

# WMLL Rules of Play (7.24.20)

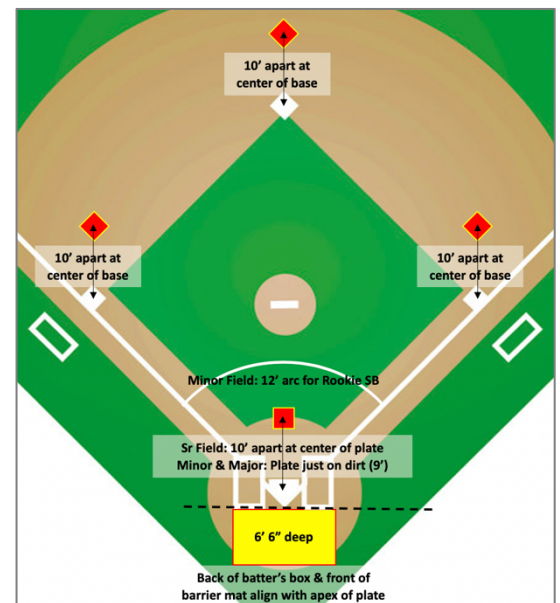
These modified rules of play are mandatory at WMLL scrimmages as well as at practices as applicable. These rules supplement & in any areas of conflict override both WMLL local rules & national Little League rules. All non-conflicting WMLL local rules & national Little League rules remain in effect. Note: Coaches must also understand & abide by all "WMLL Gathering, Mask, Physical Distancing & Hygiene Requirements" (see separate document).

## TEAM & PLAYERS

- **Teams & Squads:** No WMLL team may have more than 25 players. Teams may elect to break their players into two squads in a fixed manner for all scrimmages or via temporary assignments for individual scrimmages.
- **Approved Players:** All scrimmages & practices are limited to players assigned to the team involved.
- **No Replacement Players:** Replacement players from other teams may NOT be used under any circumstances.
- **No Forfeits:** There will be no forfeited scrimmages. Coaches should consider distributing players across squads if there is a significant imbalance in attendance.

## FIELD LAYOUT

- **Bases:** The standard bases are for use by the offensive squad & for establishing foul lines. Pitchers pitch to the batter at the standard home plate. A second set of bases added 10-feet straight out from the standard bases is for use by the defensive squad.
- **Batter/Catcher Barrier:** The batter's box will be shortened so that the its back lines up with the back of the standard home plate. A flat barrier marks the area between the back of the batter's box & the front of the "catcher's box". The batter must stay in front of & the catcher behind this area at all times.
- **Expanded Dugout / Squad-Only Zone:** A squad-only zone for each squad includes one dugout and a delineated adjacent area outside the fence with marked player drop spots (at least six feet apart) for players to use when their squad is on offense. Only players, coaches & approved volunteers are allowed in the squad-only zone.



## TIME LIMITS & WARMUPS

All scrimmages are limited to 6-innings with two types of time limits. Time-limited scrimmages can end in a tie. The umpires will enforce the scheduled starting time and the time limits.

- **"No New Inning" Time Limit = 1 hour, 30 minutes:** No new inning may begin after this time limit 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 scrimmage ends because the home team takes the lead or the "hard" time limit is reached.
- **"Hard" Time Limit = 1 hour, 40 minutes:** When this time limit is reached, the scrimmage 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 scrimmage during their at-bat (after being behind at the end of the last complete inning). In this case the scrimmage ends in a tie.
- **No Batting Practice, Off-Field Warmups or Infield Practice:** Pre-scrimmage batting practice, off-field warmups, & infield practice are not allowed. Players are allowed to warm-up in the outfield before their scrimmage as time permits.

## SAFETY STOPS

A number of safety stops / player freezes have been created to help maintain physical distancing on the playing field. Umpires, offensive players & defensive players all have the responsibility & authority to trigger a safety

stop. Whenever a safety stop occurs, umpires will determine how to call the play – safe, out, do over, etc. If there is any uncertainty about the correct call, a do over should be implemented.

- **Dead Ball:** Umpires must call a play dead / player freeze whenever they anticipate that the developing play could result in two or more players breaking physical distancing requirements or potentially creating any other unsafe condition.
- **Defensive Player Freeze:** A runner must stay six feet away from a defensive player in the act of fielding a batted ball. If a defensive player in the act of fielding a batted ball must stop or yield right of way to the runner, the defensive player should raise their hand as a signal to the umpires. If the umpire believes (expanded) interference occurred, the runner will be called out.
- **Offensive Player Freeze:** A defensive player not in the act of fielding a batted ball must stay six feet away from all baserunners – both along the base path & around all offensive bases. If a runner must stop or yield right of way to the defensive player, the runner should raise their hand as a signal to the umpires. If the umpire believes (expanded) obstruction occurred, all runners will be awarded the bases that the umpire judges they would have reached had there been no obstruction.

## BATTING

- **Batters:** The batter must remain in front of the batter/catcher barrier at all times & must back out of the box after each pitch to create a clear lane for the catcher's return throw to the pitcher.
- **On-Deck / In-the-Hole Batters:** The on-deck batter (in-the-hole batter in the Jr & Sr Lgs), should move to the end of the dugout so that they can advance to the plate (on deck circle in the Jr & Sr Lgs) without delay
- **Bat Retrieval:** When players are not able to return their own bat to the dugout, the plate monitor or a coach will collect the bat & place it in a safe location on the backstop until it can be collected by the player owner. In the Jr & Sr Lgs, the bat will be returned to a coach at the dugout via the incoming batter and/or on-deck batter.
- **No Dropped Third Strike:** Batters are out after being thrown three strikes & may not attempt to advance to first base on a dropped third strike.
- **No Bunting:** Bunting is not allowed.

## BASERUNNING

- **Offensive Bases:** The offensive squad will use the standard set of bases at all times.
- **No Stealing:** Stealing is not allowed.
- **Leaving Base:** In Rookie, Minor & Major BB & SB & Junior SB, runners may not leave the base until the ball crosses the plate. Players detected leaving early will be called out. In Junior & Senior BB, runners can take a four-step lead of no more than eight feet.
- **Arriving at a Base:** Runners may slide into any base or run through the bag like is traditionally down at first base. Sliding is permitted, but not required as there are no tag plays. Headfirst sliding when advancing is prohibited with the penalty of the offender being called out.

## DEFENSE

- **Defensive Bases:** The defensive squad will use the added set of bases for defensive force outs but will use the standard home plate when pitching to the batter. Fouls lines are established by the standard bases.
- **No Tag Plays:** All outs involving baserunners must be force plays. Once a runner advances halfway to a base, he/she must continue on to that base (& may not return to the previous base).
- **Catchers (Rookie Lgs):** Catchers will not be used. The plate monitor/retriever will retrieve balls & return them to the pitcher - either individually as they are pitched or after a quantity is collected in a bucket.
- **Catchers (Minor, Major, Junior & Senior Lgs):** When receiving pitches & throwing balls back to the pitcher, the catcher must stay behind the batter/catcher barrier at all times. The catcher may only cross over the barrier to be prepared to make a play during a live ball when the batter is clear of the batter's box.
  - *In order to keep the scrimmage moving, Minor & Major BB & SB catchers should not retrieve any balls that get passed them. These balls will be handled by the plate monitor/retriever.*