

Grandville Rules Clinic 2012

The Rules of Little League Baseball and Softball

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Today's Agenda

- How our Umpiring System Works
- How to Talk to an Umpire
- Safety Rules
- Rules that Differ from MLB
- Supplemental Rules
- Interesting Rules
- Rule Myths
- Questions / Your Topics

How Our Umpire Program Works

- Almost all your games will be umpired by teens
 - Each has attended classes and many have umpired in the league before.
- The league UIC assigns umpires to games
 - Umpires for your games should arrive 20 minutes before game time.
 - If you are missing an umpire, call me.
 - If you have feedback about an umpire, call me.
- We rarely have had a problem, but remember, it is our job as adults to always conduct ourselves in a manner that displays good sportsmanship and the proper respect for authority on and off the field.

How to Talk to an Umpire – 9.02

- At the end of a play, a manager may request “time” and, when granted, approach the umpire that made the call. (Don't yell across the field)
 - Politely ask your question about the ruling.
 - If the question is about a “judgment call” (ball/strike, fair/foul, safe/out), no argument is allowed.
 - If the question is about “application of a rule,” you may ask the umpire to consult with his partner.
 - If the umpire decides to, he may consult his partner, but his partner cannot over rule him. If he is convinced he made a mistake applying a rule, he may change his mind.

Safety During the Game

- **Players do not handle/swing bats in the dugout or outside the playing field.** The batter entering the field should grab the bat on the way out of the dugout.
- **Players should remain in the dugout except when playing.** Players should not stand in or around dugout openings. An adult coach should be in the dugout at all times.
- **In Majors and below, the on-deck hitter is not allowed.** At the beginning of an inning, only the first batter may come out of the dugout with a bat and warm up well away from the plate and any coaches or players.

Safety During the Game

- **All batters and runners wear batting helmets.** Also, any players who are coaching bases must wear a helmet.
- **The catcher must have a “dangler”** (throat guard) attached to the mask.
- **Between innings, any player warming up the pitcher must wear a catcher's mask and helmet.** Shin guards and chest protection are optional.

Bat Inspection – Baseball

- For baseball games, a bat inspection is required 10 minutes before game time.
- Composite barreled bats in Majors & below must be on the approved bat list.
 - This is not an approved list for Juniors this year.
- If you have a composite bat, I suggest you print out the list and have it with you at every game
 - www.littleleague.org/learn/equipment/baseballbatinfo.htm

Baseball Legal Bats (Reg IV)

Division	Max Length	Max Diameter	Barrel Material	Required Marking	Drop
Majors and below	33"	2-1/4"	Wood	None	Any
			Metal/Alloy	BPF 1.15 or lower	Any
			Composite*	BPF 1.15 or lower	Any
Juniors	34"	2-5/8"	Wood	None	Any
			Metal/Alloy	None	Any
			Composite	BBCOR	Any
Seniors	36"	2-5/8"	Wood	None	Minus 3
			Not wood	BBCOR	Minus 3

*Composite Bats in the Majors and below divisions must be on the Approved List.

Baseball Legal Bats (Reg IV)

- **Penalty for Use of an Illegal Bat**
 - Discovered before batter steps into box
 - Remove bat from play
 - Discovered after batter steps into box
 - Remove bat from play
 - Batter is out
 - Lose one eligible adult base coach (not ejection)

Baseball Legal Bats (Reg IV)

- Discovered after hit, defense accepts play
 - Remove bat from play
 - Lose one eligible adult base coach
 - All advances legal
- Discovered after hit, defense accepts penalty
 - Remove bat from play
 - Batter is out
 - Lose one eligible adult base coach
 - Nullify any advances due to use of illegal bat
- Discovered after next batter steps into box
 - Remove bat from play

Pre-Game Meeting

- The plate umpire will call both managers to the plate area 5 minutes before game time
 - Introduce yourselves to each other
 - Assure umpires that your players are properly equipped – No jewelry (includes rope necklaces), no illegal bats
 - Review ground rules – Field 13 trees
 - Clarify method for questioning calls
 - No discussion on judgment calls (balls/strikes, safe/out)
 - After receiving time, go to the umpire that made the call
 - Can ask the umpires confer to review a rule decision

Mandatory Play Requirement – Supplementary Rules

- **Baseball and Softball Majors & below**
 - All players present at the beginning of a game must play at least 3 full innings in the field
- **Softball Juniors & Seniors**
 - For a team with fewer than 13 players, MPR is 3 full innings in the field and 1 at bat
 - For a team with 13 or more players, MPR is 2 consecutive innings and 1 at bat
- **Baseball Juniors & Seniors**
 - 3 full innings and 1 at bat
 - Re-entry not allowed until sub has completed 6 consecutive outs and 1 at bat

Ending the Game

- Darkness & Weather – 5.10
- Time Limits – Supplementary Rules
 - Softball Minors
 - No new inning after 9PM on weekdays
 - No new inning 2 hours after start time if another game follows
 - Baseball Minors
 - No new inning after 8:30PM on weekdays
 - No new inning 2 hours after start time if another game follows
 - Softball & Baseball Majors
 - No new inning 2 hours after start time if another game follows
 - Softball & Baseball Juniors and Seniors – No limits
 - Inning starts when last out is made

Ending the Game

- Mercy – Supplementary Rules

Division	Completed Innings	Run Lead
Softball AA,AAA & Majors	4 or more	10 or more
Softball Juniors & Seniors	5 or more	10 or more
Baseball AA,AAA & Majors	4 or more	15 or more
Baseball Juniors & Seniors	5 or more	15 or more

Supplementary Rules

- Softball & Baseball AA
 - No stealing when ahead by 10 runs or more
 - One base stolen per batter
 - Coach rescue pitching
 - Fourth outfielder allowed (Softball only)
- Softball AAA
 - No stealing when ahead by 10 runs or more
 - One base stolen per pitch until May 14 then no restriction
 - 5 run limit for the first 3 innings until May 14

Little League Rules – Outs

- The runner is out:
 - When the runner does not slide or attempt to avoid a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make a tag – 7.08(a)(3)
 - THERE IS NO “MUST SLIDE RULE”
 - This situation can happen anywhere on the field, not just at a base.
 - Any fielder blocking a base without the ball is likely guilty of obstruction.
 - A runner can be ejected but not called out for running over a fielder who doesn't have the ball
 - Accidental collisions still happen
 - Slides head-first into a base while advancing – 7.08(a)(4)

Leaving Early (7.13) - Baseball

- When the pitcher has the ball on the rubber and the catcher is ready to receive a pitch, base runners may not leave their base until a pitched ball reaches the batter.
 - **If a play is made on the runner**, let the play continue. If the runner is put out, ignore the infraction; if the runner is safe, call time and return all runners to the bases left.
 - **If the batter gets a hit**, let the play continue until action stops, then call time, place the batter based on value of the hit and return all runners to the bases closest to the ones left.
 - Infraction by one runner applies to all. Everyone returns, except where forces prevent it.
- You cannot stop a runner who continues to advance with this rule.

Leaving Early (7.13) - Softball

- When the pitcher has the ball in the pitcher's circle
- Runners off base are out if they fail to immediately advance or return - 7.08(a) Note 3
 - Runners may not leave their base until – 7.08(a)(5), Supplementary Rules
 - AA – the pitch reaches the batter
 - AAA & above – the pitcher has released the ball
 - Penalty for leaving early
 - Ball is immediately dead (Batter cannot hit it)
 - Runner leaving early is out

Little League Rules

- Third strike not caught in flight – 6.05, 6.09
 - Batter is not out and becomes a runner if:
 - There are 2 outs, or
 - With less than 2 outs, no runner on first base
 - If first base is occupied, the batter is out even if the runner on first is stealing
 - This rule applies to – Supplementary rules
 - Softball Majors and higher – full season
 - Softball AAA – after May 14
 - Baseball Juniors and higher – full season
 - Baseball Major & AAA – unknown right now

Little League Rules

- If a base is dislodged during a play – 7.08(c)
 - No additional plays can be made on that runner at that base
 - Any following runners are safe if they touch the dislodged base or the original location of the base
- Batter throwing the bat
 - Warn the batter and coach
 - Never an out

Pitcher Basics – Baseball – Reg VI(c)

A pitcher must be removed from the mound when he has reached the pitch count limit for his age and finished pitching to the current batter

Age	Limit Per Day
17-18	105
13-16	95
11-12	85
9-10	75
7-8	50

Pitcher Basics – Baseball – Reg IV(d)

Pitches Delivered for Ages 14 and Younger	Pitches Delivered for Ages 15 and Older	Rest Required
66 or more	76 or more	4 days
51 – 65	61 – 75	3 days
36 – 50	46 – 60	2 days
21 – 35	31 – 45	1 day
1 – 20	1 – 30	None

Pitching in more than one game in a day – Reg IV(k)

- Majors & below – Not allowed
- Juniors & above – Allowed if 31 or fewer pitches delivered in the first game. Pitch counts are per day.

Pitcher Basics – Baseball

- A player that has delivered 41 or more pitches in a game cannot be catcher for the rest of the day – Reg IV(c)
- A player that has been catcher in any part of 4 innings cannot be pitcher for the rest of the day – Reg IV(a)
- Once removed from the mound – Reg IV(b)
 - Majors & below – may not return to pitcher
 - Juniors & above – may return to pitch once if he has remained in the game at a defensive position

Pitcher Basics – Softball

Division	Innings Pitched	Rest Required	Max Innings	Max Innings
AA	3 or more	1 day	6 per game	6 per week
AAA	3 or more	1 day	6 per game	6 per week 9 per week*
Majors	2 or more	1 day	9 per game	9 per week
Juniors	5 or more	1 day	10 per day	18 per week
Seniors	5 or more	1 day	10 per day	30 per week

- From Reg IV(b) and Supplementary Rules
- Calendar week is Sunday through Saturday
- Delivery of one pitch constitutes an inning pitched
- For AAA, 9 innings per week allowed only if the team is scheduled for 3 games in that week

Pitcher Basics – Softball

- If removed from pitcher but remaining in a defensive position, a player may return to pitcher anytime, but only once in the same inning she was removed – Reg IV(c)
- In Majors and above, no more than 5 pitchers may be used per game unless the fifth pitcher becomes injured – Reg IV(d)

Pitcher Basics – Softball (8.00)

- Pivot foot on pitcher's plate, free foot on plate or behind within the width of the plate
- Take a signal (or appear to) with hands separated
- Bring hands together, one step forward, pivot foot must remain in contact with plate or push off and drag away (No leaping)
- Crow hop, replacing the pivot foot and pushing off, is an illegal pitch.
- A pitch dropped during delivery is a ball and remains live.

Pitcher Basics – BB & SB (8.00)

- A pitcher can be substituted at any time – even during an at-bat
- A coach can visit the same pitcher – 8.06
 - 2 times in one inning; third time the pitcher must be relieved
 - 3 times in the game; fourth time the pitcher must be relieved
 - New pitcher is not charged a visit on entry
- Pitches must be delivered for intentional walks

Pitcher Basics – Baseball Majors and AAA

- Proper positions: Windup or Set – 8.01
- Take sign while on pitcher's plate – no quick pitches
- No balks, but illegal pitches at the discretion of the umpire based on division – 8.01, 8.05
- A pitch that slips out of the pitcher's hand
 - Crosses a foul line - ball
 - Doesn't cross a foul line, no runners on base - no pitch
 - Doesn't cross a foul line, runners on base - illegal pitch (ball)

Pitcher Basics – Baseball Juniors/Seniors

- Proper positions: Windup or Set – 8.01
 - Can throw to a base from either
 - Must step toward base
 - Base must be occupied or to make a play
 - Must step backward with pivot foot to disengage
- Take sign while on pitcher's plate – no quick pitches
- Illegal pitches listed in 8.05, balk with runners on
- Balk is not an immediate dead ball
 - If a pitch follows, the offense may take the resulting play or the penalty
- A pitch that slips out of the pitcher's hand
 - Crosses a foul line - ball
 - Doesn't cross a foul line, no runners on base - no pitch
 - Doesn't cross a foul line, runners on base - balk

Appeals

- **Some infractions are not automatic outs.** Rather, the defense must point out the infraction and tag the offending runner or relevant base.
 - Runner misses touching a base – 7.10(b), (c)
 - Runner misses home plate and makes no effort to return – 7.10(d)
 - Runner fails to return to first base immediately after overrunning – 7.10(c)
 - Runner fails to tag up on a caught fair or foul fly ball – 7.10(a)
 - Not a force play!
 - A player fails to bat in his proper position in the batting order – 6.07

How to Appeal – 7.10

- The ball must be alive and in play
 - If already live, the ball does not need to be returned to the pitcher
 - Since it is live, runners may attempt to advance
- The defense must specify the infraction while tagging the appropriate base or player
- Appeals must be made before the next play or pitch (not counting “continuous action” that includes the appealable infraction)
- You can appeal only once. If you err on the appeal, you lose the right

Interference

- Any action by an offensive player that “obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play.” – 2.00, 7.09
 - Runner is hit by fair batted ball: Runner out; dead ball.
 - Runner collides (even slightly) with a fielder making play on batted ball: Runner out; dead ball.
 - Runner intentionally impedes a player’s attempt to throw the ball to make a play: Runner out, and possibly the other runner is also out; dead ball
 - Runner intentionally slaps away tag: runner out; dead ball.
 - Batter intentionally or through willful neglect interferes with play at the plate: runner out; dead ball – unless third out, then batter is out

Obstruction

- “... a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding the ball, impedes the progress of any runner” – 2.0, 7.06
 - Type “A”: A play is being made on obstructed runner – immediate dead ball; award bases at least one passed the one last touched
 - Type “B”: A play is not being made on obstructed runner – delayed dead ball; award the base which, in the umpire’s judgment, the runner would have attained had the obstruction not occurred.
- If obstructed while returning to a base (as on pick-off play), always award the next base.

Obstruction

- The two most common points of obstruction:
 - Extra-base hit and first baseman is watching the ball and in the base path when batter-runner bumps into him rounding first base.
 - Home plate – Catcher is blocking the plate without the ball. The base line belongs to the runner and the catcher should be there only when fielding a ball or with the ball already in his/her possession

Batting Out of Order

When a player bats out of order, the “proper batter” (the one who failed to bat in his proper place) is the one called out and the at-bat of the “improper batter” is nullified – 6.07.

- **This is an appeal play for the defensive coach.** The umpire should not call attention to a player batting out of order.
- **If discovered while the improper batter is still at bat,** simply replace with the proper batter who assumes the count.
- **If discovered following the first pitch to the batter following the improper batter,** the improper batter’s at-bat becomes legitimate and the batting order picks up at that point
- **If discovered before the first pitch to the next batter,** the proper batter is called out, the improper batter’s at-bat is nullified, and the batting order picks up with the batter following the proper batter.

Infield Fly – (2.00)

... a fair fly ball (not including a line drive nor an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, when first and second, or first, second and third bases are occupied, before two are out.

- Meant to protect the offense from an easy double play
- No outs or one out
- Force at third
- **Ordinary effort varies with division**
- If the umpire forgets to call the IF, the rule may be applied after the fact.

Foul tip (2.00)

- A foul tip is a batted ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher's hands and is caught.
 - It is a strike
 - It is a live ball (runners may steal)
 - It is NOT a foul ball

Rule Myths (all false)

- The hands are considered part of the bat.
- The batter-runner must turn to his right after over-running first base.
- If the batter breaks his wrists when swinging, it's a strike.
- If a batted ball hits the plate first it's a foul ball.
- The ball is dead on a foul-tip.
- The batter who batted out of order is the person declared out.
- The batter may not overrun first base when he gets a base-on-balls.
- If the batter does not pull the bat out of the strike zone while in the bunting position, it's an automatic strike. (True for softball, however)

Rule Myths (all false)

- The batter-runner is always out if he runs outside the running lane after a bunted ball.
- A runner is out if he slaps hands or high-fives other players or base coaches, after a homerun is hit over the fence.
- Tie goes to the runner. (There are no ties – either the runner arrived first or the ball did)
- The runner gets the base he's going to, plus one on a ball thrown out-of-play.
- Anytime a coach touches a runner, the runner is out.
- The runner must always slide when the play is close.
- The runner is always safe when hit by a batted ball while touching a base.
- A runner may not steal on a foul-tip.

Rule Myths (all false)

- It is a force out when a runner is called out for not tagging up on a fly ball.
- An appeal on a runner who missed a base cannot be a force out.
- A runner is out if he runs out of the baseline to avoid a fielder who is fielding a batted ball.
- Runners may not advance when an infield fly is called.
- No run can score when a runner is called out for the third out for not tagging up.
- A pitch that bounces to the plate cannot be hit.
- The batter does not get first base if hit by a pitch after it bounces.
- If a fielder holds a fly ball for 2 seconds it's a catch. (Release of ball must be voluntary)

Rule Myths (all false)

- You must tag the base with your foot on a force out or appeal.
- If a player's feet are in fair territory when the ball is touched, it is a fair ball.
- The ball must always be returned to the pitcher before an appeal can be made.
- With no runners on base, it is a ball if the pitcher starts his windup and then stops.
- If a fielder catches a fly ball and then falls over the fence it is a homerun.
- The ball is dead anytime an umpire is hit by the ball.
- The home plate umpire can overrule the other umps at anytime.

Questions