



HWLL Rules Amendments

# Minor League Baseball & Softball

Effective September 2023

## GENERAL:

1. The home team shall occupy the first base dugout; the visitor shall occupy the third base dugout
2. If a team cannot field at least 7 players within 15 minutes of game time that team will forfeit the game.
3. Specific rules apply to those adults serving in coaching capacities at a game:
  - a. A team may designate no more than four adults to serve in coaching roles at any given time.
  - b. All of these adults must have passed background checks and have been approved by the league.
  - c. The team at bat may select up to two base coaches from the four adults, who should use the areas indicated for coaching on the field.
  - d. If an umpire approves a base coach under 18 years of age, that coach must wear a helmet while coaching a base.
  - e. Coaches are reminded that they must not physically assist runners in running the bases (Penalty: out is called).
  - f. One coach of the offensive team is positioned on the field as a pitcher. No other adults may be in in-play areas.
  - g. Coaches are not to interfere with batted or thrown balls. If a coach accidentally is touched by a ball, the ball is alive in play.
  - h. All defensive coaches must be in the dugout or in areas otherwise out of play. In minor league Softball only, one defensive coach may be in playable area.
  - i. No one who is not a player or one of the adults serving in a coaching capacity may occupy any dugout or fenced-in area. This includes relatives of the players of any age. (Penalty: Umpire's discretion of warning, ejection, and/or team forfeit.)
  - j. Coaches are expected to exhibit positive sportsmanship at all times, and to insist upon the same from all their team's players and spectators.
4. Teams are required to leave the field in good condition, dispose of all trash, and otherwise respect the league's permits.
5. Games consist of 6 innings unless extended by a tie score. No inning may start after the game has been in progress for 90 minutes if teams in our league are scheduled to play in the following time slot. If a game is delayed due to a shortage of players from either team the time of the game will be counted from the scheduled starting time.
6. No changes shall be made to the Little League Schedule. (Exception: In the event of permit changes or weather challenges, the league at its sole discretion will make necessary adjustments.)

## PLAYER POSITIONING:

7. It is the philosophy of the Minor league and below that players rotate among the various positions. We rely on our coaches to position their players in accordance with this philosophy. At the very minimum, the following rules will be enforced:
  - a. every player who arrives before the first pitch is required to be positioned in the infield at least once and the outfield at least once.
  - b. When a team has eight or more players present, no player may play the infield for more than three of the first four innings, or more than four of the first six innings.

- c. The catcher position is not used, but a fielder is permitted to move to the plate once the ball is put into play.
- d. Until the pitcher reaches the batter, all outfielders must stay 15 feet behind the baselines.
- 8. It is the philosophy of the Minor League and below is that players play for as equal an amount of time as possible. In keeping this philosophy
  - a. The batting order consists of all players present. Any player who arrives after the first pitch is automatically placed after the last spot in the batting order. Such a player should be reported to the umpire immediately upon arriving. If a player leaves early or is injured during a game and unable to continue to play, that player is removed from the lineup and is no longer permitted to play. Such a player should be reported to the umpire immediately. No out is charged when that player's former batting position comes up.
  - b. Nine players play the field at any given time. These 9 fielders are designated positions: 1 pitcher's helper, 4 other infielders, 4 outfielders.
  - c. No player may sit out a second time until all players sit a first time, and no player may sit out a third time until all players have sat out at least twice. If a player enters or leaves the field mid-inning, it does not count as the player having sat out that inning.
- 9. No player may play the pitcher position for more than 2 innings. Playing that position for a single pitch or more in a given inning counts as playing the mound for that inning.
- 10. Position Ineligibility Protests: If the coach of a team believes that the positioning of the opposing team will prevent the opposing team from adhering to the minimum and maximum playing requirements, that team must bring the issue to the umpire's attention immediately. The team may submit a positioning chart that they have kept to support such a protest. The umpire will consider the records kept by both teams, and may speak to the players involved as needed. The umpire will then make a judgement, which is final and not subject to protest. If the umpire judges that the current fielding positioning is not legal, the umpire will order any positioning changes that, in the umpire's judgement, will remedy the rules violation. Protests after the inning has begun can only result in changes from that point forward.
- 11. All players must wear their uniform shirt, white uniform baseball pants, and appropriate baseball footwear for the playing surface. Players who are not properly attired will not be permitted to play, and will not be placed in the lineup until they are properly dressed.

#### **GAME PLAY RULES:**

- 12. Runners must avoid collisions with fielders. The umpire will enforce obstruction and interference rules, but notwithstanding who has the right of way on a play, runners who do not make every effort to avoid collision will be penalized.
- 13. Coaches shall pitch between 25 and 46 feet from home plate in line with the pitching rubber. In baseball, the pitching shall be overhand. The umpire has a discretion to require a particular pitching location if the umpire feels the pitcher is pitching from an unsafe location.
- 14. The pitcher's helper position has particular responsibilities vis-à-vis ending a play.
  - a. An area of 10 feet in radius (or, at the umpire's discretion, an area of a different size that conforms with the markings of the field) will be designated as a dead ball area upon return throws.
  - b. The defensive coach shall designate a player to play Pitcher's Helper.
  - c. When the pitcher's helper has possession of the ball and has both feet planted in the designated circle, the ball is dead and all runners must return to the last base legally touched unless the runner was forced to advance at the start of the play, no matter how close to the next base the runner is. (Exception: If the pitcher's helper fields a batted ball with both feet planted in the circle, the pitcher's helper has the option to attempt a play. If the pitcher's helper does not elect to attempt a play, the ball will be dead and each runner and the batter-runner will be allowed to advance one base.)
- 15. Bunting is not permitted. A batter must attempt to take a full swing. Penalty: Strike

16. A batter must complete his turn at bat within 10 pitches. An out will be charged. A foul ball on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> pitch shall not be considered a pitch for the purpose of this rule.
17. Runners must remain in contact with the base until the ball is hit by the batter. The violation by one runner affects all runners. There is no automatic out. For penalty see rule 7.13b excluding the last two sentences of 7.13b.
18. Under no other circumstances are pinch runners permitted unless a player is being removed from the game permanently due to injury.
19. All batters and runners must wear helmets.
20. There shall be no infield fly rule
21. No more than six runs can be scored by one team in an inning. (Exception: In the 6<sup>th</sup> inning or the final inning of the game, the inning shall have no run limit. A team losing by 10 or more runs may elect to reinstate the run limit in the last inning, which will then apply to both teams.)
22. Any game that has not been official due to darkness shall be official provided it has been underway for at least 75 minutes.