

Baseball USA “The Yard” League Rules

(Revision June 17, 2008)

1.0 Teams

1.1 Each team will consist of up to a maximum of 18 ball players properly registered with Baseball USA “The Yard”.

1.2 No individual ballplayer can participate in two different age groups during a season, nor can an individual ballplayer participate on two teams with in the same age group.

1.3 Each team must have one (1) designated manager with whom Baseball USA “The Yard” and the Houston Select Baseball League (HSBL) recognizes as the head coach of a team.

1.4 Each team is required to purchase accident insurance through an HSBL approved Insurance plan.

1.5 Each team is required to submit the following items for each of the ballplayers on the team roster:

1.5 (A) A player contract for that season (spring and fall)

1.5 (B) Proof of primary group health insurance coverage on each player (part of the player contract).

1.5 (C) Birth Certificate

Note: Each of these items must be received by the league office before the first scheduled league game of the season.

1.6 Each Team is required to have an online roster registered with USSSA www.texassussa.org. (For tournament play only, not HSBL play)

1.7 Any ballplayer signing a HSBL contract is bound to that HSBL team for the entire HSBL season. It does not prohibit a player from playing in another league at the same time.

1.8 A Player may play for another HSBL team during the HSBL season provided:

1.8 (A) The coach that the player is playing with agrees to release the player from his obligation with that team.

1.8 (B) Both the player and the coach sign an HSBL player release form and that form is received by the league director.

1.9 Players are allowed to participate with teams other than their contracted teams in tournament play. However, every player is always obligated to his contracted team and their schedule of events and can only participate with other teams with the consent of the contracted team. Teams using unauthorized ballplayers in tournaments will be subject to forfeiture of games in which the illegal ballplayer has participated.

1.10 If a team has not taken the field ten minutes after the scheduled start time of a game. The game will be declared a forfeit. You can start a game with eight (8) players with no penalty. You must have a minimum of eight (8) ballplayers to start a game. Anything less than eight (8) the game will be declared a forfeit. The game will not be rescheduled. On fields ten (# 10) and eleven (#11) the clock starts at the scheduled game time.

Note: These rules are for standard Baseball USA “The Yard” play and are subject to revisions for tournaments. Revised tournament rules will be posted before each tournament.

Games will be played using Official Baseball Rules published by Major League Baseball as amended below:

2.0 Coaches / Dugouts / Equipment

2.1 A team shall be limited to four (4) non-players (three coaches and a batboy) inside the fence and dugout.

2.2 While on offense, only two coaches may be outside of the dugout and on the field of play.

2.3 While on offense, only the batter and the on deck hitter shall be outside of the dugout and on the field of play. The on deck hitter shall stay within the vicinity of his dugout. Players are not permitted to warm up in the opponents on deck circle.

2.4 While on defense, only one coach is permitted outside of the dugout and on the playing field.

2.5 A bat boy/girl may leave the dugout to retrieve a bat after all playing action has been completed. All bat boys/girls must have a double eared helmet on as a protective measure.

2.6 All batters must wear full service helmets with double ear flaps.

2.7 All equipment shall remain inside the dugout and not protrude through the fence.

2.8 Catchers will be required to wear a certified catching helmet that protects both ears and the head. Skull caps are not permitted.

2.9 Catchers are required to wear a protective cup.

2.10 Jewelry of any type is not permitted on a player involved in the game.

2.11 The umpire shall ask the player to remove the jewelry. Play shall not continue until the jewelry is removed or the player is replaced. This is not an ejection. Medical alert bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewelry. If worn, they must be taped to the body so as to remain visible.

2.12 Metal cleats may not be worn by 12 year old players or younger.

2.13 The use of cell phones shall not be permitted inside the playing field by players, non-players or umpires.

3.0 Courtesy "Runner"

3.1 At any time the team at bat may use courtesy runners for both the pitcher and/or catcher.

3.2 The same runner may not be used for both positions in the same inning.

3.3 The courtesy runner(s) will be:

3.3 (A) A player not in the batting order.

3.3 (B) The last out (not necessarily the last batted out) if all players are batting.

3.4 A courtesy runner is mandatory for the catcher with two outs and optional before.

3.5 A courtesy runner may be used for an incoming pitcher and catcher (but not for both exiting and incoming in the same half inning).

4.0 Intentional Base on Balls

4.1 An intentional base on balls may be given by the defensive team by having the catcher or coaches request the umpire to award first base to the batter.

4.2 This may be done before pitching to the batter or on any ball and strike count to the batter.

4.3 The ball shall be declared dead before making the award of first base.

5.0 Time Limit

5.1 The time limit for ages eight and under is one hour and fifteen minutes.

5.2 The time limit for ages nine through twelve is one hour and forty minutes.

5.3 The time limit for ages thirteen and fourteen is one hour and forty minutes.

5.4 When the time limit expires, the game shall be over when the inning is finished.

5.5 If the teams are ready and want to start early, the time will start on the catcher's throw down to second base. If the game is starting late, the clock will start on the umpire's announcement of the start time at the completion of the pre-game conference.

5.6 If a game is tied after the regulation number of innings and time still remains, the game will continue one extra inning to determine a winner. If the game is still tied after the one extra inning, the games end in a tie, even if additional time remains.

5.7 An inning is deemed to begin at the moment the third out is made in the previous inning.

5.8 The umpires are the sole judge of the time.

5.9 During the season ending tournament a winner will be determined.

5.10 An inning is finished after time expires when the visiting team finishes their at bat and the home team is winning, or the home team finishes their at bat if the score is tied or the visiting team is winning.

6.0 Game Length

6.1 Game lengths shall be as follows:

6.1 (A) Up to and including twelve year old teams, the game length shall be six innings.

6.1 (B) Thirteen year old teams up and including eighteen year old teams the game length shall be seven innings.

6.2 If a game is called due to weather or other hazardous conditions, it is an official game if three and one half or four innings has been completed.

6.3 Suspended games:

6.3 (A) All games stopped by an umpire for weather or other reasons before the game is declared official shall be a suspended game.

6.3 (B) On fields ten and eleven all games will be stopped at 9:50 P.M. The League Director shall determine if the game is to be complete or suspended.

Note: The League Director will schedule the completion of suspended games at his discretion. Normally when the teams involved are both scheduled to be on site at the same time.

7.0 Run Rules

7.1 All games played at Baseball USA "The Yard" shall be played with a run rule in effect. A game will be over if the visiting team is losing by ten runs after three and one half innings of play or the home team is losing by ten runs after four innings of play.

7.2 A game will be over if the visiting team is losing by eight runs after four and one half innings of play or the home team is losing by eight runs after five innings of play.

7.3 In the nine and ten year old divisions of league play teams will be limited to six runs per time at bat.

7.4 In ten year old and younger divisions' mathematical elimination will apply. (If the home team is mathematically eliminated in the top of the fifth or sixth inning, the home team shall be allowed to bat in the bottom half of that inning.)

8.0 Substitutions

8.1 A team may bat nine or ten without a designated hitter or the entire roster

8.2 If a team is batting the entire roster, there is free substitution on defense, except for the pitcher.

8.3 If a team is batting nine or ten, any of the starters may be withdrawn and re-entered one time, including a player who is the designated hitter, provided such player occupies the same batting position whenever he is in the batting order.

8.4 A pitcher may become a pitcher two times per inning, providing the pitcher is removed from the pitching position on the first visit in an inning, and re-entry rules are not violated.

9.0 Designated Hitter (Applies only to age 15 and older)

9.1 A hitter may be (not mandatory) a designated hitter for any one starting players and all subsequent substitutes for that player.

9.2 Starting defensive player cannot be listed as the designated hitter in the starting lineup.

9.3 Failure to declare a designated hitter prior to the game prohibits the use of the designated hitter during the game.

9.4 The role of designated hitter is terminated for the remainder of the game when:

9.4 (A) The defensive player or any previous defensive player for whom the designated hitter subsequently bats, pinch-hits or pinch-runs for the designated hitter.

9.4 (B) The designated hitter or any previous designated hitter assumes a defensive position.

10.0 Roster Batting

10.1 If a team is batting the entire roster, and a member is unable to continue due to injury or illness, the team will not be penalized when it is the missing player's turn to bat.

10.2 A team may start the game with less than nine players (a minimum of eight)

10.3 There will be no penalty for not having nine players in the batting order to start the game.

10.4 When the ninth player arrives at the game, he will be added to the end of the batting order. The teams starting with eight players shall immediately notify the umpire and the other team as soon as the ninth player arrives.

10.5 A team that starts with less than nine will not be allowed to roster bat.

10.6 If a team is roster batting and a new player arrives before the entire lineup has batted, he be added to the end of the bating order.

10.7 If a player arrives after the order has batted one time, he may be used as a substitute.

10.8 If roster batting, any time the batting order is reduced by an ejection, an automatic out shall be declared in that position of the batting order.

10.9 If bating nine and the team drops below the nine eligible players due to an ejection, an automatic out shall be declared in that position of the batting order.

11.0 Batters Box

11.1 The batter must keep at least one foot in the batter's box throughout his time at bat.

Exceptions are:

11.1 (A) The batter swings at the pitch.

11.1 (B) The batter is forced out of the batters box by the pitch.

11.1 (C) The batter attempts a drag bunt.

11.1 (D) The pitcher or catcher fakes or attempts a play at any base.

11.1 (E) The pitcher leaves the dirt area of the pitching mound.

11.1 (F) The umpire calls time.

11.1 (G) The catcher does not catch a pitched ball.

11.2 If the batter leaves the box and one of the above exceptions does not apply, the umpire may call an automatic strike if he determines leaving the box delayed the game.

Reminder: The box is defined in the rule book, even if it is not marked on the field and the batters box restrictions apply.

12.0 Steal of Home Plate

12.1 If the runner from third base is running toward home plate in attempting to steal or participating in a squeeze play, the following will apply:

**12.1 (A) The batter must take the pitch or attempt to bunt.
Failure to do so will result in the following:**

12.1 (A) 1. The batter being called out.

12.1 (A) 2. All runners returning to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.1 (A) 3. The third base coach shall be ejected

12.2 With the bases loaded two outs and three balls and two strikes on the batter, the runner from third base shall not run hard to home plate.

13.0 Slide Rule

13.1 A legal slide can be either feet first or head first. If a runner slides feet first, at least one leg and buttock shall be on the ground. If a runner slides he must slide within reach of the base with a hand or a foot without going out of the base line or past the base.

13.2 On a force play if the runner slides, the slide must be on the ground in a direct line between the two bases, stopping at the base. The runner may slide or run in a direction away from the fielder to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder.

13.3 No player shall initiate malicious contact. The question of what is a malicious is the judgment of the umpire.

13.4 On a force play an illegal slide causes both the runner and the batter-runner to be called out and all other runners to return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

13.5 Malicious contact shall be grounds for ejection.

13.6 Runners are never required to slide, but if a runner elects to slide the slide must be legal.

13.7 To prevent contact, if the fielder has the ball or his receiving of the ball is imminent, the runner has the following choices:

13.7 (A) Slide

13.7 (B) Go back

13.7 (C) Go around

13.7 (D) Give up

13.8 If contact results due to the runner failing to do one of the above, the runner shall be declared out.

13.9 If a defensive player is obstructing the runner (judgment call by the umpire), contact by the runner is not illegal unless malicious.

14.0 Pitching Limits

14.1 For ages nine and ten a pitcher may not pitch more than eighteen outs in any given day.

14.2 For ages eleven through fourteen, a pitcher may not pitch more than twenty one outs in any given day.

14.3 A pitcher may not pitch more than twenty seven outs in a week, Monday through Sunday.

15.0 Coach Pitch

15.1 Each batter will be allowed six pitches, unless he hits a foul ball on the sixth pitch. He will be allowed to continue batting until he does not hit a foul ball.

15.2 League play allows ten defensive players for teams.

15.3 A fair ball hitting a coach pitcher will be declared a foul ball.

15.4 The ball is dead when returned to the infield and in the umpires judgment play has stopped.

15.5 The umpire shall determine the position of the runners when the ball becomes dead.

15.6 A team will be restricted to scoring five runs per time at bat.

15.7 The player pitcher shall be stationed within ten feet of the rubber at the time of the pitch.

15.8 The catcher shall be located in the catcher's box, no more that eight feet behind home plate.

15.9 All eight year old and younger games will require roster batting.

15.9 (A) There will be no:

15.9 (A) 1. Base on balls

15.9 (A) 2. Base awards for batter hit by a pitch

15.9 (A) 3. Infield fly rule

15.9 (A) 4. Stealing of bases (runners may not leave their base until the pitched ball crosses the front edge of home plate)

15.9 (A) 5. Courtesy runner for the pitcher

15.10 Runners may not leave the base until the pitched ball reaches home plate. A runner who leaves early will be declared out. The pitch will be called a no pitch.

15.11 A team will be permitted to issue an intentional walk by notifying the umpire of the desire to walk the batter (see rule four) A team will be limited to a maximum of three intentional walks per game and only one to an individual batter.

16.0 Appeals

16.1 The defensive team may appeal during a live ball immediately after the play and before the next pitch, granting an intentional baseball balls, or before the next play or attempted play. If the offense initiates a play before the next pitch, the defense does not lose the opportunity to appeal. A live ball appeal may be made by a defensive player with the ball in his possession by touching the runner or the base the runner missed or left early, and telling an umpire what runner and which base is being appealed. A dead ball appeal may be made by a coach or defensive player with or without the ball by telling an umpire which runner and base he felt was missed or left the base early. Appeals must be made:

16.1 (A) Before the next pitch

16.1 (B) At the end of an inning, before the pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory

16.1 (C) Before an intentional base on balls is granted

16.1 (D) On the last play of the game until the umpires leave the fenced area.

16.2 Multiple appeals are allowed providing they do not, in the umpire's judgment, make a travesty of the game.

17.0 Trips To the Mound

17.1 Between innings a coach may talk to a pitcher who is warming up. If in the judgment of the umpire the coach delays the resumption of play he will be charged with a trip to the mound. A coach may also talk to a replacement pitcher during warm ups. A delay will result in a trip to the mound being called.

18.0 Season Ending Double Elimination Tournament

18.1 For the season ending double elimination tournament the best seeded team will be the home team. In the first championship game the team from the winner's bracket will be the home team. In the "if" game the best seeded team will be the home team.