

5th & 6th Grade SWCL Youth Baseball Rules – 2023
WIAA RULES WILL BE USED EXCEPT FOR CHANGES LISTED BELOW

1. FIELD

- a. Pitching Distance: 50 feet from the back of home plate to the front of the pitching plate.
- b. Bases: 70 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.
Use of illegal bats (USSSA BAT OF ANY SIZE)
First offense: OFFENDER IS OUT AND END OF THE 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: 6 innings
- b. Complete game: If a game ends early due to darkness or weather, the game is considered complete if 3½ innings are complete and the home team is ahead, or 4 innings are complete, and the visiting team is ahead.
- c. Number of players allowed on defense:
 - i. **For Regular Season Games:**
 - 1. 10 players (a team may start with 8 players but forfeits with less than 8 players).
 - 2. No out will be assessed for the 9th and 10th position of the batting order if a team only has 8 players.
 - 3. May add late players to end of lineup without penalty.
 - ii. **For SWCL Tournament Games:**
 - 1. 10 players (a team may start with 8 players but forfeits with less than 8 players).
 - 2. No out will be assessed for the 9th and 10th position of the batting order if a team only has 8 players.
 - 3. If you have at least 10 players in the dugout, you must play all 10
- d. Batting the bench: Coaches have an option – See Section 7 Substitution
- e. Tied after 6 innings: The game ends in a tie.
- f. Time limit: **No new inning shall begin 90 minutes after the start of the game.** Time based on last out of previous inning.
 - i. Once an inning has started, the inning must be completed if the home team is behind.
 - ii. **Innings 1 -3 are CLOSED innings. You may score a max of 4 runs per inning, NO CONTINUATION.**
 - iii. **Starting with inning 4, all innings will be an open inning, may score as many runs as possible, until 3rd out.**
- g. Mercy Rule: 10 run rule in the 4th inning after the team that is behind has batted. Scoring stops after the play that puts the home team ahead by 10 or more runs.
- h. Infield Fly: Infield fly will be called with runners on first and second or bases loaded with less than two outs.
- i. Rescheduling of Game:
 - i. Both teams must make an effort to reschedule the game.
 - ii. Games not completed by end of season will be scored as a tie.
 - iii. Games cancelled for reasons other than weather, the requesting team will be responsible for a makeup date suitable with the opposing team or forfeit the game.
- j. Protesting: The umpire's decision is final – no protesting of the game.

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4. RUNNER

- a. Sliding: Runners **AVOID CONTACT OR SLIDE** 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 try to avoid contact or slide.
 - 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.*
 - iii. Head-first sliding is permitted.
- b. Return to Base: Once the pitcher has the ball on the mound all runners must immediately return to base, unless:
 - i. The runner made his break and remains in motion before and after the pitcher catches the ball from the catcher.
 - 1. If the runner is not moving when the pitcher catches the ball or stops after the pitcher catches the ball the runner may not advance and must return to the last earned base.
 - 2. The pitcher has the option of:
 - a. Not making a play on the runner i.e., the pitcher prepares to make the next pitch
 - b. Attempt to throw the runner out – the pitcher throws the ball to the last earned base. The baseman must tag the returning runner out.
- c. Leading Off: Regular leading off.
- d. Stealing: Runners may attempt to steal at any time.
- e. Home Base is **CLOSED**, unless a play is made on a runner on any base.

5. BATTER

- a. Dropped 3rd Strike: The batter **cannot** attempt to advance to 1st base on a dropped third strike. **They are out.**
- b. Bunting is allowed. However, 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 call 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.

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.
 - i. 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 6th innings.
- d. Intentional walks do not require the pitcher to pitch. The coach, pitcher, or catcher can request an intentional walk.
- e. Hit batters: A pitcher hitting three batters in one inning must be removed and may not return as the pitcher.
- f. No balks: The 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 while his pivot foot is in contact with the pitching plate and runner(s) are on base. Balk warning, no advancement.
- g. Pitchers can wear sunglasses. (Unless obvious glare that affects vision of home plate umpire)
- h. 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.

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7. SUBSTITUTION *NO DESIGNATED HITTER (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.
- b. Teams Choosing to Bat 10 Players and Substitute:
 - i. Starters: May reenter the game but must be in the same batting order.
 - ii. Substitutions: May reenter the game but must be in the same batting order.
 1. Coaches should not have certain players pinch hitting for other players who only play defense. *NO Designated Hitter (DH). The spirit of allowing substitutes to reenter is to promote players being able to substitute early in the game and reenter the game later, the expectation is all players will bat and play defense.
- 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 subsequent 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 subsequent half inning as the pitcher or catcher.

8. PLAYER ELGIBILITY

Team rosters will be posted to SWCL league website one week prior to start of the season. Rosters will include player name, uniform number, birthdate, address, and school district attended. Each team can have a maximum of **2** players from outside the team's community or school district. Rosters will be approved by the League Commissioner. Any alterations to team rosters after the start of the season must be submitted to and approved by the League Commissioner.

- a. Participation in SWCL Tournament: Players must have played in at least 50% of his/her 5/6 grade team's 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 3/4 grade player playing in at least 50% of his 3/4 league games will be eligible to play in the 5/6 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., Cal Ripken.
- c. Use of younger players: Players from 3rd/4th may play up to assist a 5th/6th grade team fill out a 10 man roster.
 - i. 5th and 6th grade teams, when without ten players, should make every attempt to fill out their roster with 4th grade players, before using 3rd grade players. 5th and 6th grade teams should not use 2nd grade or younger players on their teams.
 - ii. For regular league games, a 3rd/4th grade player may fill in on more than one 5th/6th grade 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 5th/6th grade team is relying on the 3rd/4th grade player to be part of their regular roster throughout the entire season the younger player is restricted to playing for that team (may not fill in on another 5th/6th grade team)
- d. Ineligible/illegal Player: A player playing on more than one team of the same age group, e.g. 5th/6th and 5th/6th, or playing on a younger team, e.g. a 7th/8th grade player playing on a 5th/6th grade team, is strictly prohibited.
 - i. Any team who plays a player from another team of the same age group or an older age group:
 1. Forfeits the game(s)

9. RECORD KEEPING

- a. WINNING team is to report game score to Jess Hisel via league website (SWCL.org), tie game home team to report. *Coaches should verify final score and sign opponent's book at end of the game.*
- b. 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.
- c. End of Year Record: All teams should verify end of year record with Vice President of Baseball Operations, remember unreported games are double forfeit.
- d. Open Book: Teams participating in the SWCL Tournament need to bring their full set of all SWCL league games and present them to the coach (or record keeper) of the opposing team, if requested.

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- 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.

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. The plate umpire should wear a mask, chest protector and shin guards.
 - 3. The home team is responsible for providing the home plate and base umpires.
 - 4. The home plate umpire is to print his/her name to each 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 (if more than 2 teams have same win/loss record, or teams did not play each other)
 - 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. 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.
 - 1. When the seeds are equal e.g., Southern Division seed 4 and Northern Division seed 4 are matched to play, the Southern Division teams will be home during even years and Northern Division will be home during odd years.
 - 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. Games will be played 6 innings, unless the 10 run rule applies. Rainouts are to be completed.
- f. Tie score: If the game is tied after 6 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 7th inning.
- g. The last out will continue to be placed on 2nd base until an extra inning ends without a tie.
- h. TEAMS MUST BAT AT LEAST 10 PLAYERS, TAKE AN OUT FOR EACH PLAYER LESS THAN 10. NO PENALTY FOR LEGITIMATE INJURY DURING GAME.**
- i. Compensation from SWCL: The host site will receive \$100 per game beginning Thursday.
- j. Pitcher can pitch a maximum of 8 innings per day.**