

WMLL Fall Ball Rules --- Major League Softball (August 2011)

1. All National Little League rules as described in the rulebook apply unless specifically addressed here or by past WMLL practice. What follows are notes of emphasis.
2. **Stealing:** Stealing of all bases is allowed. Runners may leave the base when the ball crosses the plate. Players detected leaving early will be called out. The runner cannot advance past the base that they are advancing to if the ball is in the pitchers circle.
3. **Dropped 3rd Strike:** Batters may advance to 1st base on a dropped 3rd strike as provided for in the rules.
4. **Bunting:** Bunting is allowed.
5. **Players/Substitution:** Teams can play with up to 10 players on defense. Teams forfeit the game if they have fewer than 8 players to start. Teams that start the game with 8 players but lose one or more players during the game may continue. If the number of players drops below 8, an out is recorded each time a missing player's turn to bat occurs. All players will be included in the batting order and must play at least 2 innings in the field. Free defensive substitution of all players is allowed. A courtesy runner for the catcher is recommended when there are 2 outs. The player making the last out will be the runner.
6. **Infield:** No more than 6 players may begin a play in the infield. All outfielders must be on the outfield grass when the ball is pitched.
7. **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). NOTE: Curfew is 9:00 PM Sunday through Thursday and supersedes both time limits, if applicable.**

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.

8. **Runs Scored:** A maximum of 5 runs can be scored per half inning.

9. **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. 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 from the game. The runner has the primary responsibility to avoid a collision with the defensive player. No headfirst sliding is allowed. Players should be taught and encouraged to slide properly.

10. **Hit Batters:** A batter will be awarded first base when hit by a pitch unless the ball is called a strike or the umpire decides an attempt should have been made to avoid the ball. Please note: a ball that bounces and then hits the batter is no different than any other pitched ball that hits the batter. The ball is dead immediately on hitting the batter.

11. **Play Stoppage:** Play stops when the pitcher has control of the ball in the circle area, approximately a 10-foot circle centered by the pitcher's plate. The umpire will return runners that are not in stride toward the next base to the preceding base.

12. **Pitching:** A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 3 innings in a game. One pitch in an inning will count as a full inning pitched. Pitching distance will be 40 feet. Any underhand style pitching motion is allowed. Once a pitcher is removed from pitching, she cannot return as a pitcher in that game.

13. **Ball:** 12-inch hardball.

14. **Infield fly rule:** The infield fly rule is **NOT** in effect for this league.

15. **Inning Switch:** Coaches are encouraged to hustle players on and off the field. The first pitch of a half inning must be delivered not longer than 60 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.

16. **Bat throwing:** A player will receive one warning each game for accidentally 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, not to bat throwing in anger or protest.

17. **Call-ups.** Teams that expect to have fewer than 10 players available for a game may "call up" a player or players from the Minor League. The League Coordinator will maintain a list of players interested in playing up. Call-up players may not pitch, and must bat at the end of the order. No team may call up the same player for more than one game in the regular season.