

ROLAND PARK BASEBALL LEAGUES, INC.

NATIONAL LEAGUE RULES

Revision 03/02/2024

The official rules of organized baseball shall apply except in the following instances:

1. Length of Game – 6 innings, but no inning may start after 7:45 PM by Head Umpire’s clock unless both managers agree otherwise prior to the start of the game and so inform the umpire(s). In the event of a tie, games may continue past 7:45, even if coaches have not agreed to extended play before the game, unless the umpire determines that it is too dark to play. In a game scheduled on Saturday or Sunday, no inning shall begin after two hours have elapsed from the actual starting time of the game.
2. Dimensions of the Playing Field – The basepaths are 60 feet. The distance from the pitching rubber to home plate is 46 feet.
3. Player Eligibility – A player must be 9 years old as of May 1st of the current season and may not turn 11 before May 1st of the current season to play in the RPBL National League. NO player may appear in any game (regular season or playoff) for a team unless he/she is a rostered player for that team or has prior consent from the RPBL Commissioner.
4. Substitution –
 - a) Unlimited in the field, but each player must play at least three (3) of the first five (5) innings. At least one (1) complete inning must be in the infield and at least one (1) complete inning must be in the outfield. (Pitcher and catcher are considered infield positions.)
 - b) Each player on hand at the beginning of the game must bat in order each time through the lineup. Players arriving after the start of the game will be inserted at the end of the lineup.
 - c) Players leaving during the game are removed from the lineup. There are no forced outs due to departing players. Players may not re-enter the game once their turn in the lineup has been skipped.
5. Number of Fielders – Each team may use ten fielders. This will consist of a pitcher, catcher, four (4) infielders, and four (4) outfielders.
6. Scoring Limitation – Once the batting team has scored five (5) runs during an inning, their turn at bat is considered complete and they will now take the field. If the batting team was losing as they entered the inning, they may score enough runs to even the deficit plus an additional five runs. All runs will count on the play when the batting team reaches the five-run maximum.

Example: The batting team has already scored four runs in the top of the first inning. The bases are loaded and the batter hits a grand slam home run. All four runs count towards the score which would be 8-0 as a result of the grand slam. Their opponent could score a maximum of 13 runs during their next at bat in the bottom of the inning. They are allowed to “even” the score plus the five-run maximum.

7. Base Running

- a) Base Running i) There are no leads in the NL. The runner may not leave the base until the ball has been batted. ii) Base stealing – is not allowed in the National League. A runner may not advance on a passed ball, wild pitch or a stolen base.
- b) Limits on advancing – On a hit ball to the outfield, no runner may advance to the next base once the ball has returned to the infield and is in the possession of any infielder. A player may not advance to first base on a dropped third strike. A player may not advance from third base to home plate on an overthrow to the pitcher. A player may not advance to home plate because of a wild pitch or a passed ball. A player may advance from third base to home as a result of a play that is made on the runner (i.e. checking the runner).
- c) Balks – The balk rule is not enforced.
- d) Substitute runner – A substitute runner may replace the catcher on base in an inning with two outs. The substitute runner must be the player who was put out last unless that player is pitching the next inning in which case the previous player who was put out will be the runner.
- e) Safety Rule – In the interest of safety, a runner must make the effort to avoid a collision with a fielder at second base, third base, or home plate. The runner will have complied with the rule if the runner slides, or if no physical contact occurs between the runner and the fielder. In the event of a violation of this rule, the offending runner is declared out, the ball is considered dead, and no other runners may advance from their base. If the umpire feels that the base runner has violated the Safety Rule in a flagrant manner, the umpire may eject the offender.
- f) Overthrows – If an errant thrown ball leaves the field of play, it is considered dead if the ball.
 - (i) Passes the (real or imaginary) projection of the fence line
 - (ii) Hits the team bench.
 - (iii) Enters any player’s area around the team bench, which results, in the judgment of the umpire, in the ball being unplayable.

- (iv) A ball that hits the backstop or a fence remains in play unless it passes through, into, or under the backstop or fence, at which point it becomes dead.
- g) Advancement as a result of an overthrow –
 - (i) Runners who are advancing to the next base at the time the ball leaves the field of play will be allowed their intended base (i.e. the base that they are running towards at the time the ball was thrown) and will be awarded the next base because of the overthrow.
 - (ii) A runner, who is stationary or is in the act of retreating to the base of origin, will advance to the next base because of the overthrow.
 - (iii) If, in the opinion of the umpire, a ball is interfered with by the bench players of the “batting team”, the advancing runners are allowed to proceed to their destined base. The stationary runner is not awarded a base because of the interference. The runner who is retreating to the base of origin is allowed to return to the base. No further advancement by a base runner is allowed because of the interference of the overthrow.
- 8. Pitching Limitations –
 - a) No player may appear in more than two (2) innings in any game as a pitcher. For this purpose, a single pitch will constitute an inning. This rule remains in effect during the end-of-season playoffs.
 - b) During the regular season, no pitcher can throw more than three (3) innings in any three-day period. This rule does NOT remain in effect during the end-of-season playoffs.

Example: In order to throw two (2) innings on Wednesday, a pitcher cannot have thrown more than one (1) inning on either Monday or Tuesday. Similarly, he could subsequently throw only one (1) more inning on either Thursday or Friday.
 - c) Any pitcher who has finished pitching in two (2) innings in a game may NOT subsequently play catcher in the same game.
 - d) A pitcher must be removed from the mound if the pitcher hits either three (3) batters in an inning or four (4) batters in the game. It is up to the umpire’s judgment whether a batter has made a sincere effort to get out of the way. Once a pitcher is removed due to hit batsmen, that player may not pitch again in that game.
- 9. Infield Fly Rule – is not enforced in the National League.
- 10. Batting –
 - a) Bunting – is not permitted in the National League
 - b) During games played in April, there will be no walks. After 4 balls the batter will hit off of a tee. April games rescheduled or continued in May

will not follow this rule. The batting team is responsible to assign the task of placing the tee at home plate after "ball 4" and removing it from the field of play after the batter puts the ball into play.

- (i) If the child hits only the tee and not the ball, and the ball rolls off the tee onto the playing field, the ball is not in play.
- (ii) The purpose of the "No Walks in April" rule is to enhance skill development of all players, by adding more opportunities for batters to swing, fielders to play defense and pitchers to hone mastery of the strike zone.

11. Required Equipment –

- a) Batting helmets with facemasks will be worn while at bat, on base, on deck or coaching a base.
- b) Long pants must be worn.
- c) Catchers must wear the full array of protective equipment while in the field. The equipment worn by the catcher is:
 - (i) catcher's helmet/face mask with throat protector
 - (ii) chest protector
 - (iii) shin guards
 - (iv) protective cup
- d) Metal spikes or cleats are prohibited.

12. Bats –

- a) All Recreational ("Rec") bats must be wood, "USA" stamped or "BBCOR" stamped. Diameter of 2 5/8" or less. No "USSSA" bats.
- b) Exception: Any bat that bears a green "Rec Approved" sticker affixed by the RPBL Equipment Coordinator.

13. Foul Fly Ball – may not be fielded beyond the projection of the fence line. A player may reach over a fence and catch a ball.

14. Game Time –

- a) Weeknight games begin at 6:00 PM during the regular season. Playoff games begin at 5:30 PM.
- b) Saturday games (with the exception of Opening Day) begin at 8:30 AM. Each subsequent game will start fifteen (15) minutes after the conclusion of the preceding game (if after or later than the scheduled time)
- c) A team must have a minimum of seven (7) players in order to start an official game. If additional players arrive, they may be inserted immediately into the defensive lineup.
- d) If a team does not have enough players (7) within fifteen (15) minutes of the scheduled starting time, the opposing manager may claim victory by forfeit.

15. Official Game – Except for Opening Day games, which may be shorter, a game will not be official unless 3-1/2 innings have been played with the home team ahead or 4 innings have been played with the visiting team ahead or tied. All other games are considered unofficial.
16. Unplayed Games – The league encourages the children to play as much baseball as possible. Therefore, teams should make every effort to complete any unplayed games. At the end of the season, an unplayed game will be counted zero points for both involved teams.
17. Suspended Games –
 - a) Regular Season - Unofficial games (see Rule 12) will be replayed in their entirety.
18. All playoff/championship games will be played in their entirety. If play is suspended during a playoff or championship game, for any reason, the game will resume from the exact place/moment when play was suspended.