

ROLAND PARK BASEBALL LEAGUES, INC.

AMERICAN 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 70 feet. The distance from the pitching rubber to home plate is 50 feet.
3. Player Eligibility –A player must be 11 years old as of May 1st of the current season and may not turn 13 before May 1st of the current season to play in the RPBL American 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. Scoring Limitation – Once the batting team has scored seven (7) 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 seven runs. All runs will count on the play when the batting team reaches the seven-run maximum. Example: The batting team has already scored six 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 10-0 as a result of the

grand slam. Their opponent could score a maximum of 17 runs during their next at bat in the bottom of the inning. They are allowed to “even” the score plus the seven-run maximum.

6. Base Running

- a. Base stealing – Stealing is allowed. The runner may not leave the base until the pitch arrives at home plate or the batter makes contact with the ball. If a player violates this rule, the first offense will result in a warning issued by the umpire and the runner will be sent back to the original base. The pitch will count only if it was a strike. The second offense (by the same runner in the same inning) will result in the runner being called “out” by the umpire. Play is suspended while an umpire issues a warning to a base runner.
- b. Limits on advancing –
 - (i) A player may not advance to first base on a dropped third strike.
 - (ii) No runner, who is at third base as the ball is put in play by the pitcher, may advance to home plate solely as a result of a wild pitch or a passed ball.
 - (iii) A runner may not steal home plate under any circumstances. This includes a first and third situation where the catcher throws down to second in an attempt to throw out the runner attempting to steal second from first. The runner at third may not advance, even on an overthrow.
 - (iv) A runner may not advance because of an errant throw by the catcher while returning the ball to the pitcher.
- 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 is made between the runner and the fielder. In the event of a violation of this rule, the offending runner shall be 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 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 as a result 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 as a result 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.

7. Pitching Limitations –

- a. During the regular season, no player may appear in more than three (3) innings in any game as a pitcher. For this purpose, a single pitch will constitute an inning. After being removed from a game, a pitcher may be brought back to pitch later in the game only once.
- b. During the end-of-season playoffs, when games tend to be scheduled closer together, no player may appear in more than two (2) innings in any game as a pitcher.
- c. During the regular season, no pitcher can throw more than four (4) innings in any three-day period. This rule does NOT remain in effect during the end-of-season playoffs.
Example: In order to throw three (3) 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.
- d. Any pitcher who has finished pitching in at least two (2) innings in a game may NOT subsequently play catcher in the same game.

- e. 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.
- 8. 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.
- 9. 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.
- 10. 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.
- 11. Game Time –
 - a. Weeknight games begin at 6:00 PM. Playoff games start time is 5:30 P.M.
 - b. Saturday games (with the exception of Opening Day) may begin as early as 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.
- 12. 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.
- 13. 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.

14. Suspended Games –

- a. Regular Season - Unofficial games (see Rule 12) will be replayed in their entirety.
- b. 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.