

METRO BASEBALL LEAGUE (MBL)

RULES, MODIFICATIONS AND REGULATIONS

Edited 4.10.24

The following rule modifications and regulations will govern play for the current season in the Metro Baseball League (MBL). These modifications and regulations are **NOT** intended to cover all of the playing rules but rather highlight those areas that are referenced most often by coaches and participants. The MBL Board of Directors has adopted the National Federation High School League rules (<https://www.nfhs.org/activities-sports/baseball/>), except where modified below.

I. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY, REGISTRATION AND RESIDENCY

- A. Players in their respective age groups must not reach the next age before May 1. **It is permissible for a player to play up from their designated age division, but they may not play down.** For example, an 11-year-old may play in the 12-year-old division, but a 12 year old may **NOT** play in the 11 year old division. **A player may play at the same age-level two consecutive years, so long as the player is age-eligible to play at that age in the second year.**
- B. The player age cutoff date is May 1st. Players in their respective age groups must not reach the next age prior to May 1st. For example, a player who turns 13 on April 30 is eligible to play at the 13U level, but not the 12U level. A player who turns 13 on May 1st is eligible to play at the 12U level. A player's grade level is not applicable in determining age group eligibility.
- C. Rosters, including head coaches and assistant coaches, must be entered into the MBL site prior to a team's first league game. Maximum of 18 players per team. Roster changes may be made through **June 1 of the current season.** Requests for roster additions after June 1 must be made via email by the association's travel director and approved by the MBL Director.
- D. **In the case where a rostered player will be absent from a game, a replacement player may be eligible to replace the rostered player. The spirit of this rule is to enable a game to be played and avoid forfeit or rescheduling. For example, if a team with 11 players has three players unable to play, the coach may coordinate a one-game waiver for up to three players - coordinated with the team association's travel director and the MBL Director. Replacement player(s) must be of equal or lower age AND equal or lower level, from their own community's travel program (or in-house program, in special cases). For example, a 12AA Blue team may waiver in a player from the 12AA White team, or a 13AAA team may waiver in a player from the 12AAA team. (This individual waiver requirements are the same as MBT. MBT, however, requires a separate form to be completed.)**
- E. The Metro Baseball League is a **community-based program**. Players are eligible to participate on teams from the community in which they live with their parent(s) or legal guardian, or their school attendance area. In some cases, a "natural baseball community" or co-op program exists, which may be a combination of nearby communities based on high school attendance area. However, this is **NEVER** intended to allow all-star or recruited teams to be formed. The MBL Board of Directors reserves the right to rule on any questionable situations.
- F. If a player attends a **private school** in a different community than the one in which he/she resides, that player may register (1) with their community program where they reside or (2) with their school's summer

baseball program. For example: if a player lives in Pipestone and attends school at Holy Angels, then the player would be eligible to play for either Pipestone's or Holy Angels' Summer Program.

G. In some circumstances, players may participate in another association by requesting a formal waiver from the MBL eligibility policy. The MBL Board of Directors reserves the right to rule on any questionable situations.

H. Policies on double rostering – such as a player participating on a club team or legion team and a community team – are the responsibility of each association.

II. LEVELS OF PLAY

A. To encourage the development and expansion of baseball in the upper Midwest and to provide for uniformity of competition for the purpose of obtaining these goals, the MBL shall be divided into three competitive levels as herein provided. **The policy of the MBL is that all associations must have a "AAA" team to have a "AA" team, unless they petition the board for an exception.** It shall be the responsibility of each association to maintain the integrity of each level within their own association and to properly classify their teams.

B. Definition of levels

AAA: The highest competitive level. This level is for a community's players who are most developed and farthest along in the baseball learning process. Emphasis is still on player development.

AA: The intermediate level, primarily intended to provide a uniform competitive experience for communities that are not able to compete at the AAA level, or communities that already have one or more teams at the AAA level.

A: Level for players who have the least experience or who are not as far along as their peers on their baseball journey – while still providing an exciting, competitive game environment.

C. Interlevel play is prohibited, except under special circumstances and with approval from the MBL.

III. PITCHING AND BASE PATH DISTANCES

AGE	PITCHING DISTANCE	BASE PATHS	PITCH COUNT
9 & 10	45-46 ft.	60 ft.	50/ game, 75/ week
11	45-46 ft.	65 ft.	50/ game, 75/ week
12	52-54 ft.	75-80 ft.	60/ game, 85/ week
13	52-54 ft.	75-80 ft.	65/ game, 90/ week
14-15U	60 ft 6 in	90 ft.	75/ game, 105 /week

IV. EQUIPMENT

A. Shoes/Cleats

9 – 12U: No metal cleats allowed.

13 – 18U: Metal spikes are allowed.

B. Bats

* All bats must have the USA or USSSA stamp (unless using a -3 BBCOR stamped bat or a single-piece wood bat).

* 15AA and 15AAA must use a BBCOR stamped bat or a single-piece wood bat.

* Any bat with a USA or USSSA stamp that has been deemed illegal via publication by the manufacturer or governing body (i.e., USSSA) based on subsequent testing is also illegal in MBL league play.

BAT BARREL AND WEIGHT DIFFERENTIAL (Length minus weight in ounces) RESTRICTIONS:

9-U, 10-U, 11-U	Barrell: 2 ¾" or less / Weight differential: Unlimited
12-U & 13U	Barrell: 2 1/4" or less with UNLIMITED weight differential or Barrell: 2 ¾" or less / Weight differential: -10
14-U & 14/15A	Barrell: 2 ¾" or less / Weight differential: -5
15AA and 15AAA	BBCOR stamp with -3 differential.

C. Other Game Equipment and Supplies

1. Each team must supply one new, game-quality (as defined by the manufacturer) baseball to the umpire prior to the start of the game. Plastic-coated baseballs are not allowed. For reference, the MBL partners with Diamond and uses models DOL-A and DOL-1 baseballs for special events.

2. The home team shall keep the official scorebook, and it may be hand-written or electronic. Both teams should keep a scorebook and confer frequently during games to avoid discrepancies in scoring or pitch count.
3. Line markings and bases are the responsibility of the home team. Every effort should be made to provide the best and safest playing conditions for the players.
4. Catcher's equipment should fit properly and may not have defects from the original specifications set forth by the manufacturer. Catcher's equipment with the NOCSAE stamp is recommended at all levels.

V. COACH, PLAYER AND SPECTATOR CONDUCT

- A. All players, coaches, spectators and umpires are to behave in a manner that reflects and promotes a positive and fun environment commonly associated with the game of baseball. Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated. This includes but is not limited to:
 - * Verbal abuse towards an umpire or anyone on site
 - * Profanity
 - * Physical aggression
 - * Tantrum-like acts
- B. Any player, coach or spectator ejected from a game will also be suspended for their team's next game – be it a tournament, league game or league playoff game – on the schedule at the time of the ejection. Depending on the severity of the infraction/behavior, supplemental discipline may be given by the MBL. A second game ejection in the same season will result in the suspension for the remainder of the season and playoff games.
- C. Anyone suspended for the season is entitled to an appeal. The appeal should be submitted in writing to the MBL Board of Directors. A hearing will be scheduled with the MBL Board of Directors.

VI. UMPIRES

- A. It is the responsibility of each home team to assign and pay for one umpire at all MBL league games. Each association determines how much the umpire(s) will be paid.
- B. The MBL endorses the one-umpire system on league games. However, an association may elect to assign two or more umpires.
- C. Judgment calls are NEVER to be questioned or protested. Questions for the umpire(s) regarding rule interpretation are allowed by the head coach, after requesting and being granted time by an umpire.
- D. An umpire may forfeit a game for prescribed infractions by spectators, coaches, players or attendants.
- E. In the case of a "no-show" umpire situation, coaches have the following options:
 1. Wait additional time for the umpire to arrive.
 2. Agree upon a substitute umpire who is already present at the field.
 - * Substitute umpires should be compensated by the home team umpire assignor.
 3. Do not play the game and reschedule.

VII. PITCHING RESTRICTIONS / PITCH COUNT / CHARGED CONFERENCES

- A. There are no restrictions on innings pitched.
- B. Pitch counts for MBL League run Sunday through Saturday.
- C. Pitch counts for league games are not connected as a cumulative to any games played outside of regular season and playoffs. There is a great trust in Coaches and Travel Directors to monitor their pitchers and put the health and safety of players as the highest priority.

9-11U	50 pitches per game 75 pitches per week
12-U	60 pitches per game 85 pitches per week
13U	65 pitches per game 90 pitches per week
14-15U	75 pitches per game 105 pitches per week

- D. PENALTY for violating the game or weekly pitch count: the player must be removed as pitcher and cannot pitch in any league/playoff games during the same week. The head coach is ejected from that game and must serve a one-game suspension in the next non-scrimmage game on the schedule at the time of the infraction.
- E. If a pitcher reaches the maximum pitch count during an at-bat, they may finish pitching to that batter. The pitcher must be removed as pitcher upon completion of the at-bat. Any additional pitches beyond the per-game maximum should be recorded on the MBL web site and counted towards the weekly pitch total.
- F. Curve Balls
9-11U: Curve Balls are NOT allowed.
PENALTY:
1st Offense = Dead ball, warning to the pitcher and head coach.
2nd Offense = Dead ball, pitch is called a ball.
3rd Offense = Dead ball, pitch is called a ball, pitcher must be removed as pitcher.

12U-15U: Curve balls are legal.
- G. 9-11U, Pitcher Stops Delivery
1. A fake pitch or a stop in delivery, when the umpire judges a baserunner(s)/offensive team to have been deprived of an opportunity to advance or from executing a play, will result in all runners advancing one base.
CASE BOOK: With R1 on first base and 0 outs, B1 squares to bunt after the pitcher starts his delivery. The pitcher stops his delivery upon seeing B1 square. RULING: The umpire should call time. If the umpire judges the offensive team could have executed a bunt with the intention of moving R1 to second base, the umpire should award B1 second base.

H. Charged Conferences / Mound Visits

1. MBL does not modify the NFHS rule on charged conferences.

NFHS Rule: Each team, when on defense, may be granted not more than three (3) charged conferences during a (regulation game), without penalty, to confer with a defensive player(s) ... Prior to accumulating three charged conferences, a conference is not charged if the pitcher is removed as pitcher.

VIII. LEADING OFF / BASERUNNING / DROPPED THIRD STRIKE

AGE	LEAVE THE BASE ...
9-10U	When the pitch crosses home plate
11U	When the pitch leaves pitcher's hand
12-15U	Anytime. Regular NFHS rules apply.

A. 9U: A runner occupying third base at the start of a play (time of pitch) may only advance home on a batted ball, a bases loaded walk/hit-by-pitch, or an attempted play on said runner.

* This rule modification is in effect for MBL league play and MBT State Tournament play. The rule is identical for both. (See 9U Casebook for this rule at MBL.bz/pages/rules-casebook)

B. In 9-11U, a batter may NOT advance to first base on a dropped third strike. Dropped third strikes are outs.

C. Courtesy Runners

9-14U: The last player to be put out will be allowed to run for the current catcher any time. The player that is run for MUST HAVE CAUGHT THE PREVIOUS INNING AND ALSO CATCH THE NEXT INNING. Exception: A courtesy runner (the last player to be put out) will be allowed for an injured player.

15AA and 15AAA: A courtesy runner will be allowed for the current catcher anytime. The player that is run for MUST HAVE CAUGHT THE PREVIOUS INNING AND ALSO CATCH THE NEXT INNING. Players who have participated in the game in any other capacity are ineligible to serve as courtesy runners until all players have participated. If all players have participated, then the courtesy runner will be the last player that made an out.

D. Sliding

MBL does not modify the NFHS rules regarding sliding. Players are never required to slide. If a runner elects to slide, the slide must be legal. Runner is out if he/she does not legally attempt to avoid a fielder in the immediate act of making a play on her/him. Jumping, hurdling or leaping to avoid a fielder are illegal - unless the fielder is lying on the ground.

IX. SUBSTITUTIONS / CONTINUOUS BATTING

A. 9-14U and 14/15A will use continuous batting and free substitutions in all MBL league games and playoff games.

B. 15AA and 15AAA will use NFHS substitution rules (9-player baseball). There is not an option to play with continuous batting.

Starting Players: Any of the starting players may withdraw and re-enter once, including a player who was the designated hitter, provided that player occupies the same batting position whenever they are in the lineup. A substitute who is withdrawn may not re-enter.

Exception: Replacement of injured players and/or courtesy runners. If an active player sustains an injury that requires them to leave the game and their team has used all of its available substitute players, the coach may substitute for the injured player with the first player on the bench who had previously lost their eligibility via the re-entry rule. A **courtesy runner** (the last player to be put out if there are no other legal substitutes) will be allowed for the catcher.

C. Teams must start the game with at least 9 players. If, because of injury, illness or other circumstances, a team is reduced to 8 players, they may finish the game with 8 players. If a team is reduced to 7 players or less, the game is forfeited.

D. 9-14U and 14/15A: If a player must be removed from the lineup due to injury, illness or other circumstances, that player's spot in the batting order is skipped; it is not an out each time that spot comes up in the order. The only exception to this rule is if the player was ejected, in which case it is an out each time that spot comes around.

E. 9-14U and 14/15A: If a player arrives late to a game, including a player who is now available for the continuation of a previously suspended game for which he/she was not present, that player is to be added at the end of the batting order upon their arrival. The player is allowed to participate as any other player.

F. 9-14U and 14/15A: If a batter is injured during an at-bat, the last player put out assumes the injured player's count and continues the at-bat.

X. REGULATION GAMES / INNINGS / TIME LIMITS / 10-RUN RULE

A. REGULATION INNINGS

9-12U: Regulation 6-innings. No new inning may begin after 2 hours elapsed from time of first pitch. In certain field situations, a time limit of less than 2 hours may be in place due to city ordinance or other special rules. Extra innings will be played when inside the time limit.

13-15U: Regulation 7-innings. No new inning may begin after 2 hours-15 minutes elapsed from time of first pitch. In certain field situations, a time limit of less than 2 hours-15 minutes may be in place due to city ordinance or other special rules. Extra innings will be played when inside the time limit.

B. Games called for any reason in mid-inning will revert to the score at the end of the last completed inning.

C. Safety is of greatest importance. Do not risk injury due to darkness, inclement weather or unplayable field conditions.

D. 10-RUN RULE

9-12U: The 10-run rule will take effect after 3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead by 10 or more runs or after 4 completed innings if the visiting team is ahead by 10 or more runs.

13-15U: The 10-run rule will take effect after 4 ½ innings if the home team is ahead by 10 or more runs or after 5 complete innings if the visiting team is ahead by 10 or more runs.

E. OFFICIAL GAME

9-12U: For a 6-inning regulation game (9U-12U), the game becomes official after completion of 3.5 or 4 innings (3.5 if home team is ahead).

13-15U: For a 7-inning regulation game (13U-15U), the game becomes official after completion of 4.5 or 5 innings (4.5 if home team is ahead).

* A game also becomes official if the time limit has been reached, or if both head coaches agree to make the game official.

XI. STANDINGS / COACH RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Standings will be compiled by the MBL and displayed on the MBL web site.

Win = 3 points

Tie = 2 points

Loss = 1 point

B. Tiebreak Procedure:

Head-to-Head

Best winning percentage

Best run differential in games between the tied teams only

Best run differential in all MBL games

C. After each game, both teams must enter/confirm the score and other game details by clicking on the game ID number in their MBL schedule. Each team should enter their own pitch count and check for accuracy of their opponent's pitch count. Teams will be contacted if their game info is not entered by 10:00 AM the day after their game.

XII. RAIN-OUT AND GAME CANCELLATION PROCEDURES

A. In the event a field is unplayable due to weather, or any other reasons for cancellation, the home team coach must:

1. Notify the opposing team as soon as the decision is made. (This should be done no later than two hours-15 minutes prior to game time.)

2. Notify the umpire or umpire assignor

* Umpires are instructed to show up for all games, regardless of weather conditions, unless notified by their assignor. Most assignors charge full rate if they are not notified of cancellations.

3. Report the cancellation on the MBL web site

4. Reschedule the game ASAP and enter the new game details on the MBL site

B. Unofficial games will resume from the exact point when the game was suspended. Coaches should reschedule the game on the MBL site and notify the appropriate umpire assignors.

XIII. POSTSEASON

A. All teams will make the playoffs. All teams may opt out of the playoffs by making that selection on their MBL team page.

B. Multiple playoff tiers/brackets will be created at or near the end of the regular season, based primarily from computer ranking and factors including finish in region, league record and geography. In some cases, seeding integrity will be overridden by geography/travel time constraints.

C. The high seed has the option to host each playoff game. The coach of the home team must:

- (1) Secure a field
- (2) Communicate and agree on date/time with opponent
- (2) Confirm game details with their umpire assignor
- (3) Post the game details on the MBL web site by clicking the game ID

D. The same substitute player waiver rule used in the regular season applies in the playoffs. The spirit of this rule is to enable a game to be played and avoid rescheduling / forfeit.