

2015 WRA/NTRA Joint House League Baseball Rules

3RD & 4TH GRADE LEAGUE (REFERRED TO AS “MUSTANG LEAGUE” BY BOTH WRA & NTRA)

With the exception of the following age-specific rules, Mustang League play will be outlined in the IHSA Baseball Rule Book.

1. ELIGIBILITY: Players must have just completed 3rd or 4th grade in 2015.
2. PLAYING FIELD: Base distance will be 60 feet; pitching rubber distance from home plate will be 44 feet.
3. NUMBER OF PLAYERS: Each team must have a minimum of eight players to begin a game; if a team cannot field the minimum number of players, a forfeit will occur 10 minutes after the scheduled start time.
4. LENGTH OF GAMES: A new inning cannot begin **75 minutes after the start of the game and 6 innings are the maximum innings to be played during the 75 minute time limit. Game times will be 5:30 and 7:15.** If there is not a following game and darkness is not a factor games should be played to completion whenever possible. Time between innings should always be kept to a minimum to keep the game moving. Post-season tournament time limits may be different and will be provided to coaches prior to the tournament.
5. PRE-GAME WARM-UP: The visiting team on the schedule has the field from 30 minutes prior to the start time to 15 minutes prior to the start time. The home team follows until the start time. When necessary warm-ups should be performed in an adjacent (but safe) area to stay on schedule if the first game of the evening runs slightly past 75 minutes. Coaches and umpires should work together to ensure “ready play” is adhered to in order to maximize available daylight.
6. TEAM ON DEFENSE: All players must play defense for at least half the game (*it is recommended that all players play defense at least every other inning*). Regulation infield consists of a pitcher, catcher, first baseman, second baseman, shortstop & third baseman. Only three outfielders are permitted and players must be positioned at least 30 feet behind the baselines. There is no infield fly rule at this level.
7. TEAM ON OFFENSE: All players in the game must be in the batting order; players who arrive after the game begins are added to the bottom of the order. All innings consist of three outs and teams are not limited to batting through the order. Bunting is allowed. **Players who will be catching the following inning must have a pinch runner if they reach base with 2 outs in order to get their catching gear on. The pinch runner will be the batter who made the last out.**
8. MERCY RULE: The 12-run “mercy rule” will occur if 1) the visiting team leads by at least 12 runs at the end of four innings or 2) the home team leads by at least 12 runs after 3.5 innings. Coaches may continue to play if they choose but the game will be officially over and the umpires will not be required to stay.
9. PITCHING: The WRA follows a pitch count policy in accordance with Little League rules. This policy is being implemented to serve as protection for young pitcher’s arms. A pitcher cannot pitch in more than one game in a single day and once a pitcher is removed from pitching in a game, he may not pitch again in that game.

The coach, assistant coach, or team representative (such as a parent) must track pitch counts each game on the provided form and turn in form to the home plate umpire at the end of the game.

Rules

League Age	Pitches allowed per day
17-18	105
13-16	95
11-12	85
10 and under	75

Pitchers league ages 7 through 16 must adhere to the following rest requirements:

- If a player pitches 61 or more pitches in a day, three (3) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 41 - 60 pitches in a day, two (2) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 21 - 40 pitches in a day, one (1) calendar day of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 1-20 pitches in a day, no calendar day of rest is required before pitching again.

There will be a maximum of 5 warm-up pitches between innings unless a new pitcher is beginning the inning, then the maximum will be 10. Warm-up pitches are not counted towards the maximum number of pitches allowed.

If a pitcher reaches their limit while pitching to a batter, they may finish pitching to the batter until the batter is out or reaches base.

If the inning ends in the process of pitching to the batter (while the max pitch count is reached), and the batter will lead off the next inning, the pitcher will not be able to start the next inning.

Any abuse of this policy will be:

1. First offense - one game suspension
2. Second offense - suspension of remainder of season, plus one year suspension from coaching.

10. LEADING OFF & STEALING BASES: Base runners must stay on the base until the pitch crosses the plate. Once the pitcher is on the pitching rubber, a base runner leaving the base too early will be called out (*there will be one warning per team by the umpire*). Runners may not steal home. However, if a play is made on any base runner (regardless of the base occupied) a runner may attempt to advance from 3rd base to home.

Background: The intent of the rule is to eliminate a "free" put out attempt at 2nd base (with runners on 1st & 3rd) without risk to the runner at 3rd base advancing. Runners on 3rd base will not be able to advance on passed balls, wild pitches, or throws from the catcher back to the pitcher.

11. BAT LIMITATIONS: No bats greater than 2 5/8" diameter are allowed.
12. CALL-UPS: Only 10-year-old players are allowed to be called up to the Bronco level; players cannot play in a Bronco game if it conflicts with his regularly-scheduled Mustang game; Mustang coaches must give permission to the Bronco coach doing the calling up especially if there's a chance the player may pitch.
13. Official Game Scorecard: Both coaches are responsible for signing the Official Game Scorecard. The Official Game Scorecard will be filled out by the home plate umpire, signed by both umpires and both head coaches, and turned into the concession stand immediately following the game. The Official Game Scorecard will be used to track league standings, track player pitch counts, and used for documentation for umpire payment. Once the Official Game Scorecard is signed changes to the documented information will not be permitted. In case of ties, the following tie-breakers will determine the final standings: 1) head-to-head competition, 2) fewest runs allowed in head-to-head competition, 3) most runs scored in head-to-head games, 4) fewest runs allowed in all games.
14. MISCELLANEOUS: Rain-outs or cancelled games will be rescheduled by the WRA scheduler; coaches will be notified as soon as possible. A loss of a player should be reported to the league representative as soon as possible. Players are encouraged, but not required, to wear a protective cup.