

West Bridgewater Youth Athletic Association

SOFTBALL RULES^{1 2}

All W.B.Y.A.A. House Rules and By-Laws will apply. [32]

1. Section 1: Player / Fan Conduct -

- 1.1. Any person ejected from a game will be given a one (1) game suspension. The person is entitled to a hearing before the Executive Board at his/her option before the suspension takes place. The Executive Board hearing shall take place within 2 weeks or the appeal shall be dismissed and the suspension is served the next game. Two (2) technical or warnings to a player will result in same. An adult can be asked by the Official to leave the playing area, (i.e. gym, baseball, softball, or soccer fields of the W.B.Y.A.A. complex) if official deems it necessary. One game suspension will be served next scheduled game. Player is to sit out complete game in uniform. [HR#10]
- 1.2. Games will not start until a qualified representative from the team reports to the Snack Shack.³
- 1.3. No food will be allowed in the dugouts. Managers and Coaches may bring in coolers and gum. Teams are responsible for cleaning out the dugout after each game.⁴
- 1.4. No one will be allowed to leave the field to go to the snack bar during the game.
- 1.5. The umpire and Coach has the right to put anyone out of the game for throwing equipment, using offensive language or having poor sportsmanship. [17]
- 1.6. No smoking by players during practice or a game. [19]

2. Section 2: Divisions: Age Groups -

- 2.1. A player must be at least (7) seven years old by September 1st and cannot be (15) before September 1st.

¹ Format change of rules **Approved 4/2010**. Bracketed number after each rule refers to previous numbering system.

² The following rules were **Deleted 10/2006**:

- *Batting and running helmets are mandatory. [24] ;*
- *Catcher's equipment and helmet are mandatory. [27];*
- *All regulation softball bats will be used in Senior League. [33] ;*
- *Instructional and Minor divisions use 11-inch softball. Major division use 12-inch softball. [34];*
- *Senior Division rules will be separate from Minor and Instructional divisions to read: Senior division softball will play by the rules outlined under "Fast Pitch" rules in the rule book of the Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA) with the following exceptions: All W.B.Y.A.A. House rules and by laws will apply. [35]*
- *Lights may be turned on at umpire's discretion. No games will be re-scheduled under the lights. [1]*

³ **Rule amended 3/2011**, previously read: " If a team representative from his team does not work the snack bar, the Manager will take the representative's place. 14 & 15 year olds are eligible to work the window in the snack bar if needed. This is to be approved by one of the following: President, Vice President, an Executive Board member, or Snack Bar Committee member on duty".

⁴ **Rule added 3/2011**

2.2. Generally, Divisions will be separated by the following age groups. Commissioners [Coaches] are entitled to shift the cut-off dates to ensure balanced divisions.

2.3. Minors - ages: 7, 8, and 9; Majors - ages: 10, 11, and 12; Seniors - ages: 13 and 14.⁵

2.4. Players may not be on more than one roster.

3. **Section 3: Game Play** –

3.1. **Uniforms**

3.1.1. T-shirts and visors will be provided by the WBYAA as a part of the sign-up fee and will not be collected at the end of the season.⁶ [1a]

3.1.2. Pants will be provided by the WBYAA and must be returned by all players at the end of the season. This means that managers/coaches should instruct their team to wear an alternative to their WBYAA issued softball/baseball pants at their last game.⁷ [1b]

3.2. **Equipment**

3.2.1. No metal spikes may be worn.⁸ [1c]

3.2.2. Batter, on deck batter and base runners must wear helmets with fastened chin straps and attached mask.⁹ [1d]

3.2.3. Catcher will wear mask, shin protector, chest protector and helmet.¹⁰ [1e]

3.2.4. Instructional and Minor Divisions will use an eleven (11) inch ball. Major/Senior Division will use a twelve (12) inch ball.¹¹ [1f]

3.2.5. Sixty (60) feet between bases - all divisions. [13]

3.2.6. All teams will be issued a "pitchers mask". Facial wipes may be provided for hygiene concerns.¹²

3.3. **Game Time**

3.3.1. All games officially scheduled will not begin another inning after (1) one hour (40) forty minutes. The game will end (2) two hours after scheduled start time regardless. *If there is an 8:00 pm game, it will not start any later than 8:15pm. Time of game will be monitored by the umpire. Lights turned on for outside activities will be charged at the current hourly rate with the permission of the Board of Directors or the President. [1]

⁵ **Rule amended 3/2011**, previously read: *"Little League: Instructional/Minor - ages 7, 8, 9, and 10. Major - ages 11, 12, 13, and 14. [25] Age limit for sign-ups. See House Rules. [26]"*

⁶ **Added 10/2006**

⁷ **Added 10/2006**

⁸ **Added 10/2006**

⁹ **Added 10/2006; amended 3/2011** by adding: *"and attached mask."*

¹⁰ **Added 10/2006**

¹¹ **Added 10/2006; amended 3/2011** by adding: *"Senior"*

¹² **Added 3/2011**

3.3.2. All games will be played according to the schedule submitted to the Executive Board. Games can be changed only with the permission of the President or Commissioner and according to W.B.Y.A.A. policy. [2]

3.3.3. Games shall consist of (6) six innings. Umpires may declare a legal game after 3 1/2 innings (because of darkness or weather conditions). Any games started but not completed to a legal game will be picked up from the exact point of stoppage. [6]

3.3.4. All protests will be settled immediately before the game may continue. Protest will be settled by President, Vice President, Commissioner, Divisional Coordinator, Executive Board member on duty. Any Coach with a rule issue, question should ask umpire to address in conference behind home plate, with other Coach present and out of spectator earshot.¹³

3.3.5. All canceled or make-up games will be made up as time permits.¹⁴ The Commissioner will make field assignments¹⁵.

3.4. **Playing Time**

3.4.1. Every player must play in the field, up to ten (10) defensive players. Additional players will be rotated into game each inning. No player shall sit for 2 innings before every player has sat 1 inning. A player may enter/reenter the game at any time. All players will bat in a continuous, rotating order. Late players will be inserted at the end of the order.¹⁶

3.4.1.1. No player in the Minors Division may play the same position for more than (3) three consecutive innings.¹⁷

3.4.1.2. Each player in the Minors Division must have an opportunity to play each position for an inning (3) outs, sometime during the season.¹⁸ The child may pass on his/her turn if they are uncomfortable in a given position. [5]¹⁹

3.4.2. Rules of pitching:²⁰

3.4.2.1. A pitcher once removed from pitching cannot come back to pitch.

3.4.2.2. A pitcher may not pitch more than (six) innings per week; one pitch constitutes one

¹³ **Amended 3/2011**, previously read: "All protests will be settled immediately (House Rule) before the game may continue. Protest will be settled by president, vice president, commissioner, divisional coordinator, Executive Board member on duty, or umpire-in-chief. [30]".

¹⁴ **Amended 10/2006**, previously read: All canceled or make-up games will be made up within seven days as time permits.

¹⁵ **Amended 3/2011**, previously read: "The President will...".

¹⁶ **Amended 3/2011**, previously read: "Every player on the team must play (3) innings each game. Therefore, a change of players on the bench will occur at the end of the third inning. Substitutes ending games will be a starter the next game. No player will sit out more than (3) innings before all players have sat out (3) innings (6 innings etc.). Instructional League must rotate a different substitute every inning."

¹⁷ **Amended 3/2011**, by replacing: "on an Instructional team" with "in the Minors Division".

¹⁸ **Amended 3/2011**, by replacing: "instructional league" with "Minors Division".

¹⁹ The following rule was **Deleted 3/2011**: "Each player who is a substitute in one game will be a starter the next game."

²⁰ The following rule was **Deleted 10/2006**: "c: A pitcher can pitch the next day if she pitched (3) three or less innings. d. Instructional/Minor Divisions will slow-pitch."

inning. Exception: If there is a third game in the week, pitcher may pitch (3) three more innings. [22]

3.4.2.3. Pitchers may pitch using a "windmill style" or fast pitch style delivery.²¹

3.4.2.4. The pitcher's pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitching rubber throughout the pitching delivery.²²

3.5. In-Game Player Substitutions²³

3.5.1. The team on the field will consist of 10 (ten) players. If one team has less, the other team will give that team the number to equal (9) nine players. If one team has less than 8 players, the game will be considered a forfeit for the standings.²⁴

3.5.2. If player(s) must be sent to the other team under rule 3, it cannot be the same player in succession, or no more than twice in a season. [4]

4. Section 4: Game Rules²⁵ –

4.1. Minor League and Instructional League - batter is out when a 3rd strike is legally caught or not caught - no drop 3rd strike rule. [7]

4.2. No bunting allowed in Minors Division.²⁶ [8]

4.3. Stealing - Major and Senior Division only, when ball crosses the plate.

4.3.1. Stealing may occur as many times in an inning as desired.

4.3.2. Runner(s) is out if leaving the base prior to the ball crossing the plate.

4.3.3. Batter/Runner at their option, or coach's option, may try to steal second base on a walk. The batter/runner must not stop their process to second base once they have decided to continue to second base, unless a play is being made on them. Once a play is being made, the batter/runner may either continue to second base, or return to first. If no play is being made on the batter/runner, and they stop the motion towards second base, the batter/runner is out. Base runners on third base cannot advance home on a steal (they must be hit or forced in by a walk with bases loaded).²⁷

²¹ **Added 3/2011.**

²² **Added 3/2011.**

²³ The following rule was **Deleted 3/2011**: "*Once a player is taken from the game, he/she cannot re-enter unless a player is injured and there are no other substitutes. [16]*"

²⁴ **Amended 3/2011**, previously read: "*The team on the field will consist of 10 (ten) players. If one team has (9) nine players, the other team will play with (9) nine players. If one team has less, the other team will give that team the number to equal (9) nine players. [3]*"

²⁵ The following rule was **Deleted 3/2011**: "*Major and minor Divisions - draft same as baseball. [23]*"

²⁶ **Amended 3/2011**, previously read: "*No bunting - Instructional League only.*"

²⁷ **Amended 3/2011**, clause previously included: "*If this happens any run scored when batter/runner is out for stopping, the run doesn't count and the runner returns. [9]*"

- 4.4. Leading: Instructional/Minor - runner is out if she leaves the base before the ball is hit.
- 4.4.1. Major/Senior divisions: after the ball crosses the plate. Note- one step dive back, W.B.Y.A.A. rule applies.
- 4.4.2. Runner must return to respective base once the pitcher has the ball on the pitching rubber. If runner doesn't return, the runner is out. Exception: if pitcher is making a motion at the runner. [10]
- 4.5. One base on an overthrow (out of playing field). [11]
- 4.6. Pitching Distance will be as follows:²⁸
- 4.6.1. Minors Division: Distance will be 35 feet from home plate. Teams may use "machine pitch" for at least the first four games of the season, at the discretion of the Softball Committee. Teams will go to "player pitch" with the approval of the Commissioner.
- 4.6.1.1. With "machine pitch", each batter will get 5 machine pitches. First pitch that the batter hits into play, batter will run/play. On fifth pitch, if batter swings and misses or doesn't swing, will be out. If 5th pitch is a foul, batter will get additional pitch(es) until ball is hit into play, swings and misses, or takes a pitch.
- 4.6.1.2. After "machine pitch", Division may select option of "Coach pitch", depending on overall player progress through the first four games before moving to "player pitch".
- 4.6.1.3. Once in "Coach pitch" or "player pitch" option, 4 balls and 3 strikes only will be utilized.
- 4.6.2. Major/Senior Divisions will pitch at a distance of 40 feet from home plate.²⁹
- 4.7. Head first sliding will be prohibited in all divisions. Any player violating this rule will be called out automatically by the umpire. [14]
- 4.8. No infield fly rule in Minors Division.³⁰
- 4.9. Throwing of the bat - batter is automatically out. [18]
- 4.10. Five Run Rule - only (5) five runs can be scored in a 1/2 inning. Five Run Rule is waived after the

²⁸ Section 4.6 **Amended 3/2011**, previously read: "*Instructional – Entire season will be pitched by a coach/parent slow pitch from a distance not closer than 20 feet from home plate. There will be a 10 pitch rule (a batter will be thrown a maximum of 10 pitches, with no walks or strike outs). Minor – From opening day to the second Monday in May, players will slow pitch from a distance not closer than 25 feet from home plate. From the second Monday in May through the end of the season, players will pitch at a distance not closer than 30 feet from home plate.*"²⁸

²⁹ **Amended 10/2006**, previously read: "*25 feet between home plate and pitcher's mound - girls less than 10 years (if needed). 30 feet between home plate and pitcher's mound - 10 1/2 year olds. 35 feet between home plate and pitcher's mound - Minor division - 1st half of season. 40 feet between home plate and pitcher's mound - Minor division - 2nd half of season. 40 feet between home plate and pitcher's mound - any girl 13 years or over.*" **Further Amended 3/2011**, by adding: "*Seniors Division.*"

³⁰ **Amended 3/2011**, previously read: "*No infield fly rule - instructional Division. [15]*"

fifth (5th) complete inning.³¹

4.11. No intentional walks in any division. [21]

4.12. The playing of a 10th player will be an outfielder and must be positioned at approximately same depth as other outfielders.³² [29]

4.13. Mercy Rule - For Majors and Senior Division only; 10 runs after 4 innings (Home team will bat if trailing).³³

5. Section 5: All-Star Team³⁴

5.1. In lieu of an All-Star team, and with majority vote from the Coaches, a mother/daughter game **may** be played in each division.³⁵ [33]

5.2. An All-Star team will be picked and recognized each year in all divisions as outlined in Section 4 of the WBYAA House Rules and Regulations .³⁶

³¹ **Amended 3/2011**, previously read: "Seven Run Rule - only (7) seven runs can be scored in one inning. Seven Run Rule is waived after the fifth (5th) complete inning. Instructional, Minor and Major divisions. [20]"

³² **Amended 10/2006** previously read: *The playing of a 10th player in the Minor and Senior division will be an outfielder and must be positioned at approximately same depth as other outfielders. Minimum of 20 feet instructional league and 30 feet major and minor league.*

³³ **Added 3/2011**

³⁴ The following language was **Deleted 3/2011**: "Hats will be supplied for All-Star teams in all divisions. [33]"

³⁵ **Added 10/2006**

³⁶ The following language was **Deleted 4/2010**; "An All Star/Tournament team will be picked each year by each manager of that division via a written ballot that will be placed in a sealed envelope and returned to the division commissioner by a specific date and time. After ballots are turned into the commissioner, a discussion will take place between the commissioner and the managers prior to the final roster being turned into the president"; and **Replaced with entire Rule 5.3**. Further **Amended on 3/2011** to read: "as outlined in Section 4 of the WBYAA House Rules and Regulations ."