

ROOKIE LEAGUE BASEBALL - WMLL Fall Ball Local Rules

(Note: Clarifications / adjustments to last year's Fall Ball Local Rules are indicated with blue text)

All national "minor" division Little League rules in current season rule book apply to the WMLL Rookie Fall League unless specifically changed in these local rules, or by past practice. The WMLL Safety Plan contains further regulations which will be enforced as local rules.

Fall Ball is part of Little League's Training and Development Program. It is intended to provide additional opportunity for all players to hone skills and try new positions. Game scores are the least important part of Fall Ball. Coaches are encouraged to "ratchet it down a notch" to adhere to the purpose of Fall Ball. Coaches not adhering to this philosophy will not be asked back in the future.

Home Team. The home team occupies the first base dugout. The home team will provide two new regulation baseballs, a concession stand volunteer worker, a volunteer base umpire, and a post game field crew member to replace the tarps.

Visiting Team. The visiting team occupies the third base dugout and is responsible for operating the scoreboard. The visiting team is also responsible for providing a volunteer base umpire, and a post game field crew member to replace the tarps.

Note: WMLL will provide the home plate umpire. Volunteer umpires should work at first & third base & should change positions every inning or two.

Base Coaches. Adults may be base coaches when their team is at bat. All coaches, if not coaching a base, must stay within three feet of the dugout entrance.

Base on Balls and Hit Batsman. There will be no walks, intentional or unintentional, or hit batsmen allowed in this league. *Catcher interference will be enforced.*

Bat Throwing. A player will receive one warning each game for inappropriately throwing the bat. For any subsequent instance of throwing the bat in that same game the player will be called out. The warning and out can be on the same at bat. If a hitter is called out for throwing the bat, the ball will be dead and any runners must return to the base which he/she occupied prior to the pitch. Note: this rule applies to accidental bat throwing while or after swinging at a pitch, not to bat throwing in anger or protest.

Batting Cages and Surrounding Spaces. Batting cages are for pregame practice for Major, Junior and Senior league teams. Rookie and Minor league teams can use the batting cages but must vacate them if asked to do so by an older age team, which will be playing a game from the Major, Junior or Senior leagues. Soft toss and other pre-game batting practice can take place only in a batting cage or soft-toss station.

Batting Order. All players present must be in the batting order. If a player is unable to continue play there will be no penalty to the offensive team when that individual is scheduled to bat. If able, the player can reenter the batting order without penalty.

Coaches in the Field of Play. For the first two calendar weeks of the season only, the defensive team may station one coach on the outfield grass for instructional purposes.

Courtesy Runner. A courtesy runner may be used for the catcher at any time, but is mandatory when there are two outs. This runner will be the individual who made the last out.

Defensive Positions. Each team shall field ten players when on defense. Four of those players must be outfielders and take positions on the outfield grass.

Dugouts. Only uniformed players, the manager, one coach and one scorekeeper are permitted on the bench. The manager should require all others to leave the dugout. Players must stay in the playing area or on the bench during the game unless the manager permits them to leave. During a game, the only individuals allowed outside of the dugout are the defense team, the batter, base runners, manager and base coaches. Each team must clean up their respective dugout and area after a game or practice.

Forfeits for Lack of Players. If a team does not have seven players to participate in a game, that team will forfeit the game. A team has fifteen minutes from the scheduled starting time to obtain seven players before a forfeit is declared. When both teams have less than seven players, a double forfeit occurs. If a team expects to be short of players, the team manager should obtain replacement players as described in the "Replacement Players" section below. If a team forfeits a game, the game will not be replayed.

Inning & Time Limits: All Fall Ball games are limited to 6-innings with two types of time limits. There also is a 9 PM curfew Sunday thru Thursday that supersedes both time limits. Time-limited games can end in a tie & will be considered a complete game regardless of the number of innings played. The umpires will enforce the scheduled starting time and the time limits for each league.

- No new inning may begin after the "**no new inning" time limit** of 1 hour, 20 minutes is reached. An inning starts when the last out of the prior inning is made. If an inning starts prior to the "no new inning" time limit expiring, that inning may be completed unless the game ends because the home team takes the lead or the "hard" time limit is reached.
- When the "**hard" time limit** is reached (10 minutes after the "No New Inning" Time Limit), the game ends immediately after the current batter finishes their at bat. When this occurs, the outcome is determined by the score at the end of the last complete inning, unless the home team is at bat & has tied the game during their at-bat (after being behind at the end of the last complete inning). In this case the game ends in a tie.
- During weeks 1-3, the **first weekday game on the Minor Field** (except for Major League softball) must end by 5:50 PM.

Please begin the initial game of the day on time unless the field is not playable or the umpires are not present. The umpires will enforce the scheduled starting time and the time limits for each league. Insist that your players hustle on and off the field between offense and defense so that the game proceeds quickly. The official game starting time and ending time, when the last out in the last inning is made, should be recorded on the scorecard. The first pitch of a half inning should be delivered not longer than 90 seconds after the third out of the previous half inning to keep the game moving along .

Helmets. For league games, helmets with face masks will be used by batters, youth base coaches and runners. The home and visiting managers will be responsible for getting a set of six helmets for each game from the coaches mailbox room in the new storage building and returning them after the last game of the day.

Infield Fly. There will be no infield fly rule in this league.

Line up Cards. Line up cards are to be exchanged between the managers at the beginning of the game to indicate the starting players, all eligible substitutes, absent and injured players and players who are being disciplined by not participating.

Maximum Number of Runs per Inning. A batting team has a 7 run maximum per inning, and there is no maximum to the number of hitters who may bat before the 7th run is scored. Any half inning which does not end by national rule will end as soon as the 7th run is scored.

Pitchers Position. When the pitch is delivered the player in the pitcher's position must have at least one foot on the dirt area of the pitcher' mound, forward of the point where the ball leaves the machine. At the conclusion of a play, the ball becomes dead and base runners cannot advance when secured in the pitcher's hand.

Pitching Machine. The pitching machine and cord are in play. However, if a batted ball becomes lodged under the machine so as to be unplayable, the umpire shall have the discretion to call a replay. If a thrown ball becomes lodged in or under the machine as to be unplayable, the ball shall be declared dead and the base runners will be awarded the base to which they were heading when the ball was declared dead. The umpire may call a "no pitch" when the machine obviously malfunctions. An obvious malfunction is defined as a ball which hits the ground before reaching the dirt area around the batter's box. If a player swings at such a pitch before "no pitch" is called, it will be considered a legal pitch. An adult coach of the offensive team is required to operate the pitching machine.

Pitching – Time Limit Considerations. The first pitch of a half inning should be delivered not longer than 90 seconds after the third out of the previous half inning to keep the game moving along .

Playing Time. Each player shall be in the batting order. Each player shall play at least four innings defensively, and one of those defensive innings must be at the position of pitcher, catcher, or one of the infield positions, and one must be in the outfield. Minimum defensive innings in this rule must be full half innings.

Playing Time Rule Exceptions. The only exceptions to the playing time rule will be:

1. If a player misses practices and/or games without a valid reason, the coach may decide to reduce the number of innings played in the field for the next game by a minimum of one inning. Absences due to family vacations should not affect playing time.
2. If a player arrives late for a game, the manager can decide to reduce the number of innings at his/her discretion.
3. If a player is being disciplined, a manager must inform the opposing manager prior to the game or immediately after an incident which requires removal, for the participation rule to be satisfied. The player who is being disciplined should be advised of why he/she is not participating. If the discipline results in the player being "docked" more than one inning below the league minimum, the coach must inform the League Coordinator in writing of the discipline and the cause. This method of disciplining should be used with reasonable discretion.
4. If a game is shortened because of the time limit, inclement weather or run limit, all players will not be required to satisfy the playing rule.
5. If an eligible player does not fulfill the participation rule, that player must be a starter in the team's next game and play the whole game. Any manager who violates this rule will be subject to dismissal by the league's Baseball Operation Committee.

Pre-game Practices. Teams may warm-up prior to games in appropriately designated areas. Players should be careful when warming-up so other individuals are not injured. [Players are not permitted to enter Ch 15 property for any reason at any time. Coaches & other adults are allowed on Ch 15 property only to retrieve balls. Time permitting, the home team may conduct infield practice for eight minutes or the time available until the official start time, whichever is less. Time permitting means that the infield practice cannot interfere with the game's official start time. All players present \(not just the starting infielders\) should participate in the infield practice.](#)

Replacement Players. A team which anticipates forfeiting due to a lack of players may use other WMLL registered [seven](#) or eight-year-old player(s) from other teams in the Rookie Lg to field a team so that a game can be played, even though the game will still be considered a forfeit. The coach of the team forfeiting the game must inform the opposing coach before the game starts. The replacement player(s) must be last in the batting order. If an unanticipated roster player shows up for the game bringing the total of the regular roster players to ten or more, the replacement player(s) may not be used unless the game is a forfeit.

Roster Maintenance. Each team must maintain a roster of at least ten players. If a player roster drops below ten due to injuries and/or lengthy vacations (more than two weeks), a replacement will be selected from the waiting list (if there is a waiting list) by contacting the league coordinator.

Sliding. On close plays at 2nd base, 3rd base or home plate, the runner is required to slide or to avoid collision with a defensive player who has the ball while located within the batter's box area or within the vicinity of another base. For a non-sliding runner to be automatically out all three of the following must be true: 1) There was contact between the non-sliding runner and a defensive player; 2) At the time of the contact the defensive player above had possession of the ball; and 3) At the time of the contact the defensive player above was within the batter's box area or within the vicinity of another base. If a contact is made and the runner did not slide, the umpire shall call the runner out for offensive interference. A defensive player without the ball who impedes a runner, whether intentional or unintentional, or who fakes a tag will be penalized for defensive obstruction. The umpire will award the runner the base or bases they are attempting to reach. When a runner initiates malicious contact with any fielder, with or without the ball, in or out of the baseline, the umpire shall eject the runner for the game. The runner has the primary responsibility to avoid a collision with the defensive player.

Sportsmanship. Coaches, parents, players, and all spectators should adhere to a high level of sportsmanship. The league will not tolerate: harassment of umpires; verbal or physical altercations involving coaches, players, or spectators; hazing; or negative interactions between or among coaches, spectators, and players, including organized chanting or “cheering” directed at opposing teams or players. Instances of unsportsmanlike behavior reported to the Board of Directors will be investigated by the President and may result in discipline, including suspensions. See also rule headed “Umpires.”

Stealing. No base stealing is permitted.

Strike Zone. The strike zone is larger than the standard. The width shall be the width of the plate plus the width of a baseball on both the inside and outside corners (ie a total width of 23 inches). The height shall be from the armpits to the bottom of the batter’s knees. The intent of a larger strike zone is to get hitters to become more aggressive and to speed the game along.

Umpires. The umpires will not tolerate any abusive language, equipment throwing or other violent or unsportsmanlike behavior by coaches, players or fans. Any person guilty of participating in these actions will be warned once by the umpires. Second violation will result in ejection from the game and removal from the WMLL field areas. In severe instances the offending party will be immediately ejected. The umpire will report such ejections to the umpire coordinator who will notify the Baseball Operations Committee Chairperson. Unsportsmanlike behavior which results in a game ejection carries with it another one game suspension. For a second game ejection there will be an automatic three game suspension and for a third game suspension, the individual will receive a season ending suspension.

Coaches, players, and spectators must accept and respect Umpire decisions. They should refrain from questioning “judgment” calls and must avoid actions which tend to undermine umpire authority (for example, repeatedly asking “where was that” for a pitch called a ball, or registering dissatisfaction by loudly telling an umpire to “ask your partner for help” when a close play goes against their team). Coaches who feel an individual umpire is lacking in skills or knowledge should not offer instruction or advice, but should report their concern to the League Coordinator or Umpire Coordinator.

1. To question an umpire’s ruling only one coach is to represent the team. He/she must request a time out and calmly consult with the umpire who made the call in question. A coach must not run out of the dugout or yell objections. The coach should provide the players and fans with an exemplary model of sportsmanship.
2. During all consultations with umpires about their rulings, the manager must remain in foul territory. To check on an injured player’s status, the coach may be on the playing field after an umpire requests their assistance.

Uniforms. Players must be in full uniform (white pants) to be eligible to play in a game. Umpires will be instructed to strictly enforce this rule. Replacement players may wear their team uniform if no regular team uniforms are available.

Weather.

1. If inclement weather has occurred, the field manager will determine if and when the field is in playable condition. A sign in the parking lot and a message on the answering machine (274-6556) will indicate when games are postponed because of weather. The WMLL website (www.wml.org) will also be updated.
2. If a field is not playable at game time, but might be playable in a short period of time, the game will be delayed no more than fifteen minutes. The conditions will be checked after fifteen minutes and, if the field is still unplayable, the game will be canceled and rescheduled by the coordinator. Do not ask for or expect preferential treatment in the rescheduling of games.
3. If a rain / lightning / lighting failure delay occurs after a game has started the first fifteen minutes of the total delay time does not count as part of the game time limit. When the game has been delayed for forty-five minutes or more, the game will be considered either a suspended contest or an officially completed contest depending on the inning and the score.
4. When lightning is visible, the Board of Director(s) / umpires present will suspend the game for thirty minutes and all coaches, players, spectators and umpires will take immediate shelter in the dugouts, near the concession stand, picnic porch, or in private vehicles to insure their safety. If lightning continues such that the restart of the

game will be delayed by 45 minutes or more, the game will be called and rescheduled in accordance with regular rain out procedures.

5. A game called after completion of one inning and before it is an official completed contest will be considered a suspended game. A suspended game shall be resumed at the exact point of suspension. The line ups and batting order of the teams shall be the same as the moment of suspension. If player(s) present originally are absent when the suspended game is resumed their spots in the batting order will be skipped over with no penalty. Players absent originally, but present when the game is resumed will be added to the end of the batting order. Prior to leaving the field of play, the coaches will verify the line ups, score and exact point at which play has been stopped i.e. outs, balls and strikes batter, runners score, etc. Any dispute should be referred to the league coordinator and/or Baseball Operations Committee for resolution. The league coordinator shall attempt to reschedule the suspended game at the time when the two teams will be playing each other again. The suspended game will be played prior to the regulation game or another suspended game. All pitching regulations will be determined by the week during which the suspended game is being resumed.
6. These rules will not restrict the Board of Director(s) present at the field from immediately canceling play at WMLL fields in order to insure the appropriate safety of coaches, players, spectators, umpires and concession workers.