

## West Madison Little League - Spring/Summer 2022

# MINOR LEAGUE SOFTBALL - COMPLETE LOCAL RULES

*These rules consist of three equally important sections:  
(1) WMLL Universal Local Rules, (2) WMLL Minor League softball Local Rules, &(3) the WMLL Code of Conduct*

## UNIVERSAL LOCAL RULES (All Baseball & Softball Leagues)

### PREGAME / POSTGAME RESPONSIBILITIES

**DUGOUT ASSIGNMENTS:** The home team occupies the first base dugout & the visiting team occupies the third base dugout.

**GAME BALLS:** The home team must provide two new regulation balls supplied by WMLL.

**SCOREBOARD VOLUNTEER:** A volunteer from one of the teams must be found to operate the scoreboard.

- **If playing in the first/last game of the day:** The volunteer must get/return the scoreboard controller from/to the concession stand & turn on/off the scoreboard.

**UNIFORMS:** Coaches must make sure that their players are properly dressed & equipped. Players must be in full uniform to be eligible to play in a game. Players may not wear jewelry of any kind unless it is for medical identification purposes.

**FIELD PREP:** Both teams' coaching staffs must make sure that the field is safe, hazard-free & ready for play – tarps are removed, bases are in place & ready, and, if needed, the pitching machine is set-up & ready. ***See the addendum at the end of these rules for detailed instructions.***

**GAME START & END TIMES:** The official start time of the initial game of the day will be the scheduled start time regardless of the time of the first pitch (unless the delay is weather-related, or the umpires are not present). Games after the initial game of the day must start ten minutes after the final out of the previous game or the scheduled start time, whichever is later.

- The umpires will enforce the scheduled starting time and the time limits for each league.
- The umpires must record the official game start time & end time (time of the final out) on the umpire card.

**POST GAME CLEAN-UP:** After every game, both teams must clean up their respective dugout areas.

**FIELD CLOSING:** If playing in the last game of the day, both teams' coaching staffs must replace both tarps, remove the bases & store them in the dugouts, & insert the "base plugs". ***See the addendum at the end of these rules for detailed instructions.***

### PREGAME WARMUPS

**OFF-FIELD WARMUPS:** Teams may warmup on the north side of the cages and in the grass area near the Major Field, but NOT in the grass area between the batting cages and the parking lot. 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.

**BATTING PRACTICE:** Pregame batting practice & bat swinging can take place only in a batting cage or soft toss station as follows:

- **Batting Cages:** Teams can use a batting cage for thirty minutes beginning forty minutes prior to the game. Each team can use only one of the cages.
- **Soft Toss Stations:** Teams may use a soft toss station for pregame batting practice during the allotted Batting Cage time. Only whiffle balls, tennis balls, or other soft surface balls are permitted for soft toss.

**INFIELD PRACTICE:** 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.

- **Senior Field Option:** If a game on the Senior Field is the only game of the day or the last game on a Saturday or Sunday, both teams may take infield practice with head coach agreement.
- **Rookie Baseball Option:** Both teams may take infield practice for six minutes - with the visiting team taking it first, followed by the home team (with only non-starting defensive players returning to the dugout). If players are used as catchers, they shall wear a facemask. The desire is to start the game by the official start time. However, if infield practice is not completed by the official start time, it does not extend the original game end time. The original game end time is 90 minutes from (a) the scheduled start time or (b) ten minutes after the final out of the previous game, whichever is later

**PITCHER WARM-UP:** Pitchers warming up prior to or during the game must do so in each field's designated area. Pitchers must throw from the area closest to the dugout with catchers located farthest away from the dugout when an official bullpen is not available (not applicable for Rookie League teams).

## LINE-UP REQUIREMENTS & REPLACEMENT PLAYERS

**LINE UP CARDS.** Head coaches must exchange line up cards at the beginning of the game. Line up cards must indicate the starting players, all eligible substitutes, absent and injured players and players who are being disciplined by not participating. The head coaches must also provide one another with a list of each player on their team who pitched in the past week along with the dates and number of pitches thrown in each outing (not applicable for Rookie League teams).

**OFFENSIVE BATTING REQUIREMENTS:** Every player in attendance must be in the batting order.

- **Late Arrivals:** Players not present for the game's first pitch, even if their arrival is anticipated, must be listed at the bottom of the batting order. If an absent player's batting order spot is reached before they arrive, there is no penalty and they remain in the same position in the batting order.
- **Changes in Player Availability:** 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. Players not present for the game's first pitch, even if their arrival is anticipated, must be listed at the bottom of the batting order, after call-ups if there are any.

**PLAYER SHORTAGES / REPLACEMENT PLAYERS:** If a team expects to be short of players for a game, the head coach should obtain replacement players to add to the roster for that game, unless the team is short on players due to a scheduled school event in May or June. If this occurs, the head coach should contact the league coordinator so that the game can be rescheduled.

- Coaches should contact potential replacement players directly. *WMLL's goal is to allow as many players as practical the opportunity of play up. Consequently, teams should try not to use the same call up more than two times during the season.*
- A team using a replacement player must notify the opposing team coach and the League Coordinator of his/her use.
- If unanticipated roster player(s) show up bringing the total of regular roster players to nine or more, the replacement player(s) should still play, but may play defensively the league minimum number of innings.
- **Baseball:** Except in the Rookie League, replacement players must be players from the league below the level of the team short on players. In the Rookie League replacement players come from other Rookie League teams.
  - Replacement players may not pitch and must bat last in the batting order
- **Softball:** Except in the Rookie League, whenever possible replacement players should be players from the league below the level of the team short on players. In the Rookie League replacement players come from other Rookie League teams. If replacement players cannot be found from the league below, replacement players from other teams in the same league may be used – this is not preferred, but is a much better option than a forfeited game.
  - Replacement players should not pitch and must bat last in the batting order. If a team is in dire need of pitching, a replacement player may pitch with the approval of the league coordinator or VP-softball.

## COACH & PLAYER MOVEMENTS + TIME OUTS

**DUGOUT ENTRY:** Only uniformed players, coaches, and a scorekeeper are permitted on the bench. Siblings, parents, friends, etc. are not permitted. The head coach must require all others to leave the dugout. Teams violating this rule will receive one warning. Subsequent violations will result in the team forfeiting the game.

**DUGOUT EXIT:** During a game, the only players allowed outside of the dugout are the defense team, the batter, & base runners. Players must stay in the playing area or on the bench during the game unless the head coach permits them to leave.

**ON-FIELD COACHES:** The offensive team may have adults as base coaches. All other coaches must stay within three feet of the dugout entrance during play.

- **Rookie Baseball:** A coach from the offensive team may also be on the field to operate the pitching machine when their own team is batting. For all regular season games (not including the league playoffs), the defensive team may station one coach on the outfield grass for instructional purposes.
- **Rookie Softball:** A coach from the offensive team may also be on the field to operate the pitching machine &, when there is no backup catcher, place the batting tee & ball during tee batting. The defensive team may station two coaches on the outfield grass for instructional purposes. A coach or adult volunteer acting as "backup catcher" may stand at the backstop to retrieve balls that get by the catcher & assist with the placement of the tee & ball during tee batting.
- **Minor, Major & Junior Softball:** A coach from the offensive team may also be on the field for "spot relief" pitching as needed (according to the league's local rules) when their own team is batting. *Note: During the spring/summer season, the defensive team is not allowed to station one coach on the outfield grass for instructional purposes.*

**OFFENSIVE TIME OUTS:** Each team is limited to one offensive time out per inning, which includes a base coach coming down the line to have a conference with a batter.

**DEFENSIVE TIME OUTS / COACH-PITCHER CONFERENCES:** A coach is permitted two visits per pitcher during a game, and only one

visit per inning prior to having to replace the pitcher. Any defense timeout is considered as a visit.

- During a visit with the pitcher, coaches may confer with any player(s), including the catcher.
- On the third visit to a pitcher in a game or the second visit in an inning, the pitcher must be removed from the mound (not applicable for Rookie League teams).

## GAME PACING

**INNING SWITCH:** Players must hustle on and off the field between offense and defense to allow as many innings as possible to be played within the time limit.

**WARM-UP PITCHES:** Pitchers are limited to a maximum of four warm-up pitches prior to each half inning and a maximum of eight pitches when entering a game. For Rookie League teams, these limits are halved for catcher warmups.

**DELAY OF GAME PENALTY:** The first pitch of a half inning must be delivered not longer than 90 seconds after the third out of the previous half inning. When delays occur, the umpire may call a strike on the batter if the violation is by the offensive team, or a ball on the batter if the violation is by the defensive team. The umpire may continue to call strikes or balls each 20 seconds until the first pitch is delivered.

**COURTESY RUNNER FOR CATCHER:** To allow the catcher to be in gear and ready to play without delay, 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 previous out in the inning. If the previous out was made by the scheduled pitcher the courtesy runner may be the out prior to that.

## POST-SEASON LEAGUE PLAYOFF

**STRUCTURE:** League playoffs are conducted using a single-elimination bracket play format with team seeding based on regular season standings. League coordinators determine when to establish seedings – using final standings or standings on a pre-determined date (e.g., two weeks before the start of the tournament).

**RULES:** All regular-season rules apply except those which are specifically noted in these local rules or communicated by the league coordinator in advance of the playoffs.

**REPLACEMENT PLAYERS:** If a team needs replacement players for a league playoff game, a coach must obtain league coordinator approval before seeking call up players.

**CHAMPIONSHIP GAME:** The championship games will be played without time limit, although the game may be called for darkness or weather conditions. Winning players will receive trophies or medals as determined by the Board of Directors.

## WEATHER, LIGHT & OTHER SAFETY CONDITIONS

All determinations of field, light, weather & other conditions that could affect player, spectator, umpire, coach or concession worker safety should be made together by the head coaches & umpires at each playing field unless a Board member is present and has instructed the head coaches & umpires otherwise. These determinations should always be made erring on the side of safety.

**DELAYING GAMES DUE TO RAIN, LIGHTNING OR DARKNESS/LIGHTING FAILURE:** 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. If a delay occurs after a game has begun, the first fifteen minutes of the total delay time do not count as part of the game time limit.

**LIGHTNING:** When lightning is visible, the game will be suspended for thirty minutes and all coaches, players, spectators and umpires must take immediate shelter in the dugouts, near the concession stand or in private vehicles to ensure their safety.

**CALLING GAMES DUE TO RAIN, LIGHTNING OR DARKNESS/LIGHTING FAILURE:** When a game has been delayed for forty-five minutes, the game will be called.

- A game called before the completion of one inning will be rescheduled as a new game.
- A game called after 4 innings have been completed (3 ½ innings if home team is leading) is an official completed contest.
  - *For Junior & Senior Lg baseball, an official contest is after the completion of 5 innings (4 ½ innings if home team is leading)*
- A game called after the 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.
  - *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 for resolution.*

### **Resuming a Suspended Game:**

- *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.*

- *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.*
- *All pitching regulations will be determined by the week during which the suspended game is being resumed (not applicable for Rookie League teams).*

**IMMEDIATE CANCELLATIONS:** These rules will not restrict the head coaches, umpires, and/or any Board member present at the field from immediately canceling play in order to ensure the safety of players, spectators, umpires, coaches and concession workers.

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## Addendum: OPENING & CLOSING WMLL FIELDS

### OPENING A FIELD

**FIELD INSPECTION:** Walk the field & dugouts to make sure that they are safe & hazard-free. Report any items needing attention to your league coordinator or a ground crew member. If safety issues are present, do NOT use the field until repairs are made or restrict activities to safe areas of the field.

**TARPS:** Remove the tarps from the mound and home plate area, fold them up, and put the tarps and stakes or weights on the storage cart. *Note: Please do not leave tarps or weights on the grass as it can cause the grass to get damaged & burned.*

**CART:** Roll the cart to its proper storage location - behind the 1B dugout on the Minor & Senior Fields & behind the 3B dugout on the Battista (Major) Field.

**BASES:** Take the bases from the dugout to the base locations. Remove the base plugs and place the bases in the holes. Put the base plugs in the dugout on top of the helmet box.

**SCOREBOARD & CONTROLLER:** If using the scoreboard, get the scoreboard controller from the concession stand, & on the Minor & Battista Fields turn on the scoreboard via the switch on scoreboard support leg.

### CLOSING A FIELD *(after the last game of the day or a game cut short due to weather)*

**BASES:** Take the base plugs from the dugout to the base locations. Remove the bases and place the base plugs in the holes. Put the bases in the dugout. *Note: It is important to replace the plugs so the infield can be groomed without plugging/losing the holes.*

**TARPS:** Cover the mound and home plate area with the correct tarp (with the seam/dirty-side down) so that only the dirt is covered, then secure the tarp & as follows.

- **Battista & Senior Fields:** Place pegs in every other hole of both tarps.
- **Minor Field:** Place black weights on the home plate tarp around its perimeter. The mound tarp is weighted internally and does not need supplemental weights.

*Note: Tarps must be put down at the end of the day even if no rain is forecasted. Tarps are designed to hold moisture in the dirt as much as to keep rain out. Mounds & home plate areas left uncovered overnight quickly become rock hard.*

**CART:** Move the cart to its proper storage location - behind the 1B dugout on the Minor & Senior Fields & behind the 3B dugout on the Battista (Major) Field.

**SCOREBOARD & CONTROLLER:** If the scoreboard was used, return the scoreboard controller to the concession stand & on the Minor & Battista Fields turn off the scoreboard via the switch on scoreboard leg.

### PITCHING MACHINE

**STORAGE:** To use a pitching machine, get it from the equipment room before the game & return it afterwards (unless you are certain that there is a game immediately after yours that also needs to use it.)

**POWER SUPPLY:** Connect the pitching machine directly to the in-ground outlet behind the pitcher's mound (no extension cord is needed).

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### SOFTBALL PITCHING RUBBER

**STORAGE:** The softball pitching rubber, spikes & hammer are stored in the first base dugout of the Minor Field near the helmet box. If missing, check for a backup in the equipment room (formerly coach's mailroom).

**PLACEMENT:** Position the pitching rubber & secure it with the spikes as follows: Minor Softball = 35', Major Softball = 40' & Junior/Senior Softball = 43'. After the game, please return the rubber to the proper storage location (unless you are certain that there is a game immediately after yours that also needs to use it.)

Note: On the Minor Field these distances will be marked with short paint lines.

## MINOR LEAGUE SOFTBALL LOCAL RULES

All national Little League rules for Minor League softball, as described in the current season rulebook, apply unless specifically changed in these local rules, WMLL Universal Local Rules, the WMLL Code of Conduct, or by past WMLL custom.

### BASICS

**BALL:** A 11-inch (hard) softball will be used.

**PITCHING & BASE DISTANCES:** Pitching will be from 35 feet with the bases 60 feet apart.

### GAME LIMITS + FORFEITS

**INNING & TIME LIMITS:** All regular season games are limited to six innings with no new inning beginning at or after an elapsed playing time of 1-hour & 45-minutes.

- If an inning is underway at the 1-hour & 45-minute mark, the inning should be completed in full unless the home team is ahead after the top half inning of play or takes the lead in the bottom half. In that case, the game is considered completed and the home team wins.
- Tie games will not be continued if six innings have been played or the time limit has been reached.
- A game which ends due to the time limit will be considered a complete game regardless of the number of innings played.

**RUN LIMIT:** A maximum of five runs can be scored per half inning.

**FORFEITS:** Teams forfeit if they have fewer than seven players to participate in a game. A team has fifteen minutes from the schedule starting time to obtain seven players before a forfeit is declared. When both teams have less than seven players, a double forfeit occurs. Teams that start the game with seven players but lose one or more players during the game may continue. When a forfeit takes place, teams are strongly encouraged to scrimmage one another, sharing players as needed. This scrimmage is not an official game & will not count toward league standings.

- *Exception: If a team has less than the required number of players due to a scheduled school event during the regular school year, the game can be rescheduled if the league coordinator is notified 2 weeks prior to the scheduled game.*

### EQUIPMENT & GEAR REQUIREMENTS

Each teams' coaching staff must make sure that their players are properly equipped.

**HELMETS:** Players must have their own helmets. Helmets must include face masks in Rookie & Minor Lg BB & all SB leagues. If a player cannot provide their own helmet, they should contact their League Coordinator to arrange a WMLL helmet loan for the season. All offensive players outside the dugout must wear batting helmets including batters, base runners and player base coaches.

**CLEATS:** If players wear cleats (recommended), they must be rubber (steel cleats are only allowed in the Jr & Sr Leagues.)

**BATS:** Any bat designated as a softball bat may be used.

### DEFENSE

**DEFENSIVE PLAYERS:** Teams can play with up to ten players on defense of which a maximum of six can play in the infield (including the pitcher and catcher). All outfield players must position themselves on the outfield grass. Free defensive substitution of all players is allowed.

**DEFENSIVE PLAYING TIME.** Each player shall play at least four innings defensively. The minimum defensive innings in this rule must be full half innings.

- At least one of the defensive innings must be an infield position (including pitcher and catcher) and one an outfield position.
- Each player's infield & outfield inning must be within the first four innings of the game.
- No player may be kept off the field defensively for two innings, before all players have been kept off for at least one inning.

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

- *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 maximum of one inning. Absences due to family vacations should not affect playing time.*
- *If a player arrives late for a game, the head coach can decide to reduce the number of innings at his/her discretion.*
- *If a player is being disciplined, a head coach must inform the opposing head coach 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.

- 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.
- 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 head coach who violates this rule will be subject to dismissal by the league’s Baseball Operation Committee.

**INFIELD FLY RULE:** There is no infield fly rule.

**DEFENSIVE OBSTRUCTION:** When a defensive player without the ball and not in the act of fielding a batted ball, impedes the progress of a runner or fakes a tag, all runners will be awarded the bases that the umpire judges they would have reached had there been no obstruction. This includes a defensive player who blocks off a base, base line or home plate from a runner while not in possession of the ball.

- *Additional Guidance:* When a defensive player is waiting for the ball, they must give the base runner a straight path to the base or home plate. The defensive player may not block any portion of the base or home plate unless they are holding the ball. If the defensive player blocks the base without the ball, it is defensive obstruction & the runner will be declared safe.

## PITCHING

**PLAYER PITCH:** All pitching will be done by a player-pitcher using an appropriate underhand-style pitching motion until that pitcher throws three balls to a batter. After three balls, a coach from the batting team will take over pitching to that batter with any strikes carrying over from the original count.

**PLAYER PITCH LIMITS:** A player-pitcher may pitch a maximum of two innings in a game. One pitch in an inning will count as a full inning pitched. Pitchers’ innings need not be consecutive. Should a pitcher be removed from pitching, she may return as a pitcher in that game one time, but a pitcher cannot be removed and then re-entered as a pitcher in the same inning or removed and re-entered twice in the same game.

**WALKS:** There are no walks. To create more opportunities for hitting & fielding, coach pitch is used after a player pitcher throws three balls to a batter (with any strikes carrying over from the original count.)

**HIT BATTERS:** During player pitch, a batter will be awarded first base when hit by a pitch unless the ball is called a strike or the umpire decides that the batter should have been able to avoid being hit. Hit batters are not awarded first base during coach pitch. In either case, the ball is dead immediately on hitting the batter.

- To protect both pitcher & hitter confidence, it is recommended that a coach remove a player-pitcher from the game if that pitcher has hit two consecutive or three total batters.

**DROPPED THIRD STRIKE:** Batters are out after being thrown three strikes & may not attempt to advance to first base on a dropped third strike (both during player & coach pitch).

**COACH PITCHING:** A coach from the batting team should be ready to take the mound as soon as a player pitcher throws a third ball to a batter. When pitching, coaches may use any underhand style pitching motion & must wear a mitt for safety reasons. A ball that hits the coach inadvertently remains in play. If a coach intentionally touches a ball in play, the batter is out and runners are returned to their bases.

- For consistency, it is recommended that coaches pitch from 35’ just like player pitchers (moving in a step or two is permissible, but not encouraged) with a velocity & trajectory similar to that of a good player pitcher. Lobbing the ball in a soft toss fashion is NOT beneficial for hitter development & is strongly discouraged.

**RULE MODIFICATIONS DURING COACH “SPOT RELIEF” PITCHING:** During coach pitch, there are no walks, bunting or stealing and first base is not awarded if the batter is hit by a pitch.

**PLAYER PITCHER POSITIONING DURING COACH PITCH:** The defensive player fielding the pitching position must have at least one foot on the artificial turf area around the pitcher’s mound & must position themselves even with the pitching rubber.

## BATTING

**ON DECK WARMUPS:** For safety reasons, on deck warmup swings are prohibited.

**STRIKE ZONE:** To encourage more aggressive hitting and speed the game along, the strike zone used 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 (for a total width of 23-inches) and the height shall be from the batter’s armpits to the bottom of their knees.

**BUNTING:** Bunting is allowed except during coach pitching. *WMLL believes the act of squaring to draw infielders in and then swinging away is dangerous to charging infielders. Coaches should not permit their batters to engage in this action.*

**BAT THROWING:** A player will receive one warning each game for inadvertently throwing the bat. For any subsequent instance of

throwing the bat in that same game, a player that has been warned 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 the base, which he/she occupied prior to the pitch. *Note: this rule applies to accidental bat throwing, not to bat throwing in anger or protest.*

## BASERUNNING

**DOUBLE FIRST BASE:** A double first base is used. The runner must touch the orange portion of the base while the fielder must touch the white portion on the initial play at first base. If there is no play the runner may touch the white base.

**LEAVING BASE:** Runners may leave the base when the ball crosses the plate. Players detected leaving early will be called out.

**SLIDING:** Players are encouraged to slide on ANY close play (even if the defensive player is not yet in possession of the ball). Headfirst sliding when advancing is prohibited with the penalty of the offender being called out.

**STEALING:** Stealing is allowed subject to the following rules:

- **No Stealing During Coach Pitch:** Stealing is only allowed during player pitch.
- **One Base Limit:** Runners may only steal one base for each pitch thrown regardless of any put out attempts or overthrows resulting from the runner's attempt to advance. *This rule is intended to encourage catchers to attempt to throw out runners.*
- **No Stealing Home:** A runner is never allowed to steal home – including on wild pitches, passed balls, pick off throws by the pitcher or catcher & throws by the catcher to catch a stealing runner. The only way a player can make it home is on a batted ball or when a base is awarded to the batter when the bases are loaded.
- **No Stealing on Catcher Throwback:** Runners may not steal during the throw from the catcher back to the pitcher after a pitch - even if an errant throw is not caught by the pitcher.
- **No Stealing on Pitcher/Catcher Pick Off Throws:** Pick off throws by the pitcher & catcher are allowed & runners may not advance on these pickoff attempts - even if an errant throw is not caught by the defensive player at the base.
- **No Stealing When Ahead by 8 or More Runs:** Teams leading by 8 runs or more are not allowed to steal and may only advance bases on batted balls or when forced to do so when a base is awarded to the batter.
- **Stealing Beyond Limits:** If a runner attempts to steal a base beyond what is allowed by rule, the defense has the opportunity to get that runner out. If the runner arrives safely at the next base, they must return to the previous base once the play has ended & the ball is dead.

**BASERUNNING & EXTRA BASES:** Runners may attempt to advance one additional base (including home) on an overthrow to any defensive player (including a baseman, the cutoff, or the pitcher) following a batted ball. If a second overthrow results from an attempt to throw out an advancing runner, the runners may not advance again.

- *Note: There are no or rules or guidelines that limit the number of bases that runners (including the batter) can take on hits to the infield or outfield, on fielding errors, or on hits to unmanned outfield positions.*

**OFFENSIVE INTERFERENCE BY RUNNER:** When a runner interferes with a defensive player in the act of fielding a batted ball or is hit by a fair ball in fair territory, the runner will be called out & the ball dead. If a runner initiates malicious contact with any fielder, with or without the ball, in or out of the baseline, the umpire will eject the runner for the game.

**COLLISION AVOIDANCE RULE:** On a close play at second base, third base or home plate, the runner is required to either slide or avoid contact with a defensive player in possession of the ball waiting to make a tag. If contact is made in this situation & the runner did not slide, the runner will be called out & the ball dead.

Additional guidance:

- *If a defensive player is blocking the base/plate without the ball, it is defensive obstruction (regardless if contact was made or not) & the runner is safe.*
- *If a defensive player is blocking the base/plate with the ball and the runner either slides or doesn't slide but avoids contact with the defensive player, it is neither defensive obstruction nor an automatic out & the umpire must decide if the runner was safe or out.*
- *For a runner to be called out due to the collision avoidance rule, all three of the following must be true:*
  - 1) *There was contact between the non-sliding runner and the defensive player.*
  - 2) *At the time of contact the defensive player had possession of the ball.*
  - 3) *At the time of contact the defensive player was within the vicinity of a base or home plate.*
  - 4) *the defensive player was within the batter's box area or within the vicinity of another base.*
- *Coaches are encouraged to teach their players to slide on ANY close play (even if the defensive player is not yet in possession of the ball).*

**PLAY STOPPAGE:** Once the pitcher has the ball within the artificial turf / mound area, runners must immediately return to the last base touched or break to the next base. Failure of a runner to immediately return to the base or break to the next base will result in the umpire calling the runner out.

# CODE OF CONDUCT (All Baseball & Softball Leagues)

*These rules apply to coaches, players, parents, & spectators for all WMLL baseball & softball leagues.*

## GENERAL SPORTSMANSHIP

**EXPECTATION:** Coaches, players, parents, & spectators must adhere to a high level of sportsmanship. The league will not tolerate negative interactions, verbal abuse, or physical altercations from or between coaches, players, parents or other spectators. This includes hazing or organized chanting directed at any player or team.

**CONSEQUENCES:** Instances of unsportsmanlike behavior should be reported to the Board of Directors for investigation by the President and may result in discipline, including suspensions.

## TREATMENT OF UMPIRES

**EXPECTATION:** Coaches, players, parents & spectators must not harass umpires in any way & must avoid actions that would undermine umpire authority. They must accept & respect umpire decisions & should refrain from questioning judgment calls.

**CONSEQUENCES:** Umpires will not tolerate any abusive language, equipment throwing or other violent or unsportsmanlike behavior by coaches, players or spectators.

- **Warning:** Any person guilty of participating in these actions will be warned once by the umpires.
- **Ejection:** A 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. Unsportsmanlike behavior which results in a game ejection carries with it another one game suspension. *Note: The umpire will report such ejections to the Umpire Coordinator who will notify the VP-Baseball / Softball.*
- **Suspension:** For a second game ejection there will be at a minimum an automatic three game suspension and for a third game suspension, the individual will receive a season ending suspension.

## COACH BEHAVIOR

**EXPECTATION:** Coaches and coaching staff should provide the players and fans with an exemplary model of sportsmanship & are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times. Coaches are to follow all WMLL rules – in general & specific to their individual league.

### COACH INTERACTIONS WITH UMPIRES:

- **To question an umpire's ruling,** Coaches may not run out of the dugout or yell objections. Instead, one coach from the team must request a time out and then meet with the umpire who made the call & one coach from the opposing team in foul territory to calmly discuss the matter. The second umpire is encouraged to join in discussions as needed.
  - *If the umpires ruling was a judgment call based on the correct understanding & application of the rules, the coach may request an appeal. In any case, the umpire's final call must be respected & the coach should not argue or complain to the umpire or publicly.*
  - *If the umpires ruling was based on an incorrect understanding or application of the rules, the umpire(s) & coaches should work together to determine the correct response. If a ruling change is in order, the change must be announced by the umpire that made the original call.*
- **To check on an injured player,** a coach may move onto the playing field after requesting a time out from the umpire to assist the injured player.
- **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.

**CONSEQUENCES:** Any coach that is reported to the League for issues of misconduct may be investigated by the Board and may result in discipline, including being suspended from games, practices, and other volunteer positions. *Examples of misconduct are as follows, but not limited to openly disputing or arguing any decision by an umpire; using obscene or vulgar language; visually displaying any sign of dissatisfaction with an umpire's decision including staying on the field or standing in the dugout with the intent of inciting the officials, players or spectators; & berating players, umpires, coaches, families, and/or spectators in a manner unbecoming WMLL.*

- **Warning:** First warning may be a discussion between the coach(es) and the League Coordinator and/or Board President. In severe instances, the offending party may be immediately suspended. *A written summary of the discussion will be provided to all parties and kept on file.*

- **Suspension:** A second infraction that occurs in the current year may be an automatic suspension from coaching. The period of suspension will be no less than two (2) weeks and may be up to the remaining season based on the severity. *A written summary of the discussion will be provided to all parties and kept on file.*

## **ADDITIONAL CONSEQUENCES**

Any member of the WMLL Organization or Community is subject to further consequence should they be found to flagrantly disregard the Organization's rules and expectations. Examples of possible consequences are as follows, but not limited to inability to serve as a WMLL volunteer and/or inability to participate on WMLL committees.