

3rd & 4th Grade SWCL Youth Baseball Rules – 2023

WIAA RULES WILL BE USED EXCEPT FOR CHANGES LISTED BELOW

1. FIELD

- a. Pitching Distance: 46 feet from the back of home plate to the front of the pitching plate.
- b. Bases: 60 Feet

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: Must be
USA Baseball approved. Maximum length 32". Maximum 2 5/8 diameter. BBCOR is an APPROVED bat to use in the SWCL.
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 stamped or marked Little League approved.
 - i. **Balls stamped or marked "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. Length of game: 5 innings
- b. Number of players allowed on defense: 10 players (a team may start with 8 players but forfeits with less than 8 players).
 - i. No out will be assessed for the 9th and 10th position of the batting order if a team only has 8 players.
 - ii. May add late players to end of lineup without penalty.
- c. Batting the bench: Coaches must bat their bench in League and SWCL Tournament games.
- d. **NO WALKS.** If a pitcher throws 4 balls to a batter, it is not a walk. A coach from the batting team will come in to pitch to each batter with 4 balls.
 - i. Called strikes count as well as swings. A batter **CAN** strike out.
 - ii. Batters hit by pitches from opposing pitcher **do count**. Batters **are not** rewarded a base when hit by a pitch thrown by a coach.
 - iii. Coach will pitch from the rubber.
 - iv. Max of 4 pitches from the coach unless foul ball.
 1. After the fourth pitch from coach, the batter will be out.
 2. If a player fouls off on the 4th Coach's pitch it will be treated like a foul ball on a second strike. The batter will be allowed another pitch.
 3. If the batter does not swing on the 4th pitch, the batter is out.
- e. TOURNAMENT GAMES ONLY – No outs will be taken for less than 10 players in the tournament. Teams can play with 8 players.
- f. Complete game: If a game ends early due to darkness or weather, the game is considered complete if 3-1/2 innings are complete and the home team is ahead, or 4 innings are complete and the visiting team is ahead, or the score is tied.
- g. Tied after 5 innings: The game ends in a tie.
- h. Time limit: No new inning shall begin 90 minutes after the start of the game. Official time based on last out of previous inning. Once an inning has started the inning must be completed if the home team is behind.
- h. **Innings 1-3 are CLOSED innings. Teams may score up to 4 runs per inning. NO CONTINUATION. Innings 4 and after are OPEN innings. Teams may score as many runs as possible until 3rd out.**
- i. Mercy Rule: 10 run rule in the 4th inning after the team that is behind has batted. Scoring stops after the play putting home team up by 10 or more runs.
- j. Infield Fly: Infield fly will be called with runners on first and second or bases loaded with less than two outs.
- k. Rescheduling of Game:
 - i. Both teams must try to reschedule the game.
 - ii. Games not completed before the tournament will be scored a tie.
 - iii. If a team cancels for reasons other than weather, the requesting team will be responsible for makeup date suitable with the other team or forfeit the game.
- l. Protesting: The umpire's decision is final – no protesting of the game.

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4. RUNNER

- a. Sliding: Runners must slide OR avoid contact when there is a play at any base/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.*
 - ii. Head first sliding is permitted.
- b. Leading Off: base runners can lead off when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. The base runner is not allowed to advance to the next base unless catcher throws to a base. If base runners leave base too early, a warning will be made the first time. Any additional times it will be an out.
- c. Stealing: There is no stealing, runner may lead off the base when the pitch leaves the pitcher's hand. **If the catcher throws a ball to a base, the runner can advance. However, home is closed so the runner cannot advance to home.**
- d. Runner(s) may not advance when the catcher overthrows the pitcher.
- e. Runners must return to the base before the next pitch
- f. Home Base is Closed 100% of the time, until a ball is put into play.

5. BATTER

- a. Bunting: Bunting is Prohibited.
- b. Dropped 3rd Strike: The batter may not attempt to advance to 1st base on a dropped third strike.
- c. The batter must call time if he needs to talk to his coach.

6. PITCHER

- a. Warm up pitches: Pitchers are limited to 5 warm up pitches between innings.
- b. Maximum Number of Innings in One Game: A player can pitch no more than 3 innings in a game. One pitch to a batter is considered an inning.
- c. Non-consecutive Innings: A pitcher can be taken out of the game and return as a pitcher, e.g., a pitcher may pitch the 1, 2, and 5th innings.
- d. Hit batters: A pitcher hitting three batters in one inning must be removed and can not return as the pitcher.
- e. No balks: An umpire will call a "no pitch" if a pitcher commits a balk e.g., pitches without coming to a complete pause (aka quick pitching), pitcher drops the ball during wind up with runner(s) on base.
- f. Pitchers are allowed to wear sunglasses. (Unless obvious glare that affects vision of home plate umpire)
- 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.

7. PLAYER ELGIBILITY

***Roster for teams will be posted to SWCL website at least one week prior to start of season. Each team can have a maximum of 2 players from outside the team's community or school district. Rosters will be approved by league Commissioner. Any alterations after approval must be approved by League Commissioner. A player from lower division can still play up one division. 2nd Graders may be brought up during the season to participate in 3/4 Grade to help make a complete team. It is required that the player participate in that community's rec program.

- a. Participation in SWCL Tournament: Players must have played in at least 50% of their teams 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. 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., Cal Ripken.
- c. Ineligible/illegal Player: A player playing on more than one team of the same age group, e.g., 3rd/4th and 3rd/4th, or playing on a younger team, e.g., a 5th/6th grade player playing on a 3rd/4th grade team, is strictly prohibited. 3rd or 4th graders who play up primarily in regular season, must play 50% of 3/4 grade games to be eligible for 3/4 grade tournament.
 - i. Any team who plays a player from another team of the same age group or an older age group, Forfeits the game(s)

8. RECORD KEEPING

- a. WINNING team is to report game score to Jess Hisel via league website (SWCL.org), tie game home team reports.

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- b. Game Records: Teams must keep complete books for each game. *Coaches must verify final score and sign opponent's book.*
 - 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.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.
- e. 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.**

9. 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. The home team is responsible for providing the home plate and base umpires.
 - 3. Plate umpire is required to wear shin guards, chest protector, and face mask.
 - 4. Plate umpire is to print name on both team score books.
 - ii. SWSL League Tournament:
 - 1. The home plate umpire must be WIAA Certified Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

10. SWCL TOURNAMENT

- a. Tie breaker for seeding teams with same win/loss record.
 - i. Head-to-head
 - ii. Least runs given up per game (if more than 2 teams have same win/loss record)
 - 1. Sum is among teams that are tied.
 - 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.
 - 1. When the seeds are equal, western division is home during even years, eastern division in odd years.
 - ii. 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 stamped or marked Little League 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. Time limit: Games do not have a time limit.
 - i. Rainout/delay games will be completed to 5 innings, unless the 10 run rule applies.
- f. Tie score: If the game is tied after 5 innings of play.
 - i. The last player that made an out, from both teams, will be placed on 2nd base at the beginning of their half of the 6th inning and any necessary innings.
 - ii. The last out will continue to be placed on 2nd base until an extra inning ends without a tie.
- g. Compensation from SWCL: The host site for the SWCL tournament will receive \$100 per game beginning Thursday
- h. **Pitchers may pitch a maximum of 8 innings per day.**
- i. For 3/4 grade, no outs will be taken for less than 10 players in the tournament. Teams can play with 8 players.