one visit with the current pitcher per inning. The second visit dictates a pitching change at that time. Only three pitching changes per inning can be made (except for injuries).

Run Rules

20. Each team will only be allowed to score 6 runs per inning, once a team scores 6 runs that half of the inning is over. If the last batter of the inning finishes his at bat, the next batter in the line-up will lead off the following inning. A team may score as many runs as possible in the last inning of the game.
21. A 10 run rule after four innings will apply in all games. If after the fourth inning a team is winning by 10 runs, the game is over and the leading team is the winner (3 ½ if the home team is winning).

Pitchers

22. No balks will be called.
23. Innings pitched limits will be as follows: one pitcher from each team will be allowed to pitch 3 innings in each game, all other pitchers will be limited to 2 innings per game. These innings must be consecutive. One pitch thrown in an inning constitutes one inning pitched.

Batting

24. **Only USA Baseball stamped bats with a 2 5/8" barrel, or Little League stamped bats 2 ¼: barrel bats are allowed. 2 ¼" barrel bats will only be allowed through the 2019 season. NO WOODEN BATS MAY BE USED.**
25. If a player steps into the batter's box, without a helmet, there will be one team warning. After that team warning, the umpire will call out any following player stepping into the batter's box without a helmet.
26. If a batter throws a bat there will be a team warning. After that team warning, any following player who throws a bat will be called out.
27. The strike zone is the space above home plate, which is between the batter's armpits and the top of the knees, when they assume a natural batting stance.
28. After the third strike, the batter is automatically out whether the catcher catches the ball or not.

Base Running

29. All runners on the base paths must wear batting helmets. Every team will be allowed one warning. The next time a runner will be called out if the runner fails to comply. This means all the way around the base path including first base to home.
30. Base runners may leave the base after the ball crosses home plate. Leaving early shall result in a team warning. The next occurrence shall result in that base runner being called out. In an attempted steal situation runners can only advance one base. This also applies to double steal situations. In the event of an over throw on a steal the runner cannot advance. One Pitch One Base.
31. With an overthrow that remains in the field of play from a batted ball, the base runner can attempt to advance as far as they desire. With an overthrow that does not remain in the field of play, the runner is granted only one base. Base runners may advance on a pick-off play (except to home).
32. Base runners may steal second or third base when the ball crosses home plate.
33. Base runners can only score on a batted ball, walk, or fake tag at third (umpire's call).
34. A batter that is walked may not advance until another pitch has been made.

League Rules

35. The infield fly rule will not be invoked.
36. There will be no pointing to first base on an intentional walk. The pitcher must throw the pitches to the batter.
37. No fake tags. Umpire's discretion can award base runners one base.
38. League/Division standings will only be used for seeding in the tournament. Individual trophies will be awarded for the Tournament Champions and Runners-up.
39. Contact your school commissioners with any problems, issues, or suggestions.

40. All tie games will be played out except for darkness, and then will only be made up if the outcome affects the standings.
41. No more than three coaches/adults in the dugout at a time, except in the case of an injury.
42. If a team cannot play for any reason when weather permits, they forfeit the game.
43. **Organizations must report team records before or at the BEGINNING of the stated time of the tournament draw meeting; any organization failing to do so will not be placed in the league tournament.**
44. **All League fees are due no later than May 1st of the current year.**
45. Above rules must be obeyed. Noncompliance dictates forfeiture.
46. SEE ATTACHED PAGE ON SLIDING AT BASES TO AVOID CONTACT.

WOBL Sliding Rule

WHEN A RUNNER (OTHER THAN A BATTER-RUNNER APPROACHING FIRST BASE) IS APPROACHING A BASE WHERE A FIELDER EITHER HAS THE BALL OR IS ABOUT TO CATCH THE BALL, IT IS THE RUNNER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO AVOID CONTACT WITH THE FIELDER BY EITHER SLIDING OR ATTEMPTING TO EVADE THE FIELDER. A RUNNER WHO FAILS TO SLIDE OR ATTEMPT TO EVADE THE FIELDER MAY BE CALLED OUT EVEN IF HE/SHE IS NOT TAGGED OR THE BALL IS NOT HELD BY THE FIELDER. A FLAGRANT ATTEMPT TO CRASH INTO THE FIELDER TO BREAK UP THE PLAY MAY ALSO RESULT IN THE RUNNER'S BEING EJECTED FROM THE GAME.

The intent of this rule is to avoid injury. If a fielder has the ball and is waiting to make a tag, the runner must slide, return toward his previous base, or attempt to run around the fielder. This will prevent the fielder's being blindsided by the runner or the ball.

Please note that the rule does NOT say that the runner must slide. The runner must slide or attempt to avoid contact, which can be done by trying to return to a previous base or run around the fielder. Of course, in these instances, rules about running out of the baseline to avoid a tag still apply. There are going to be some times when the runner is going to be out and there isn't much he/she can do about it.

Even between bases, a runner must still attempt to evade a tag; he/she may not run into a fielder who has the ball or is attempting to play the ball.

If a fielder neither has the ball nor is playing the ball, the fielder must stay out of the runner's way. Otherwise, "obstruction" may be called.

In all cases, the invocation of this rule is a judgment called by the umpire. Umpires should be instructed to call this rule as firmly and consistently as practical, but it remains within the umpire's discretion not to invoke this rule when there is negligible, incidental contact.

If most cases where a play is about to be made on a runner, the runner is more likely to be safe if he/she slides, so the rule encourages good play as well as safe play. In any case, if players are instructed to slide at a base when there is any possibility that a play may be made on them, there will be very few instances of controversy.