

7th & 8th Grade SWCL Youth Baseball Rules – 2023
WIAA RULES WILL BE USED EXCEPT FOR CHANGES LISTED BELOW

1. FIELD

- a. Pitching Distance: 55 feet from the back of home plate to the front of the pitching plate.
- b. Bases: 80 Feet
- c. Outfield Fence: An outfield fence is not required for league games. However, an outfield fence is required to host the SWCL League Tournament.
- d. Portable Mounds can be used if both coaches agree to use them. **Homemade mounds will not be allowed.**

2. EQUIPMENT

- a. Helmets: When outside the dugout, all members of the batting team must wear a helmet. The first time a player of the team at bat is caught outside the dugout without a helmet the team will be warned, each time after the team will be assessed an out.
- b. Catcher Gear: Throat guard, mask, chest protector, cup, and helmet are required equipment for catchers.
- c. Footwear: Metal cleats are prohibited.
- d. Bats:
 1. BBCOR .50 or USA Baseball approved. Maximum of 2 5/8" diameter.
 2. USSSA 1.15 BPF certified bats. Maximum of 2 1/4" diameter. (ILLEGAL STARTING 2021)
 3. All bats may not exceed 34 inches in length.
 4. Wood bats must be made of a single piece of wood.
 1. May not exceed 36 inches in length.
 2. Handles may be roughened or wound with tape not more than 18 inches from the handle end.

If a NON-APPROVED/ILLEGAL bat is brought onto the playing field (inside the fence) batter is to take an out for that at bat. If a team has repeated offenses disciplinary action may occur.

First offense: BATTER IS OUT AND END OF INNING.)

Second offense: TEAM, FORFEITS THE GAME.

Third Offense: TEAM IS BANNED FROM LEAGUE TOURNAMENT PLAY.

****All offenses must be reported to League Commissioner.**

- e. Balls: Must be Little League, Senior League or Babe Ruth approved.
 - i. Balls marked or stamped "Official League" are not acceptable.
 - ii. The home team is responsible for providing one new ball and one good spare.
- f. Player Number: All players must have a number on their uniform/shirt.

3. GAME

- a. **2 hour time limit.** No **NEW** inning may start after 2 hours from start of the game. The **NEW** inning starts immediately after last out of previous inning. Games tied after time limit is imposed are recorded as a tie.
- b. Length of Game: 7 innings, if tied, continue to play until the tie is broken (If less than 2 hours). The last out from previous inning will start at 2nd base in each extra inning played.
- c. Complete game: If a game ends early due to darkness or weather, the game is considered complete if 4½ innings are complete and the home team is ahead, or 5 innings are complete, and the visiting team is ahead.
- d. Mercy Rule: 10 run rule starts in the 5th inning after the team that is behind has batted. *Scoring stops after the play that puts home team up by 10 or more runs.*
- e. Infield Fly: Infield fly will be called with runners on first and second or bases loaded with less than two outs.
- f. Rain Out: Teams must try to make up games due to weather or wet grounds.
 - i. Both teams must try to reschedule the game.
 - ii. Non played games due to weather will be recorded as a tie.
 - iii. Games cancelled due to reasons other than weather, the requesting team shall make suitable makeup time or forfeit game.
- g. Protesting: The umpire's decision is final – no protesting of the game.
- h. Number of players allowed on defense: 9 players (the team may start with 8 players but forfeits with less than 8 players).
 - i. No out will be assessed for the 9th position of the batting order if a team only has 8 players.
 - ii. May add late players to end of batting order without penalty.

4. BATTER

- a. Dropped 3rd Strike: The batter may attempt to advance to 1st base on a dropped third strike if:
 - i. 1st base is unoccupied at the beginning of the pitch and there are less than two outs or
 - ii. 1st base is occupied or unoccupied with 2 outs.
- b. Slashing is not permitted i.e., a batter may not show bunt, pull back and swing at a pitch.
 - i. If the batter shows bunt and then attempts to swing the ump shall immediately call "dead ball" and issue a strike.
 - ii. If the same or another player slashes, the umpire shall immediately call "dead ball" and the batter will be out.
- c. The batter must call time if he needs to talk to his coach.

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5. PITCHER

- a. Maximum Number of Innings in One Game: A player can pitch no more than 4 innings in a game.
 - i. One pitch to a batter is considered an inning.
- b. Non-consecutive Innings: A pitcher can be taken out of the game and return as a pitcher *ONCE* per game, e.g. a pitcher may pitch the 1, 2, 3 and 7th innings or 1, 2, 6, and 7th innings or similar.
- c. Hit batters: A pitcher hitting three batters in a game must be removed and may not return as the pitcher.
- d. Balk: Each pitcher will receive one warning per game. The umpire will call “balk” and provide one warning; the balk rule will be enforced for every subsequent infraction. **NO BALK WARNING IN TOURNAMENT GAMES.**
- e. A pitcher does not have to pitch to the batter for an intentional walk. The coach, pitcher, or catcher may request a walk.
- f. A pitcher may wear sunglasses (unless obvious glare affects umpires’ vision)
- g. Catchers cannot come into pitch unless there is an injury.
 - i.e., a catcher cannot come into pitch within the same inning unless there is an injury. If a player is not catching that inning, they can pitch.

6. RUNNER

- a. Sliding: Runners must slide or avoid contact when there is a play at any base and home plate, or he will be called out.
 - i. A play is defined as the defender having control of the ball and attempting to tag the runner out.
 - ii. If the defender does not have control of the ball, the runner must still avoid MALICIOUS contact.
 1. *If the runner is put out due to avoiding a defender without control of the ball, the umpire may call the runner safe due to obstruction.*
- b. Home Base Open: **HOME BASE IS OPEN IN ALL LIVE BALL SITUATIONS.**
 - i. A runner may steal home while the pitcher is in possession of the ball and preparing to make a pitch.
 - ii. The pitch does not have to be a pass ball or wild pitch e.g., a squeeze play is legal.
 - iii. A runner may attempt to take home if he or another runner is played on e.g., the catcher or another player attempts a play on the runner on third base or the catcher or pitcher makes or fakes a play on another base runner.
 - iv. A runner may attempt to take home if the catcher overthrows the pitcher.

7. SUBSTITUTION *No Designated Hitters (DH)*****

- a. Batting the Bench: Coaches have the option of batting their bench.
 - i. The batting order must remain the same for the entire game.
 - ii. Players can substitute freely without the need to report.
 - iii. No out is recorded for legitimately injured player not batting when you bat the bench.
- b. Teams Choosing to Bat 9 Players and Substitute:
 - i. Starters: May reenter the game twice but must be in the same batting order.
 - ii. Substitutions: May reenter the game once but must be in the same batting order.
 - iii. If player subs into bat, he must play 1 inning of defense. If he subs in on defense, he must stay in until he bats once.
- c. Reporting: When a coach elects not to bat the bench, the home plate umpire and opposing team record keeper must be notified by the coach or record keeper of every substitution and reentry prior to the player taking the field on defense or attempting an at bat.
- d. Courtesy runner: Courtesy runner(s) may be used for the player(s) pitching and/or catching the previous half inning.
 - i. When there are one or two outs.
 - ii. The player making the last out must be the courtesy runner.
 - iii. A pitcher and/or catcher receiving a courtesy runner must return in the following half inning as the pitcher or catcher.

8. PLAYER ELGIBILITY

*Team rosters will be posted to league website at least 7 days prior to start of season. Each team can have a maximum of 2 players from outside of team’s community or school district. All rosters will be approved by the League Commissioner. Any alterations after the start of the season must be communicated to and approved by the League Commissioner.

- a. Participation in SWCL Tournament: Players must have played in at least 50% SWCL games during the SWCL regular season to participate in the SWCL Tournament.
 - i. Exemption: If a player is injured (e.g., broken arm, etc.) and is unable to play and travels with his team he may participate in the league tournament.
 - ii. A 5/6 grade player playing at least 50% of his 5/6 games is eligible to play in the 7/8 grade league tournament.
 - iii. Appeal: The SWCL Board will make the final decision whether a player is eligible.
- b. Players are not prohibited from playing in other organized youth baseball programs e.g., Babe Ruth.
- c. Use of younger players: Players from younger grades, 5th/6th grades, may play up to assist a 7th /8th grade team fill out a lineup. They do not have to be on the 7th/8th grade team roster.
 - i. 7th and 8th grade teams, when without nine players, should make every attempt to fill out their roster with 6th grade players, before using 5th grade players. 7th and 8th grade teams should not use 3rd and 4th grade players on their teams.
 - ii. For regular league games, a younger player may fill in on more than one team, when the older teams do not have a full roster due to players being injured, ill, or unavailable to play for personal reasons.
 1. If the older team is relying on the younger player to be part of their regular roster throughout the entire season, the younger player is restricted to playing for that team.

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- d. Ineligible/illegal Player: A player playing on more than one team of the same age group, e.g., 7th/8th and 7th/8th, or 9th grader or older playing on a 7th/8th grade team is strictly prohibited.
1. Any team who plays an ineligible/illegal player **FORFEITS THE GAME(S)**.

9. RECORD KEEPING

- e. Game Records: Teams must keep complete books for each game.
- i. Records need to include (at minimum):
 1. Players' full name
 2. Players' uniform number
 3. Number of innings each pitcher pitched.
 4. Number of runs scored by each team.
- f. End of Year Record: All teams are to contact the league Vice President of Baseball Operations and verify their league Win-Loss record immediately after their last game.
- g. The **WINNING** team is required to report the game score to Jess Hisel via the league website (SWCL.org), failure to report the score will result in a forfeit for both teams. *Coaches should verify final score and sign opponent's scorebook.*
- h. Open Book: Teams participating in the SWCL Tournament need to bring their full set of game records from all SWCL league games and present them to the coach (or record keeper) of the opposing team, if requested.
- i. The winning team needs to report scores on our website (SWCL.org). Failure to report the score of a game will result in a forfeit by each team. Coaches should verify final score and sign opponent's book. Any team with 2 or more unreported scores by the deadline, the current head coach will not be allowed to coach the next year unless a \$150 fine is paid to the SWCL.

10. OFFICIATING

- a. Umpire Qualifications
- i. League Games:
 1. The home plate and base umpires must be high school age (at least 15 years old).
 2. Umpires are requested to wear mask, chest protector and shin guards.
 3. The home team is responsible for providing the home plate and base umpires.
 4. Home plate umpire is to print his/her name to both team's scorebook.
 - ii. SWCL League Tournament:
 1. The home plate umpire must be WIAA Certified Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

11. SWCL TOURNAMENT

- a. Tie breaker for seeding teams with same win/loss record.
- i. Head-to-head
 - ii. Least runs given up per game.
 - iii. Record against higher seeded teams
 - iv. By flip of a coin
- b. The location of games will be:
- i. Monday through Wednesday at the higher seed location.
 - ii. When seeds are the same, the southern division is home during even years and the northern division is home during odd years.
 - iii. All winner bracket and losing bracket games will be played at the host site Thursday – Saturday. This is the same process that Softball uses for the SWCL tournament.
- c. Home team:
- i. The higher seed will be home Monday through Wednesday.
 - ii. Thursday, Friday and Saturday the home team will be determined by the flip of a coin.
- d. Balls: Must be Little League, Senior League, Babe Ruth or NFHS approved.
- i. Monday through Wednesday the home team is responsible for providing one new ball and one good spare.
 - ii. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday the tournament host will provide one new and two good spares for each game.
- e. ***NO BALK WARNING IN TOURNAMENT GAMES.***
- f. ***Must bat at least 9 players. (Take an out for missing 9th batter) no penalty for legitimate injury during game.***
- g. Time limit: Games do not have a time limit.
- h. Games will be completed to 7 innings if rain delay/rainout. (unless 10 run rule applies)
- i. The home plate umpire must be WIAA certified Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.
- j. Compensation from SWCL: The host site will receive \$120 per game starting Thursday.
- k. **Pitcher may pitch a maximum of 8 innings per day.**