

## **WMLL Fall Ball Local Policies & Rules – Major League Baseball**

(Aug. 2011)

All national little league rules in current season rule book apply 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: Volunteer umpires should work at 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. They should change positions every one to two innings.)

Time Limit & Curfew. The time limit is 1 hr., 40 mins. and a game can end in a tie (see “Game Time Limits” below for further details). **Please note the "Hard Time Limit" rule. Curfew is 9:00 PM Sunday through Thursday and supersedes both time limits, if applicable.**

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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.

Bat Swinging. Only the player at bat is permitted to swing a bat. No other player is permitted to pick up a bat until it is his/her turn at bat and he/she is approaching the plate. There is no on-deck hitter. Point of emphasis – any player picking up and/or swinging a bat before his/her turn at bat will be given a warning. A second incident in the same game will result in an ejection of that player. A second ejection of any player in the same season from the same team will result in an extra suspension for the player and the coach.

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 the base which he/she

occupied prior to the pitch. Note: this rule applies to accidental bat throwing while or shortly after swinging at a pitch, not to bat throwing in anger or protest.

Batting Cages & Surrounding Spaces. The home team can use a batting cage for thirty minutes beginning seventy minutes prior to the game and the visiting team can use a batting cage for thirty minutes beginning forty minutes prior to the game to the game. Soft toss and other pregame batting practice can take place only in a batting cage or soft-toss station. If your batting cage is occupied by a Rookie or Minor Lg team, you may ask them to vacate as your team has preference. Please be diplomatic!

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 re-enter the batting order without penalty. Free substitution on defense is permitted.

Coaches Visits to Pitchers. A coach is permitted two visits per pitcher during a game with any defense timeout being considered as a visit. On the third visit to a pitcher, he/she must be removed from the mound.

Courtesy Runner. A courtesy runner may be used for the catcher when there are two outs. This runner will be the last out in the inning. If the previous out is the scheduled pitcher the courtesy runner may be the out prior to that. Use of courtesy runner is optional, but recommended

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 eight players to participate in a game, that team will forfeit the game. A team has fifteen minutes from the scheduled starting time to obtain eight players before a forfeit is declared. When both teams have less than eight players, a double forfeit occurs. If a team expects to be short of players, the team manager should obtain replacement players from the Minor Lg (11 year olds only). Forfeits will not be rescheduled. See more details in "Replacement Player" section below.

Game Time Limits. All games shall have a length and time limit of 6 innings or 1 hour and 40 minutes (known as the "No New Inning" time limit). 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, subject to the "Hard Time Limit" rule below. If game is tied at the end of an inning and the "no new inning" time limit has expired, the game is over and a tie is

recorded. A game which ends due to the time limit will be considered a complete game regardless of the number of innings played.

***\*\*\* When the "Hard Time Limit" is reached (10 minutes after the "No New Inning" Time Limit), the game ends immediately (current batter may finish at bat). If the home team is at bat and the game is still tied, the game ends in a tie. If the home team is at bat and takes the lead, the game ends immediately. In all other instances, the outcome is determined by the score at the end of the last complete inning (which may also be a tie)***

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 must be delivered not longer than 90 seconds after the third out of the previous half inning. Penalty: 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.

#### Harassment of and Disputes with Umpires.

1. The league will not tolerate any harassment of the umpires by managers, coaches, players or fans or any harassment / organized cheering against any opposing player or team.
2. The umpires will not tolerate any abusive language, equipment throwing or other violent behavior by managers, coaches, players or fans.
3. 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 and 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.
4. To question an umpire's ruling only the manager is to represent the team. He/she must call time out and calmly consult with the umpire. A manager must not run out of the dugout or yell objections. The manager should provide the players and fans with an exemplary model of sportsmanship.
5. During all consultations with umpires about their rulings, the manager must remain in foul territory. To check on an injured player's status, the manager/coach may be on the playing field after an umpire requests their assistance.

Ineligible Pitcher. Any violation of the pitching rules will result in the ineligible pitcher being removed from the pitching position and an automatic protest which will be ruled on by the Baseball Operations Committee. The game will continue with a new eligible pitcher and both scorebooks should note the ineligible pitcher's name and the inning in which the violation was said to have occurred.

Intentional Base on Balls. No intentional walks are allowed in this league. A coach, who directs his pitcher to deliberately walk any batter, will be subject to severe disciplinary action by the Baseball Operations Committee.

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.

Offensive Time Outs. Each team is limited to one offensive timeout per inning. This includes a base coach coming down the line to visit with the batter and/or having a conference with the next batter as he comes to the plate.

Pitchers – Breaking Balls for Younger Pitchers. WMLL believes it is potentially harmful for pitchers younger than the Senior League level to throw breaking pitches. Coaches below the Senior League level should not teach or permit pitchers to throw breaking balls. ***Note: the above statement represents the philosophy of WMLL; it is not a national or local rule. Umpires will not enforce any sanction for the alleged throwing of breaking balls. Anyone concerned that a team or coach is not adhering to this philosophy should contact the appropriate league coordinator.***

Pitching Rules. A pitcher may pitch no more than two innings in a game. After having been removed as a pitcher, a player may not return to the mound in the same game.

Note: While we will not officially count pitches and exchange pitch count information with opposing coaches, it is expected that coaches will generally track pitches and follow the philosophy for resting pitchers arms as used during the regular season and described below:

- If a player pitches 61 or more pitches in a day, 3 calendar days rest.
- If a player pitches 41-60 pitches in a day, 2 calendar days.
- If a player pitches 21-40 pitches in a day, 1 calendar day
- If a player pitches 1-20 pitches in a day, 0 calendar days

Examples:

- W throws 66 pitches on Saturday. The earliest W should pitch again is Wednesday
- X throws 60 pitches on Saturday. The earliest X should pitch again is Tuesday
- Y throws 22 pitches on Saturday. The earliest Y should pitch again is Monday
- Z throws 20 pitches on Saturday. The earliest Z should pitch again is Sunday

Pitching – Time Limit Considerations. **Only 4 warm up pitches are allowed between innings** to help move the game along. The first pitch of a half inning must be delivered not longer than 90 seconds after the third out of the previous half inning. Penalty: 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.

Playing Time. Each player present must be in the batting order and play at least three innings defensively. (See Playing Time Rule Exceptions below).

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 maximum 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. The teams may warm up prior to games in appropriately designated areas only or in the outfield. Players should be cautioned to be careful when warming up so other individuals are not injured. No infield practice will be allowed on the diamond prior to the game.

Replacement Players. If you know in advance that you will have fewer than ten players for a game, a replacement player(s) can be obtained. Replacement player(s) must be taken from the Minor League (11 yr olds only). The replacement(s) may not pitch and must be last in the batting order. If unanticipated roster player(s) show up bringing the total of the regular roster players to nine or more, the replacement(s) may still play, but may play defensively only 3 innings, maximum.

Roster Maintenance. Each team must maintain a roster of at least eleven players. If a player roster drops below eleven due to injuries and/or lengthy vacations (more than two weeks), a

replacement may be called up from the Minor League (9 or 10 yr olds only) or from the Major League waiting list (if there is a waiting list) by contacting the league coordinator.

Sliding. On close plays at 2<sup>nd</sup> base, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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. 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.

Stealing. Stealing of any base is permitted once a pitched ball crosses the plate.

Strike Zone. The strike zone is larger than the standard – the armpits to bottom of knees and one to two inches off the sides of the plate -- to encourage players to swing.

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 from the Minor League may wear their Minor league 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 messages on the answering machine (274-6556) and the website ([www.wmll.org](http://www.wmll.org)) will indicate when games are postponed because of weather.
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 thirty 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 fifteen minutes and all coaches, players, spectators and umpires will take immediate shelter in the dugouts, near the concession stand or in private vehicles to insure their safety. After this fifteen minute delay, if lightning continues the board of director(s) / umpires present will call the game.
5. A game called after completion of two innings 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, subject to the substitution rules. A player who was not at the original game may be used as a substitute when the game is resumed. 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. 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.