

7th & 8th Grade SWCL Youth Baseball Rules
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.
 - (1) Portable Mounds can be used if both coaches agree to use them. **Homemade mounds will not be allowed.**

2) EQUIPMENT

- a)** Helmets
 - (1) When outside the dugout, all members of the batting team must wear a helmet.
 - (2) 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
 - (1) Throat guard, mask, chest protector, cup, and helmet are required equipment for catchers.
- c)** Footwear
 - (1) 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.
 - (3) Maximum of 2 1/4" diameter. (ILLEGAL STARTING 2021)
 - (4) All bats may not exceed 34 inches in length.
 - (5) Wood bats must be made of a single piece of wood.
 - (6) May not exceed 36 inches in length.
 - (7) Handles may be roughened or wound with tape not more than 18 inches from the handle end.
 - (a) **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.
 - (b) Third Offense: TEAM IS BANNED FROM LEAGUE TOURNAMENT PLAY.
 - (8) ****All offenses must be reported to League Commissioner.**
- e)** Balls
 - (1) Must be Little League, Senior League or Babe Ruth approved.
 - (2) Balls marked or stamped "Official League" are not acceptable.
 - (3) The home team is responsible for providing one new ball and one good spare.
- f)** Player Number
 - (1) All players must have a number on their uniform/shirt.

3) GAME

- a)** 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.
 - (1) **2-hour time limit.**
 - (2) No **NEW** inning may start after 2 hours from start of the game.
 - (3) The **NEW** inning starts immediately after last out of previous inning. Once an inning has started the inning must be completed if the home team is behind.
 - (4) Games tied after time limit is imposed are recorded as a tie.
- b)** If a game ends early due to darkness or weather, the game is considered complete if 4 1/2 innings are complete and the home team is ahead, or 5 innings are complete, and the visiting team is ahead.
- c)** 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.*
- d)** Number of players allowed on defense:

- (1) 9 players (the team may start with 8 players but forfeits with less than 8 players).
- (2) 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.

e) Batting the bench: Coaches have options – See Section 5 Substitution

f) Infield Fly: Infield fly will be called with runners on first and second or bases loaded with less than two outs.

g) Rescheduling of Game

- (1) Both teams must make an effort to reschedule the game.
- (2) Games not completed by end of season will be scored as a tie.
- (3) 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.

h) The umpire's decision is final – no protesting of the game.

4) RUNNER

a) Sliding

- (1) Runners must slide or avoid contact when there is a play at any base and home plate, or he will be called out.
- (2) A play is defined as the defender having control of the ball and attempting to tag the runner out.
- (3) If the defender does not have control of the ball, the runner must still avoid MALICIOUS contact.
- (4) *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

- (1) **HOME BASE IS OPEN IN ALL LIVE BALL SITUATIONS**
- (2) A runner may steal home while the pitcher is in possession of the ball and preparing to make a pitch.
- (3) The pitch does not have to be a pass ball or wild pitch e.g., a squeeze play is legal.
- (4) 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.
- (5) A runner may attempt to take home if the catcher overthrows the pitcher.

5) BATTER

a) Dropped 3rd Strike

- (1) The batter may attempt to advance to 1st base on a dropped third strike if: 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) Bunting is allowed.

c) Slashing is not permitted.

- (1) a batter may not show bunt, pull back and swing at a pitch.
- (2) If the batter shows bunt and then attempts to swing the ump shall immediately call "dead ball" and issue a strike.
- (3) If the same or another player slashes, the umpire shall immediately call "dead ball" and the batter will be out.

d) The batter must call time if he needs to talk to his coach.

e) **SUBSTITUTION ***No Designated Hitters (DH)*****

f) Batting the Bench:

- (1) Coaches have the option of batting their bench.
- (2) The batting order must remain the same for the entire game.
- (3) Players can substitute freely without the need to report.
- (4) No out is recorded for legitimately injured player not batting when you bat the bench.

g) Teams Choosing to Bat 9 Players and Substitute:

- (1) Starters: May reenter the game twice but must be in the same batting order.
- (2) Substitutions: May reenter the game once but must be in the same batting order.
- (3) 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.

h) Reporting:

- (1) 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.

- i) Courtesy runner:**
 - (1) Courtesy runner(s) may be used for the player(s) pitching and/or catching the previous half inning.
 - (2) When there are one or two outs.
 - (3) The player making the last out must be the courtesy runner.
 - (4) A pitcher and/or catcher receiving a courtesy runner must return in the following half inning as the pitcher or catcher.

6) PITCHER

- a)** Pitchers are limited to 5 warm up pitches between innings.
- b)** A player can pitch no more than 4 innings in a game.
 - (1) One pitch to a batter is considered an inning.
- c)** Non-consecutive Innings:
 - (1) 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.
- d)** A pitcher hitting three batters in a game must be removed and may not return as the pitcher.
- e)** No balks: The umpire will call a “no pitch” if a pitcher commits a balk.
 - (1) 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.
 - (2) Balk warning, no advancement.
- f)** A pitcher does not have to pitch to the batter for an intentional walk. The coach, pitcher, or catcher may request a walk.
- g)** Catchers cannot come into pitch unless there is an injury.
 - (1) 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.
- h)** A pitcher may wear sunglasses (unless obvious glare affects umpires’ vision)

7) PLAYER ELGIBILITY

- a)** Each team can have a maximum of 2 players from outside the team’s community or school district.
- b)** Rosters need to be completed and submitted to Baseball VP by determined date.
 - (1) Roster forms can be found on the SWCL website. Forms need to include players full name, jersey number, grade completed, school attended, shirt size.
 - (2) Any alterations to rosters must be submitted to the Baseball VP prior to game.
- c)** Players are only allowed to play on one team in each division (3/4,5/6,7/8) Players are not allowed to play both softball and baseball.
- d)** Players are not prohibited from playing in other organized youth baseball programs e.g., Cal Ripken.
- e)** 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.
 - (1) Game(s) will be forfeited.

8) RECORD KEEPING

- a)** Teams must keep complete books for each game. *Coaches must verify final score and sign opponent’s book.*
- b)** Records need to include (at minimum):
 - (1) Players’ full name
 - (2) Players’ uniform number
 - (3) Number of runs scored by each team.
 - (4) Number of innings each pitcher pitched.
- c)** 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.
- d)** Teams participating in the SWCL Tournament need to be able to produce 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.

9) OFFICIATING

- a)** Umpire Qualifications
 - (1) League Games
 - (a) The home plate and base umpires must be high school age (at least 15 years old).

- (b) The home team is responsible for providing the home plate and base umpires.
- (c) Plate umpire is required to wear shin guards, chest protector, and face mask.
- (d) Plate umpire is to print name on both team score books.

10) SWCL League Tournament

- a)** Players must have played in at least 50% of their teams SWCL games during the SWCL regular season to participate in the SWCL Tournament.
 - (1) 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.
- b)** The SWCL Board will make the final decision whether a player is eligible.
- c)** Tie breaker for seeding teams with same win/loss record.
 - (1) Head-to-head
 - (2) Least runs given up per game (if more that 2 teams have same win/loss record)
 - (3) Record against higher seeded teams
 - (4) By flip of a coin
- d)** The location of games
 - (1) Monday through Wednesday at the higher seed location.
 - (2) When the seeds are equal, western division is home during even years, eastern division in odd years.
 - (3) Thursday Night Winners bracket will be played at the host site. Losers Bracket will be played at the higher seed location.
 - (4) All games will be played at the host site Friday and Saturday.
- e)** Home team
 - (1) The higher seed will be home Monday through Wednesday.
 - (2) Thursday, Friday, and Saturday the home team will be determined by the flip of a coin.
- f)** **Must bat at least 9 players.** (Take an out for missing 9th batter) no penalty for legitimate injury during game.
- g)** Balls: Must be Little League, Senior League, Babe Ruth or NFHS approved.
 - (1) Monday through Wednesday the home team is responsible for providing one new ball and one good spare.
 - (2) Thursday, Friday, and Saturday the tournament host will provide one new and two good spares for each game.
- h)** Games do not have a time limit.
 - (1) Games will be completed to 7 innings if rain delay/rainout. (unless 10 run rule applies)
- i)** If the game is tied after 6 innings of play.
 - (1) 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 and any necessary innings.
 - (2) The last out will continue to be placed on 2nd base until an extra inning ends without a tie.
- j)** Compensation from SWCL: The host site will receive \$120 per game starting Thursday.
 - (1) The home plate umpire at the host site must be WIAA Certified Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.
- k)** Pitchers may pitch a maximum of 8 innings per day.
 - (1) **NO BALK WARNING IN TOURNAMENT GAMES.**