

WESTERVILLE YOUTH BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL LEAGUE

2026 BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL RULES

ALL LEAGUES

1. GAMES, PLAYERS, FIELD EQUIPMENT AND CONDITIONS

- A. Prior to the start of a game, only the WYBSL Fields Director (or other Board designee) has the authority to cancel the game. Once a game has been started, the authority to stop play because of darkness, inclement weather, or other playing conditions rests with the WYBSL Staff, if present, or with the Head Coaches in the absence of WYBSL Staff member(s). Games will be rescheduled by the Board, with final confirmation by the Program Director.
- B. All games will start promptly as scheduled. Home Team will occupy the third base dugout and have the entire infield for warm ups until 20 minutes before the game. The visiting team will occupy the first base dugout and have the entire outfield for warm ups. Warm-ups should be focused on fielding, throwing and stretching. Hitting is permitted **ONLY** by coaches for pop flies and ground balls. At 20 minutes before the game, the home and visiting teams will switch warmup locations.

Prior to any game, players may only participate in batting practice using a hitting stick, tethered ball, whiffle balls, or other soft training balls. Hard baseballs, softballs or safety balls may **only** be used when hit directly into a batting net that is positioned so all batted balls travel away from players, coaches, and spectators from both teams. **At no time before a game may a player hit hard baseballs, softballs or safety balls in an open area or toward another field.**

Penalty: Failure to comply with this rule may result in the suspension of pre-game batting practice at the discretion of the umpire or league official.

- C. The home team coaches shall be responsible for all necessary field set-up. They shall install the bases and, if necessary, a non-permanent pitching rubber or pitching mat, at the required distances prior to start of the game and remove and secure them in the field equipment boxes at the completion of the game. In all softball leagues, set-up shall include drawing an eight (8) foot diameter pitching circle centered on the pitching rubber. The circle must be drawn in a manner that it is visible from home plate, weather and field conditions permitting. If the circle is not present at the start of an inning, the umpire will not start the inning until the circle is present.
- D. No new inning is permitted to begin more than two (2) hours after the start of the game unless the game is not considered complete and in no case may a game continue beyond two (2) hours and thirty (30) minutes. A new inning is defined as

beginning as soon as the third (3rd) out is made in the bottom of an inning. If an inning in a **complete** game is not finished because of darkness or inclement weather, the score will revert to the last fully completed inning.

EXCEPTION: for 17U Baseball, no new inning shall begin after two hours and 15 minutes and no game shall continue beyond two hours and 45 minutes.

EXCEPTION: Tee Ball shall be governed by their League Specific Rules.

- E. Games less than six (6) innings are considered complete if: 1) they last at least four (4) full innings (three and one-half (3½) innings, if the home team is ahead) and are stopped for any reason. The final score is determined by reverting back to the last complete inning unless the home team is at-bat and ahead when play is stopped. 2) they have reached the two and one-half (2½) hours limit, regardless of the number of innings played. Games that are not complete are considered suspended games. When continued, play resumes exactly where it left off when play was stopped (batting order, position of any base runners, pitchers, etc.) and all rules apply as if it was one continuous game.
- F. Extra innings will be played if, at the end of the game, the score is tied and time limits and daylight allow. But, if **complete**, regular season games may end in a tie. If so, each team will receive ½ win and ½ loss in the standings. Post-season tournament and play-off games must be complete and result in a winner. Play will continue past a complete game one (1) inning at a time until a winner is determined.
- G. A team must start, play and finish with a minimum of eight (8) rostered players. Loss of a player during the game which results in a team having only seven (7) players will result in a forfeit. After a forfeit is declared, the opposing team may supply players in order to continue as a scrimmage.

EXCEPTION: Tee-Ball may have fewer players as designated in their league-specific rules.
- H. In all cases, a game shall be forfeited only after a grace period of fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled game time.
 - 1. It is a part of good sportsmanship that a Head Coach will notify the Program Manager and opposing Head Coach as soon as he/she knows that it will be absolutely impossible for his/her team to appear with the required minimum of players for a scheduled game or make-up game. As a courtesy, we expect this notification to be made as soon as possible – even if it is done days or weeks in advance.
 - 2. Upon such notification, neither team shall appear for the scheduled game. However, this courtesy notification does not automatically trigger a forfeit.

3. Game forfeits will be awarded only after a fifteen (15) minute grace period when weather and/or field conditions at the end of the grace period would normally allow a game to be started.
4. Therefore, even if a team does not appear with the minimum of players, or has notified the Program, Manager and opposing Head Coach as specified in 1. above, there shall be no forfeit awarded if weather and field conditions fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled start time would not have allowed the game to be started. However, after a forfeit is awarded, the forfeit will stand – even if weather or field conditions would not have allowed the game to continue.

2. Players

- A. Each player will be given a team shirt and team cap, which the player may keep, prior to the first scheduled game. Each player must provide, at their own expense, a fielder's glove. During a game, no player will be allowed to play without wearing the team shirt and team cap supplied by the league. During games and practices, when a player is the batter, a base runner or the catcher, the team cap shall be replaced or covered by a helmet.
- B. No additions, subtractions or changes may be made in team shirts and caps without the express written permission of the Program Director (or his/her designee). If such alteration is approved, all coaches and players of the team must wear shirts and/or caps that are altered as approved. An altered shirt, including removal of the sleeves or lower torso, is no longer a "Team Shirt" for the purposes of Rule 2A and the player shall not be permitted to play. **Exception:** A player, at his own expense, may have his name added on the back of his shirt above the number.
- C. Catchers must wear a helmet with face mask and throat protector (a face mask with integrated throat extension may be worn without an additional throat protector), chest protector and shin guards during games, practices and while warming up a pitcher. In 10U baseball and older leagues, a **protective cup** is required during games, practices and while warming up a pitcher. In all Softball leagues, batters must wear a helmet with a **properly attached facemask**.
- D. A game shortened by a one-half (1/2) inning because the home team is ahead, does not relieve the coach of the responsibility to play each player for the nine (9) out minimum. A game shortened due to curfew or weather may alter the rule unless the game is rescheduled or continued at a later time. Exception: If a player arrives after the start of a game, each inning that begins without the player in attendance shall be counted as an inning played by that player when counting the number of defensive innings played. Free defensive substitution is allowed.

- E. On defense, each team may have two (2) charged conferences during a regulation game. One (1) additional conference is awarded for each extra inning played. Conferences must be held on the playing field.
EXCEPTION: for 13U and 17U Baseball there are a maximum of three (3) charged conferences during a regular game.

3. HEAD AND ASSISTANT COACHES' RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Each team shall be issued an equipment bag and equipment box key prior to the start of the season. These must be cleaned and returned to the Equipment Director by a date specified by the league as the return date or the coach will be held financially responsible for the value of the equipment.
- B. Adult coaches are not required to be in the uniform of his/her team at the team's games or while acting in any coaching capacity at any time during the game (for example, as a base coach). A coach may not wear any clothing or hats referencing any other baseball or softball leagues other than the WYBSL, but if a coach wears a shirt or head covering with any inscription, words, designs, or team logos, it must be the team shirt, cap or visor supplied by the league, unless written approval is obtained from the Program Director (or his/her designee).
- C. **Offensive Coaches.** While play is in progress, all coaches not performing base coaching or pitching duties must remain in the bench area off of the field of play. Also, no coach is permitted to stand at the edge of, or behind the backstop.
- D. Both coaches are responsible for reporting the score. The Home Team is responsible for entering the score and if required, the innings pitched or pitch count for the game on the online site. The home team must enter the score within three hours after the start of the game. The Visiting Team must then confirm or challenge the score within three and a half hours of the start of the game but will not be penalized if the Home Team has not entered the score in the required amount of time. For the first score not reported in the above time limit, the Head Coach will receive a warning. **A second violation will result in a one game bench restriction for the Head coach. A third violation will result in a one-game suspension for the Head Coach.** Further violations will result in additional penalties.
- E. Head Coaches or designated Assistant Coaches, shall have responsibility for all matters that take place on, and in the vicinity of, the field in which a game, practice or scrimmage is taking place. This includes assuring that all WYBSL rules and policies are followed and adhered to. If the Program Manager or a Board member is present during a game, practice or scrimmage they may intercede, if they deem it necessary.
- F. If a team does not have their Head Coach or one of their Assistant Coaches present at a practice or for both teams, in case of a scrimmage or game, then the practice,

scrimmage, or game shall not be played. A team not having their Head Coach or one of their Assistant Coaches present at a game will constitute a forfeit by that team.

- G. A coach is permitted to use a scorekeeping and/or pitch-counting application on an electronic device. The use of these electronic devices will be limited to the coaches' box on the field and dugout, providing the use of such device does not interfere with the progress of the game. Teams however cannot use electronic devices on the field for voice communication, electronic audio, texting and/or video recording.

4. **BATTING AND BASE RUNNING**

- A. A continuous batting order will be used. Each player in attendance is listed in the batting order and bats in that order throughout the game. Any player arriving late must be placed last in the batting order. The opposing coach **MUST** be notified of any addition or subtraction.
- B. The following rules regarding batting lineups will apply:
 - 1. If a player who is not in attendance at the start of the game is listed in the official batting lineup and is not present to take his place at bat for his first appearance, the batter will be declared out for such first appearance. His name will then be eliminated from the official batting lineup with no further penalty. If the player subsequently arrives, he must be placed last in the batting order.
 - 2. If a player is in attendance at the start of the game, and subsequently must leave the game (because of school event or other reasonable cause, other than injury), his name shall be eliminated from the official batting lineup with no penalty. A player so removed from the lineup shall not be allowed to play in the game from that point, unless the game is continued on another day. If the game is continued at a later date and the player is in attendance, the player shall be placed in the same place in the lineup as his name first appeared.
 - 3. In a continued game, any player who was in attendance during the first date of play and is not in attendance at the start of play on the date of continuance, shall be eliminated from the lineup with no penalty. If the player subsequently arrives, he must be placed last in the batting order. If a player was not present at the original game before it was suspended, but is present on the date of continuance, that player is added at the end of the batting order.
 - 4. If a player is injured or becomes ill during a game:
 - a. If the Head Coach disqualifies the player because of injury/illness for the remainder of the game, the player's name shall be eliminated from the lineup with no penalty. The player shall not be eligible in the case that the game is continued on another day

- b. If the Head Coach does not disqualify the player because of injury/illness for the remainder of the game, an out shall be declared at each instance of the player's scheduled batting appearance when the player is unable to take their place at bat.
 - c. If a batter begins, but cannot complete an at bat due to injury, illness, or other reason, they will be declared out. The player may remain in the game unless disqualified by the Head Coach according to rules provisions below.
 - d. If a player is injured or becomes ill and must be removed as a base runner after reaching base successfully, the last player on the bench (the most recent batter not on base) will be substituted as a pinch runner. If the same injured or ill player reaches base again and needs removed, an out will be declared.
- C. Notwithstanding any of the above, if a batting lineup contains only eight (8) players an out shall be declared each time that a ninth player would have been eligible to bat. If a batting lineup contains nine (9) players and, for any reason (even if listed above in this Rule), a player is not able or eligible to take their place at bat when scheduled, an out shall be declared when such player was scheduled to bat.
- D. Prior to games and/or scrimmages, batting aides (such as; hit sticks, wiffle balls, hitting nets, and hit-a-way devices), may only be used by players in the outfield grass between the foul lines during warm-ups (see Rule 1.B. above). Batting aides may not be used during a game or scrimmage. Only bats and devices designed to remain part of the bat, such as weighted bats, batting donuts or wind resistant devices may be used by non-batters during a scrimmage or game. After games or scrimmages, batting aides may only be used in the outfield grass between the foul lines on the field which the game or scrimmage was played, and if there is not another game, scrimmage, or practice scheduled to use the field. Additionally, no batting practice, such as "soft-toss" or "flip" drills, causing balls to be hit against backstops or fencing, is allowing at any time, including practices, scrimmages and games.

5. CONCUSSION RULE

- A. Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) must be immediately removed from the game, practice, or scrimmage by the player's coaches or WYBSL officials and shall not return to play that day. Further, the player shall not return to play until cleared with written authorization by a licensed physician which needs to be provided to the Program Director.
- B. When a player is removed from a game, practice, or scrimmage due to signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion, his/her team's Head Coach, or Assistant Coach acting as the Head Coach, will notify the Program Director on the date of the occurrence.

6. CONDUCT.

Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated in the league. Team coaches are responsible for their conduct and the conduct of their players and fans. A coach, player or fan can be ejected from a game and/or removed from the playing field area by order of the General Manager or Program Director if they violate a league rule of conduct, as follows:

- A. In a game, no coach may utilize any player(s) not currently assigned to his/her team roster by the League. Violation of this rule will result in automatic permanent suspension of the coach(es) involved.
- B. No coach, player or fan shall ever engage in a physical altercation with any player, umpire, coach or fan.
- C. No coach, player or fan shall intentionally violate or refuse to follow any league or game rules.
- D. No coach, player, adult parent/family volunteer or fan shall come to the playing field under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug; and no coach, player or adult parent/family volunteer shall use tobacco products at the playing field during a game or practice.
- E. No coach, player or fan shall engage in grossly unsportsmanlike conduct, including, but not limited to, throwing equipment, use of profanity, arguing with an adult parent/family volunteer over a call or directing remarks to a player, adult parent/family volunteer, coach or fan which are of a degrading or distracting nature.
- F. Only the Head Coach, or his/her designee in the Head Coach's absence, may dispute a judgment call by an adult parent/family volunteer. Disputes at this level should be rare and should be handled by a discussion involving **only** the adult parent/family volunteers and Head Coaches.
- G. After each game, in the practice of good sportsmanship, all coaches and players shall form two opposing lines and proceed through a traditional, orderly "handshake line". No coach or player shall avoid participation in this line or exhibit unsportsmanlike conduct in the line.
- H. No Coach, player, parent, or fan, shall at any time, threaten, intimidate, attempt to intimidate, harm or attempt to harm, any adult parent/family volunteer, player, coach, WYBSL official, or fan. Any person who violates this rule may immediately be banned from all WYBSL sites and activities for a period of time to be determined by the Program Director up to and including a permanent ban. This rule shall be applied regardless of where and when the offending conduct takes place.
- I. No player may engage in an intentional act(s) which is reasonably likely to result in damage or defect in any equipment or field fixtures. The first infraction shall be a warning for the team, a second infraction from the same team the player shall receive a strike. Any infractions after the strike shall result in the player being out. Any infractions prior to the start of the game shall result in a warning to the coach, a second infraction prior to the game shall result in the head coach's suspension for that game. Examples of

prohibited behavior: a player hitting home plate forcefully with a bat or hitting balls into the field fences. (Does not apply to Pitch, Hit & Run Day)

- J. Chants/intentional distractions/loud noises (natural or artificial) directed at the opponent's pitcher prior to their pitching or the batter getting ready to hit, or a fielder getting ready to make a play is not good sportsmanship. We should strive to have our young players play to the best of their ability and let their natural talent be the barometer of their success. This is unsportsmanlike behavior and shall not be tolerated in the WYBSL. Umpires, coaches, players and fans need to work together for the benefit of the players. The positive values that are learned at the ball diamond will serve the young players long after their season ends.
- K. If a coach, player or fan is ejected from a game and/or removed from the playing field area for conduct as described above (or in the case of G. above, does not participate as described), the person shall provide a written statement describing his/her version of the events and/or other explanation to the Program Director within twenty-four (24) hours of the incident, and may not attend or participate in any practice or game until doing so. The Program Director shall review the statement and gather any other information from other parties that they deem necessary to determine if a further penalty should be assessed. Such further penalty, if any, shall be assessed before the team's next scheduled game.
- L. Any coach who violates the above guidelines may be immediately removed from his/her position by Program Director. In the event of such an occurrence, each coach would be provided with the opportunity to appear before the Board of Trustees at its next scheduled meeting in order to describe for the Board his/her version of the events which may exist for reinstating the coach.

WYBSL, JBBL and JGSL staff, managers, coaches, and umpires are expected to enforce this policy at all times.

Automatic Penalties. In order to clarify and standardize penalties for violations, the following automatic penalties shall apply:

- A. If a coach or player is ejected from a game because of a violation of the Conduct guidelines, or National Federation Rules related to unsportsmanlike acts, malicious contact or similar acts, that coach or player shall be suspended for (and shall not attend) the next game the coach or player would attend, including the next subsequent season.
- B. If a coach, player or fan is ejected from a game and/or removed from the playing field area for violation of Conduct guidelines during a game, that coach, player or fan shall be suspended for (and shall not attend) the next game the coach, player, or fan would attend, including the next subsequent season.
- C. If a coach, player, or fan is ejected or removed as described in 1. or 2. above, and fails to comply with this policy, the applicable game shall be forfeited by the offending team.
- D. It shall be the offending team's responsibility to enforce this policy.

- E. All other provisions of the Conduct guidelines – including provisions regarding additional penalties – and the procedures described therein, shall be in full effect and shall be followed by all coaches, players and fans.
- F. A second violation by the same coach, player or fan shall result in further penalty – which may include suspension for the season and/or an extended period of time.

7. RULE VIOLATIONS AND PROTESTS.

No games may be played under protest. However, if rules have been violated, the Program Director has the authority to call "no game" and order the game to be replayed – or continued from the point of the rule violation. The complaining coach must notify the opposing coach of his/her intention to bring a complaint to the General Manager before the next pitch after the occurrence of the disputed rule violation and must notify the Program Director (or the President if the Program Director is not available) of the disputed rule within two (2) hours after the end of the game.