



# Mustang League Rules

KENILWORTH-WINNETKA BASEBALL ASSOCIATION

(Revised March 2018)

## 1. POLICIES ON SPORTSMANSHIP AND CONDUCT

- 1.1. The coaches shall promote sportsmanlike conduct and control the behavior and deportment of their players, assistant coaches, fans, as well as themselves.
- 1.2. The coaches will do their best to emphasize the League's purpose of developing skills and providing fun for the players, while encouraging respectful competition within the game.
- 1.3. It is acceptable for a coach to keep score. The exercise around keeping score is to develop knowledge and understanding of baseball rules and to assist in playoff seeding.
- 1.4. A player or coach who swears throws a bat or batting helmet, or is otherwise disruptive or unsportsmanlike shall be given a verbal warning by the umpire. A player who engages in such conduct may, at the umpire's discretion, lose his next turn at bat. Any subsequent act of misconduct by that player or coach shall result in ejection from the game.
- 1.5. Coaches and players may not question or protest judgment calls made by the umpire. Coaches will be responsible for requiring their players and their team's fans to do so likewise.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1. No player may participate in a regular season game until their eligibility is confirmed, their release form is submitted, all league fees are paid, and they have attended the skills evaluation session (unless the Commissioners have consented in advance).

## 3. EQUIPMENT & UNIFORMS

- 3.1. Rubber-cleated shoes are highly encouraged. No metal spikes of any kind are allowed.
- 3.2. During games, all players are expected to wear full uniforms (cap, shirt, pants, belt, and baseball socks). The uniform shirt should be tucked in.
- 3.3. All metal and alloy bats with a max barrel of 2 5/8 inches, max SPF of 1.15, max length of 33 inches, max drop of Minus 12. Composite barreled bats meeting



these requirements will be allowed if they are approved for use by USA Baseball (<https://www.usabaseball.com/>).

- 3.4. All batters and base runners must wear batting helmets with face masks at all times.
- 3.5. Any player who is catching for a pitcher must wear a catcher's mask, including the time when the catcher is "warming up" the pitcher and no batter is present. Catchers must wear cups. Other players are encouraged to wear cups.

#### 4. **PLAYING FIELD DIMENSIONS**

- 4.1. The distance between bases will be 60 feet. The distance between home plate and the pitching rubber will be 44 feet measured from the back tip of the plate to the front of the pitching rubber.

#### 5. **NUMBER OF ROSTER PLAYERS & PLAYING TIME**

- 5.1. Teams must have at least 6 roster players present at game time; otherwise the team forfeits the game.
- 5.2. Teams that have at least 10 roster players present during a game must play with 10 players on defense, irrespective of the number of players available to the opposing team (a team that has less than 9 players may ask the opposing team to supply an outfielder when the opposing team is at bat). When a team has 10 players on defense, four of the players must play outfield, equally spread across the field.
- 5.3. Outfielders must play in an arc at a distance of at least 20 feet behind second base. Outfielders may not make plays on the infield, but outfielders CAN make throws to any infielder to force a runner at any base (e.g. an outfielder CANNOT field a ball and run to a base and step on it to force a runner or cover a base from the outfield – the runner in this case will be called safe – but an outfielder CAN field a ball and throw it to any infielder covering any base for a force out). Only infielders can make plays in the infield. Outfielders backing up plays in the infield must throw the ball to an infielder to make a play on a base runner. Outfielders may not cover a base during a steal attempt.
- 5.4. If a team has less than 10 roster players present during a regular season game, the team may use a non-rostered player at any position **except** pitcher. A non-roster player will be entitled (but not required) to bat and will be placed at the bottom of the line-up. A non-roster player **must** be a player registered with KWBA, either in the Mustang League or in a KWBA League for younger ages. During the post-season championship tournament, non-roster players may not play to fill out a team having less than 10 roster players.



5.5. All rostered players present during a game must bat in turn, regardless of whether they are playing defense. It is the intent of the league for all players to have the opportunity to play every position on a regular basis, within limits for their safety and capabilities (i.e. don't have a player pitch that cannot throw the ball as far as home plate or have a player that cannot catch play first base). Players should rotate regularly between infield and outfield. At a minimum:

5.5.1. Each player must play at least 2 innings of defense in the infield (first baseman, second baseman, shortstop, third baseman, catcher, or pitcher) by the end of the fifth inning. A player must play at least one inning in the outfield by the end of the fourth inning.

5.5.2. Each roster player present at game time may not sit out more than 1 inning on defense until each of the other roster players has also sat out at least 1 inning on defense. Similarly, each player must sit out 2 innings before a player can sit out 3 innings. **This is a high priority and the responsibility of the Head Coach.**

5.6. Players who arrive after game time should be added to the end of the batting line-up and should hit the next time that spot is due up.

## 6. **SCORERS: REPORTING**

6.1. The home team is responsible for recording the official score at each game.

## 7. **GAME DEFINITION & NUMBER OF INNINGS**

7.1. A "regulation game" will last 6 innings. An "official game" must last at least 5 full innings (4 ½ innings if the home team is leading at the end of the top of the 5th inning).

7.2. Games suspended due to weather will be rescheduled, if possible. The game will be played from the point of suspension through the completion of 6 innings. League Commissioners will reschedule the games.

7.3. During the regular season if the score is tied after six innings or at the end of play due to reaching the time limit, the game will be a tie. Teams will not play extra innings during the regular season. However, in the playoffs, teams will play extra innings until a winner is decided.

## 8. **PACE OF PLAY**

8.1. Length of Games: The time limit for regular season games is 2 hours, regardless of the score or situation in the game. A new inning will not begin after 1 hr 45 mins. However, if an inning begins before the 1 hr 45 min time limit, the inning will be played until the 2 hr limit is reached.



- 8.2. The umpire will keep the time and notify the coaches at the start of the game as to the official game time. Only the umpire in his sole judgment in consultation with the coaches can amend the length of games.
- 8.3. The pitcher will be allowed a maximum of 5 warm-up pitches between innings.
- 8.4. If there is one out and the team at bat has its catcher for the next half inning on base, the catcher on base should be removed from the base and be replaced by the player who has made the last out. In addition, if there are two outs and the catcher of the hitting team is not on base, the umpire should remind the coach to get the catcher ready to start the next half inning.

## 9. PITCHERS

- 9.1. Each pitcher may throw a maximum of 1 inning per game. If a pitcher pitches in any part of an inning that constitutes an inning pitched.
- 9.2. Once a pitcher stops pitching and leaves the field or switches to another position, he/she cannot pitch again that game (even if he/she has not pitched a full inning).
- 9.3. Any pitcher who hits 3 batters during a game will be immediately replaced and will not be allowed to pitch again that game. This Rule may be waived by the home plate umpire (i.e., if a batter should/could have moved to avoid being hit by a pitch).
- 9.4. A third grader must pitch at least one inning (defined as three consecutive outs in an inning) prior to the beginning of the fourth inning. In the event a third grade pitcher is unable to finish an inning for any reason (injury, ability, etc.), the team remains obligated to fulfill the "third grade inning" requirement and may substitute another third grader who has not pitched in that game. If a 3rd grader gives up the 4 run maximum before he has pitched 3 outs, the 3rd grade requirement has been met.
- 9.5. If player swings at a pitched ball that has struck the ground and the ball is put in play, it is a "live ball" and a missed swing on such a pitch remains a strike. Any pitch that touches the ground and bounces through the strike zone without being swung at by the batter is a ball. A pitch that has hit the ground will be considered "live" for the purposes of "stealing bases" as specifically defined by Rule #11 with two outs, unless it touches the batter. In that case, it is a dead ball and that batter shall be awarded first base and all forced runners will advance a base, including the awarding of home.
- 9.6. There are no intentional walks. Pitchers must pitch to every hitter.
- 9.7. There is no coach pitching.
- 9.8. Four balls will be required for a walk. The batter and all runners on base will advance as appropriate.



## 10. BUNTING

- 10.1. No bunts are allowed. The home plate umpire will decide if a ball is bunted. A “bunted” ball with two strikes will be considered the third strike.

## 11. LEAD-OFFS / STEALING / BASE RUNNING

- 11.1. A base runner may steal only after there are two outs. Base runners may not lead-off from any base until the pitched ball crosses home plate. If the umpire rules that the runner left the base before the ball crossed home plate, the runner will be directed to return to the base. If the ball is hit when the runner has left the base too early, the umpire will have the discretion to limit the number of bases which the runner may advance.
- 11.2. A base runner is not allowed to steal home. A runner may attempt to steal second base or third base, as long as there are two outs and the runner leaves the base after the pitch crosses home plate.
- 11.3. There is a “wall” at third base. Runners may not advance past third base except on a batted ball or when advanced with bases loaded following a base on balls or hit batsman.
- 11.4. A base runner advancing to any base on a “close play” should slide and may not “run over” the baseman or the catcher. The runner must always avoid contact. If the base runner does not avoid contact on a close play, the runner will be called out. Base runners at all bases must avoid collisions with defensive players.
- 11.5. A base runner may not interfere with a fielder who is making a play on a ball or who has a ball being thrown to them. If the base runner interferes with a fielder attempting to field the ball or receive a throw, the runner will be called out. **This is an issue the coaches must explain clearly to their players.**
- 11.6. A fielder that is not making a “play on a ball” or receiving a throw from another player may not be in the base path of a base runner. If a fielder interferes with or is standing in the base path of a runner, the runner will be awarded the base they are running to, even if they are tagged or forced out.
- 11.7. On a single or an error, if a base runner “rounds” first base and, in the umpire’s discretion, begins an attempt to advance to second base, the base runner may be tagged out just like in the Major Leagues.
- 11.8. The “infield fly rule” will not be followed – any ball that is hit is “live.”

## 12. OVERTHROWS

- 12.1. Runners may advance a maximum of one additional base (including to home) on an overthrow **only** if the play begins with a batted ball.



- 12.2. Runners attempting to advance on an overthrow do so at their own risk if the ball remains in play.
- 12.3. Overthrows can occur on throws made to any base whether attempting to get an out on a runner or returning a ball to the infield after an outfield hit.
- 12.4. Runners advancing to third base at the time of the overthrow may score on the overthrow (so long as the play began with a batted ball).
- 12.5. If a subsequent overthrow occurs during the play, no additional advances are permitted.
- 12.6. If the overthrow on the initial play is declared a “dead ball” by the umpire (e.g. ball goes into dugout), all base runners shall be awarded one base.

### 13. **RUNS**

- 13.1. There is a 4 run limit per team, per inning regardless of score, number of outs or base runners. Upon the scoring of 4th run in a half-inning, that half-inning is over. If 4th run scores as part of a multi-run homerun or similar play, all runs up to and including the 4th run shall be recorded.
- 13.2. The declared “Last Inning” is an exception to this limit (subject also to the Mercy Rule in Rule 13.3). In the Last Inning – as declared by the umpire – the visiting team may score the **greater** of 4 runs or enough runs to take the lead by 4 runs; the home team is then given the opportunity to score as many runs as needed to win.
- 13.3. A game will end if a team has a lead of 15 or more runs at the end of 5 innings of play (i.e. at the end of 4-1/2 innings of play or as soon as the 15th lead run is scored in the bottom of the 5th inning).

### 14. **RULE CHANGES**

- 14.1. The League Commissioners, after consulting with the League’s head coaches and umpire, shall have the authority to change the rules at any time.
- 14.2. Every effort shall be made to make any necessary rule changes no later than mid-season.

### 15. **PLAYOFF RULES**

- 15.1. Unless addressed specifically herein, Regular Season Rules in effect at the end of the Regular Season apply throughout the playoffs.
- 15.2. Players, Playing Time and Field Positions



- 15.2.1. During the pregame meeting, all coaches must submit a line-up card detailing the batting order, each player's name, and uniform number.
- 15.2.2. Every team must have at least 8 roster players – in uniform – present for the start of a game. Fewer than 8 players at the start of a game will result in a forfeit. Once a game has started a team may continue with 7 players, however, if a team falls below 7 players they will forfeit the game.
- 15.2.3. Non-roster players are not allowed to fill in during the playoffs.
- 15.2.4. Borrowing players from the opposing team is not allowed in the playoffs.
- 15.3. End of Game and Tie Breakers
  - 15.3.1. No inning will start after 2 1/2 hours from the game's original start time.
  - 15.3.2. In the event of a tie after 6 innings, and the game has not reached the time limits stated above, teams will play a maximum of 2 extra innings under the following conditions:
    - 15.3.2.1. The 7th inning, and if necessary the 8th inning, will start with each team placing a runner at second base to start their at bat. The runner must be the player who made the last out in the previous inning. If that player has left, then the player who made the second to last out of the previous inning will be the runner.
    - 15.3.2.2. In the event of a tie after 2 extra innings, the expiration of the time limit after 7 innings, the umpire(s) in his/their sole judgment has/have determined it is unsafe to continue playing or the field of play is no longer available (whichever is the latest), the winner will be the team that last held a lead after the most recently completed inning (e.g. if the game is tied after 8 innings played or after 7 innings and 2 1/2 hours have passed so that no new inning can be started, the team that had the lead after the 5th inning will be the winner. If it was tied after 5 innings, the team with the lead after the 4th inning will be deemed the winner, etc.).
  - 15.3.3. A game is "official" after 4 1/2 innings have been played with the home team in the lead. Any "official" game called due to darkness or weather will revert back to the last full inning played and the score at that time will determine the winner. Any game that is called before it is official will be resumed at the beginning of the inning when it was postponed. The score reverts back to the score of the last completed inning.