

# WGBSL RULES

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**UPDATED May 2017**

## Rain Out Procedure

**To confirm a rainout** the striper will examine each field and then call the umpire coordinator for baseball and softball to report the playability of the field. The field striper will then call the rainout hotline and leave the message there for all coaches and Division/Grade Coordinators.

**To reschedule, Rescheduled games should be worked out as soon as possible.** Both coaches will review their schedule, confer with each other and agree to a new date & time. The home team coach will contact the Division/Grade Coordinator with the new, mutually agreed upon date & time. Once the changes have been made on the website the Division/Grade Coordinator will email or call both coaches and the umpire coordinator to set up umpires for that rescheduled game. The rainout number is: **314-961-6685**.

## Rules Summaries

### **Softball**

Item	Division				
	Instructional	Bantam	Midget	Junior	
	K - 2nd	3rd & 4th	5th & 6th	7th & 8th	
Pitching Distance (ft)	Coach Pitch	35	40	43	
Base Path (ft)	45	50	60	60	
Across Diamond (ft)	63.5	70.5	85	85	
Leadoff?	No (2)	No (2)	No (2)	No (2)	
Stealing?	No	3 <sup>rd</sup> No 4 <sup>th</sup> Yes (3)	Yes (1)	Yes	
Catcher Pickoff?	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes	
Dropped Third Strike?	No	No	Yes (1)	Yes	
# of Players	10	10	10	9	
Run Limit per Inning	-	5	7	7	
Innings/game	-	5	7	7	
Inning Start Time Limit	-	1hr 30min	1hr 40min	1hr 40min	

- (1) Runners may advance one base per pitch/pickoff attempt
- (2) Runner may leadoff after pitch leaves hand of pitcher
- (3) 4<sup>th</sup> Grade can steal 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base but CANNOT steal home even on a passed ball or wild pitch

## Baseball

Item	Division						
	Instructional	Bantam		Midget		Junior	
	K - 2nd	3	4	5	6	7	8
Pitching Distance (ft)	Machine	40	43.5	47	50.5	54	57.5
Base Path (ft)	50	60	65	70	75	80	85
Across Diamond (ft)	70.5	85	92	99	106	113	120
Stealing ?	No	No	Yes (1)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Leadoff ?	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pickoff ?	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dropped Third Strike ?	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
# of Player	10	9	9	9	9	9	9
Run Limit Per Inning		7	7	7	7	7	7
Innings/game		7	7	7	7	7	7
Inning Start Time Limit	1:30	1:40	1:40	1:50	1:50	1:50	1:50

- 1) a. A runner shall not steal home
- b. A runner shall not steal on a ball that gets passed the catcher.
- c. A runner attempting to steal second may not advance to third until the next pitch.
- d. A runner may not leave the base until the ball crosses the plate

## I. SECTION 1 - ORGANIZATION

- A. **The Webster Groves Baseball/Softball League** (hereinafter referred as "WGB/SL") is a not-for-profit association (503D). It shall consist of two sub-leagues, the **Webster Groves Baseball League** ("WGBL") and the **Webster Groves Softball League** ("WGSL"). An executive committee consisting of three officers shall operate the WGB/SL. They shall be elected annually by the team managers of the most recently concluded season at a meeting called for by the Executive Committee. They are WGBL Commissioner, WGSL Commissioner, and the Secretary/Treasurer. Four officers if the Secretary and Treasurer are separate people. The Executive Committee shall elect either the WGBL Commissioner or the WGSL Commissioner to serve as Commissioner of the entire WGB/SL.
- B. The WGBL and WGSL shall establish divisions for the play of baseball and softball, respectively. Each division shall have a "Division Coordinator" appointed by the respective sub-league Commissioner. The Division Coordinators shall serve as liaisons between the Executive Committee and the teams comprising their division. In addition, the Division Coordinators shall form the rules committee with sub committees for baseball and softball rules respective of their sub league. Each shall be presided over by the appropriate sub-league Commissioner for the purpose of reviewing rules changes recommended by the officers, its own committee members and/or the general membership. The rules committees shall meet on call of the Commissioners.

## II. SECTION 2 - MEMBERSHIP AND OPERATION OF LEAGUE

- A. **Baseball Divisions:** The WGBL shall consist of organized divisions as follows:
1. **Instructional** - Shall consist of players in the PreK/Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades.
  2. **Bantam** - Shall consist of players in the 3rd & 4th grades.
  3. **Midget** - Shall consist of players in the 5th & 6th grades.
  4. **Juniors** - Shall consist of players in the 7th, 8th and 9<sup>th</sup> grades.
- B. **Softball Divisions:** The WGSL shall consist of organized divisions as follows:
1. **Instructional** - Shall consist of players in the Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades.
  2. **Bantam** - Shall consist of players in the 3rd and 4th grades.
  3. **Midget** - Shall consist of players in the 5th and 6th grades.
  4. **Junior** - Shall consist of players in the 7th and 8th grades.
  5. **Senior** - Shall consist of players in the 9th through 12th grades.

**C. Playing Up:**

1. The league is organized by a player's grade in school at the time of sign-up.
2. Any player may "play up" (ahead of his/her grade) with parental consent, managerial approval and the approval of the sub-league Commissioner.
3. A player may be mandated to "play up" if his/her age exceeds the usual ages for his/her grade and the Sub league Commissioner mandates the move.

**D. Playing Down:** No player may "play down" below his or her grade level /division regardless of age.

**E. Players eligible to participate:**

1. Ages: All players who will be 4 years old prior to September 1 of the current year and/or have not attained their 19th birthday prior July 1, of the current season, are eligible to register and play on WGS� teams.
2. A player playing on another organized softball or baseball team is eligible to compete in the WGB/SL providing no games will be scheduled between the WGB/SL team and the other team the player elects to play for. Further the player's registration and participation with another team is known and approved by the WGB/SL Executive Committee and his/her WGB/SL team manager. No refunds of league fees will be made for any missed league play as a result of this concession.

**F. Registration:**

1. All players must register with the WGB/SL as the WGB/SL Executive Committee shall from year to year determine.
2. All new WGB/SL players must have the permission of and be accompanied by a parent, guardian or consenting adult when registering. If requested by a member of the Executive Committee or their Division Coordinator, they must present his/her birth certificate as satisfactory proof of age.
3. Subsequent to the close of registration but prior to June 1, additional players may be registered upon approval of the appropriate sub-league Commissioner Late registrants must comply with all registration requirements and pay a late fee unless waived by the Sub-league Commissioner. There is no guarantee late registration players will receive matching team uniforms.
4. A player who is not properly registered and assigned to a team roster by the WGB/SL is not permitted to practice with or play in a game for a WGB/SL team. The WGB/SL assumes no liability for unregistered players participating in any WGB/SL practice or game. Violation of the registration requirements can result in the removal of the team manager or coaches in addition to the forfeiture of all games in which such players have participated.

**G. Financial Aid:** Financial aid to a player in the form of a waiver of part or all of the registration fees may be granted in the sole discretion of the Executive Committee based on financial need. The request can be made by the parents, player or the player's manager.

**H. Draft:**

1. At the completion of registration, all players who competed in the WGB/SL in the previous season will be assigned to the same team they played on during the previous season (if they are able to meet the requirements for that division), unless they desire to enter the draft.
2. All players registering for the first time and all players, who express a desire to play on a team other than the team they played on during previous season, will be placed in the player draft. The managers of the respective teams will in turn draw-by-lot names of players from the player draft in order to fill out their rosters. The only exception to this requirement will be if the player requests to be placed on a different team and both team managers agree to the move.
3. No tryouts are permitted and the managers shall not recruit "draft" players to their teams. However, the manager of every team and all players on the roster of that team the previous season are entitled to be placed together on a roster for the next season. Thus, the recruitment of players from the prior season's team is allowed before registration.
4. New players to the WGB/SL shall be placed in the player draft. Requests of new players to play on a specific team or with one or more other draft eligible players will be honored, if possible, provided that there has been no illegal recruitment, the team manager agrees and the team roster is not already full. Recommended roster size is 12 - 14 players.

**I. Advertising Partners:**

1. Organizations, businesses, and service clubs are solicited for advertising partners in the WGB/SL.
2. Upon approval of the application by the WGB/SL, the advertising partner will remit advertising fees to the WGB/SL.
3. If the advertising partner designates a team, the WGB/SL will allow draws subject to approval of the League Executive Committee, by that team against the advertising fee paid by the sponsor, subject to limits set by the Executive Committee from time to time. At no time will the draws be more than one half of the sponsorship fee.
4. The advertising fee shall be determined from year to year by the WGB/SL Executive Committee.

**J. Fees:**

1. The WGB/SL Executive Committee shall determine the players' registration fee from year to year.

2. The Executive Committee shall establish the registration fee. It shall be adequate to provide uniforms, playing and safety equipment (including bats, balls, bases, headgear and catching equipment) for each team in the WGB/SL. It shall also provide for qualified umpires, two new balls for each league scheduled game and other equipment and field improvements deemed to be needed and/or desirable. Players may bring their own equipment if desired. All equipment used must be approved for player's level of play by the Amateur Softball Association and/or USA Softball and the United States Little League Baseball Congress.

**K. Gifts:**

Any manager giving, or any player receiving, athletic equipment or anything of monetary value, as an incentive to play for that team, is subject to dismissal from the WGB/SL, as determined by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will determine any further participation in WGB/SL activities. No refund of fees paid will be made.

**L. Expulsion:**

The WGB/SL Executive Committee shall have the power to expel any player, coach, manager or team for failure to comply with the rules of WGB/SL and Good Sportsmanship, without recourse or refund of fees at their sole discretion.

**M. Managers/Coaches:**

The Executive Committee shall have full power to select and/or remove managers and coaches at its absolute discretion, without recourse. The league reserves the right to conduct background checks on any person involved in league or team operation

### **III. SECTION 3 - GENERAL PLAYING RULES FOR THE WGB/SL**

**The following rules shall apply to both WGBL and WGSL play:**

- A.** The umpire(s) is/are in complete charge and control of the game and all decisions they make are final, subject only to Section 4. Only the team manager (or coach-in-charge) is allowed on the playing field to discuss a ruling with the umpire. Violations can result in ejection and/or forfeiture of the game at the discretion of the umpire.
- B.** League playing rules **may not** be altered or changed by agreement of the managers or coaches prior to or during a game.
- C.** During play, absolutely, no other person(s) other than players, base coaches, and umpires are allowed on the playing field. The Instructional Division in baseball and softball and Bantam Division in softball shall allow coaches on the field during play.
- D.** **Managers and coaches are responsible for the conduct and sportsmanship** of themselves, their players and their teams' spectators. Any problems must be reported to the WGB/SL Commissioners or The Commissioner of Umpires immediately. The Executive Committee will determine if any further action is required.

- E. BATTING ORDER** - The manager shall use a batting order consisting of all players listed on their rosters that are present for the game. In other words, all players play offense.

Under this rule,

1. The batting order cannot be changed. In the case of an injury to a player or the departure of a player from the game, moving the other batters up to fill-in closes the space in the lineup. No change in player batting order is allowed.
2. Once the batting order is submitted to the opposing team, each late arriving player will be added as the last batter in the order in the order he or she arrives. All batters will bat in order until the game is officially ended.

- F. FIELD PLAY** - Unlimited player substitution during the game is allowed, a player may enter the game on defense at any time; inning by inning is preferable. It is strongly recommended that each player play at least three (3) innings of defense per game.

- G.** Players have a designated place to stay at least 20 feet from the foul line and in foul territory as each field allows.

1. At no time is a player to be permitted to remain behind the backstop.
  - a. If any member of the offensive team remains behind the backstop after being requested by the umpire to move the batter shall be called out.
  - b. If any player on the defensive team remains behind the backstop after being requested to move the first batter of the next at bat for their team shall be called out.
2. The enforcement of this rule shall be at the umpire's discretion and his/her ruling shall be final and not subject to protest.

- H. The Home Team shall sit along the first (1<sup>st</sup>) base line** and be responsible for setting up the field of play.

- I. Profane language, unsportsmanlike conduct and unnecessary roughness** will not be tolerated from anyone: players, managers, coaches, spectators and umpires. The offending individual(s) will be ejected from the game and subject to further actions as the league may determine. Both coaches by mutual consent may have umpires removed.

- J. ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IS PROHIBITED** by anyone on or near the playing field during any league function. Offenders will be required to leave the ballpark.

- K. TOBACCO USE OF ANY KIND IS PROHIBITED** by anyone on the playing field or in the bench area during any league function. In the event such use occurs, a warning shall be given by the umpire and the person shall immediately cease use. In the event such use continues, the offender(s) shall be required to leave the ballpark.



- L.** Any player, manager or coach who throws a bat or other equipment, as a gesture of anger or disgust shall be given the following warning from the umpire-in-charge:  
**"ANY FURTHER SUCH CONDUCT WILL RESULT IN YOUR EJECTION, AND MAY RESULT IN FORFEITURE OF THE GAME"**.

It is the umpire's decision if the offending person will be ejected from the game.

1. For minor non-dangerous infractions - each manager shall be warned that any subsequent such infraction will result in that persons' ejection from the game regardless of whether the offending party is the same individual previously warned or a member of the same team as the one receiving the first warning.
2. For a dangerous infraction resulting in or capable of resulting in serious injury, the offending individual can be ejected from the game without warning.

- M.** Any player, manager or coach who is ejected from a game by the umpire must report verbally or in writing to the Division Coordinator who shall forthwith consult the Executive Committee for a further ruling on such individuals' eligibility.

1. The manager may report on behalf of his player.
2. Until either a verbal or written report has been made, and a ruling rendered regarding future eligibility of said ejected player, the player, manager or coach shall be ineligible to play and any game they participate in shall be forfeited.

- N.** Only players, managers, coaches, bat-persons and scorekeepers are allowed on the players' bench during the game.

**O. Playing Field Warm-up Times:**

1. If time allows for on field warm-ups, each team shall have equal on field warm-up time. Maximum time is 15 minutes each. The Home Team has the field beginning 30 minutes before game time – for 15 minutes. The Visiting Team has the field for the final 15 minutes before game time.
2. In the event the field is not available for the full 30 minutes prior to starting the game, the time shall be split equally between the teams with the home team to go first.
3. The order of who warms up first may be changed by agreement of the managers prior to the game.

- P.** The Home Team is responsible for setting up the infield official size bases, pitching rubber and home plate (if not permanently installed) are to be supplied and installed by the Home Team.

- Q.** Each team must supply one new official league ball for each game. Game balls shall be given to the umpire before the start of the game. (The League supplies all game balls).

- R.** All players must wear WGB/SL issued uniforms during play.

- S. All players must wear WGB/SL issued or approved protective headgear while in the on-deck position, in the batter's box and while running the bases. Catchers must wear all approved protective gear while catching.
- T. NO METAL SPIKES OR METAL CLEATS ARE ALLOWED.
- U. In the event that a game is postponed for any reason, and has not been rescheduled by consent of the managers and the Commissioner of Umpires within 7 days, either manager may apply to the Division Coordinator for a setting at which the game must be played or forfeited.
- V. Although strongly discouraged, a game may be played without the attendance of an Official League Umpire, but only with the consent of both managers. However, no protests will be allowed.
- W. The boundaries of the playing field and any ground rules shall be defined by the umpire and agreed to by both managers prior to the start of each game.
- X. A ball hit in the air is not out of play until it strikes an object or the ground outside the playing field or a player who has any part of his/her body outside the playing field touches the ball.
- Y. Each team shall provide a scorekeeper. At the end of each half inning the scorekeepers shall provide the score to the umpire. The umpire shall resolve any discrepancies in the score at that time. If this is not done there will be no appeal. The umpire's ruling will be final. The home team shall be the official score keeper
- Z. **RUN RULES**
  - 1. Run rules are detailed in each league's rules.
    - a. Softball – Section 6, Paragraph E-4&5.
    - b. Baseball – Section 5, Paragraph B-3.1; Paragraph C-7; Paragraph D-9; Paragraph E 3, 4.
  - 2. All divisions will play as many innings as possible until a complete game is played or called according to individual league rules.
    - a. Softball – Section 6, Paragraph E.
    - b. Baseball – Section 5, Paragraph A-3.

#### IV. SECTION 4 - PROTEST

- A. Only managers may enter protests on a violation or misinterpretation of playing rules as defined herein.
  - 1. The protest must be made to the game umpire immediately and noted on their game report umpire reporting slip.
  - 2. A typewritten report must be filed with the League Commissioner within 48 hours following the date of the game.
  - 3. A \$100.00 protest fee payable to WGB/SL must accompany the protest. The fee will be returned if the protest is allowed.

- B.** A protest will not be allowed on an umpire's discretionary decision unless the protest is based solely on a safety issue.
- C.** If a protest is lodged with the umpire, he must:
  - 1. Immediately notify the team against whom the protest is made.
  - 2. Notify the Commissioner of Umpires, in writing, within 24 hours of the game date.
- D.** When a protest is lodged with the Commissioner of Umpires, he/she shall instruct the Secretary to notify, in writing, the team against whom the protest is made.
- E.** The manager of the team against whom the protest is filed must deliver his written response to the protest to the Secretary within 48 hours of receipt of notice.
- F.** The Executive Committee shall in its absolute discretion either meet in executive session and rule on the protest or conduct a hearing on the protest and thereafter rule. In the event of a tie vote on the protest, the decision of the Commissioner of Umpires shall be final. An Executive Committee member shall not participate in deciding a protest which affects either his or her team's standing in the division or directly pertains to his or her team.
- G.** No protest will be allowed that is not entered before the teams have left the playing area.
- H.** ABSOLUTELY NO ARGUING WITH AN UMPIRE'S CALL. If a parent argues, the manager for that team will give that parent a warning.

## SECTION 5 – PLAYING RULES – BASEBALL ONLY

A. The playing rules of the WGBL shall be the same as the Official Rules of Baseball, subject to the following exceptions:

1. Diamond measurements shall be as follows:

**Instructional**

Pitching distance                      45 feet  
 Distance between bases                50 feet  
 Bases shall not be fastened down.

**Bantam    3<sup>rd</sup> Grade                      4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Pitching distance                      40 feet                      43.5 feet  
 Distance between bases                60 feet                      65 feet  
 Bases shall not be fastened down.

**Midgets    5<sup>th</sup> Grade                      6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Pitching distance                      47 feet                      50.5 feet  
 Distance between bases                70 feet                      75 feet  
 Bases shall not be fastened down.

**Juniors    7<sup>th</sup> Grade                      8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Pitching distance                      54 feet                      57.5 feet  
 Distance between bases                80 feet                      85 feet  
 Bases may be fastened down.

2. a. Each team must have eight players in order to start a game. If less than eight are present, the game is forfeited (See b). If a ninth player arrives before the conclusion of the game, he may enter the game only when his team is on defense. He shall assume the last position in the batting order. If a team is reduced to eight players for any reason during a game, the batting position of the player removed will be skipped. No out will be counted for the 9<sup>th</sup> player. Under no circumstance will a team be permitted to start or continue a game in which it has fewer than eight players available. If a person is injured, he will be allowed to come back into the game only when his injury has been cared enough for him to return.
- b. If either or both teams do not have 8 players present at game time, up to a 10 minute grace period shall be provided. If, during the grace period, both teams have the required number of players, the game shall start immediately. If, at the end of the grace period, one or both teams do not have 8 players, then such team or teams shall forfeit the game.

3. A game shall consist of no more than 7 innings subject to the following conditions:
- a. The time limit for starting a new inning is as follows:  
**Bantam, Midgets and Juniors – 1 hour 50 minutes**  
**Instructional – 1 hour 30 minutes**  
 No new inning shall be started after the 1:50 mark
- b. When the time limit above is reached, the full inning underway will be completed, and the game scored as an official game regardless of the number of innings played.
- c. If in the sole discretion of the umpire, or by agreement of both managers, a game is terminated due to inclement weather, unplayable field conditions or darkness, and less than three full innings have been played, the game will be rescheduled

- and replayed in its entirety.
- d. When a protest is lodged with the Commissioner of Umpires, he/she shall instruct the Secretary to notify, in writing, the team against whom the protest is made.
  - e. The manager of the team against whom the protest is filed must deliver his written response to the protest to the Secretary within 48 hours of receipt of notice.
  - f. The Executive Committee shall in its absolute discretion either meet in the executive session and rule on the protest or conduct a hearing on the protest and thereafter rule. In the event of a tie vote on the protest, the decision of the Commissioner of Umpires shall be final. An Executive Committee member shall not participate in deciding a protest that affects either his team's standing in the division or directly pertains to his team.

**B. Instructional Division Rules (K - 2<sup>nd</sup>):**

1. Reduced Injury Factor (RIF) baseballs shall be used in all games.
2. Players will not pitch. Either a pitching machine or a team manager/coach shall be utilized.
3. Additional rules of play to promote safety and the learning experience shall be implemented. Those rules are as follows:
  - 3.1. Five run limit per inning.
  - 3.2. Five strikes per batter.
  - 3.3. Three outs per side.
  - 3.4. No base stealing.
  - 3.5. No leadoffs. Runners must stay on their base until the pitched ball crosses home plate.
  - 3.6. No advance after play is made (ball fielded, overthrown, returned to infield, etc.)
  - 3.7. Everyone bats. The order is set prior to game time and does not change for that game. Late arrivals are added to the end of the order.
  - 3.8. Ten players maximum are allowed on defense at one time.
  - 3.9. Maximum of two coaches allowed on the field when the team is on defense.
  - 3.10. No harassing other teams batters.
  - 3.11. Each team will provide an umpire behind the plate while their team is batting. No called strikes and no walks. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base coaches will umpire the base they are coaching.

**C. Bantam Division Rules (3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>):**

1. Reduced Injury Factor (RIF) 5 baseballs shall be used in all games.
2. There is no infield fly rule.
3. Batter is out on a dropped third strike.
4. NO LEADOFFS. A team shall be allowed one warning for an illegal leadoff, but only if the runner did not attempt to steal and the ball is not batted fair. Subsequent violators shall be called out. A runner may leave the base after the ball crosses the plate. In the event of an illegal leadoff resulting in the runner being called out, the ball shall be deemed dead and no other runners shall be permitted to advance.
5. A runner shall not advance to home except when forced as a result of a walk, hit batter or catcher's interference or as a result of a batted ball.
6. **4<sup>th</sup> Grade Only:** A runner will not be allowed to advance on a ball that gets passed the catcher or squirts out. THE CATCHER DOES NOT HAVE TO CATCH THE BALL. As long as the ball remains in front of and within reach of the catcher then the runner may steal. This rule will help speed up the game and allow the catcher to get more experience in trying to throw a runner out.
7. **4<sup>th</sup> Grade Only:** A runner attempting to steal second base may not advance to third base

until the next pitch is thrown. Said runner shall be sent back to second base if such an attempt occurs. No stealing is permitted in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

8. A team can score no more than seven runs in an inning. The inning shall end after the 7<sup>th</sup> run safely crosses the plate.
9. No player may pitch in excess of 3 innings in a game in the Bantam Division. An appearance as a pitcher for any part of an inning shall constitute an inning for the purpose of this rule. Violation will result in forfeiture of the game or games that the violation(s) took place.

#### **Midget Division Rules (5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>):**

1. Reduced Injury Factor (RIF) 10 baseballs shall be used in all games.
2. During the first 2 WGBL games of the season, the umpire will warn pitchers in the event of a balk and explain their illegal actions. Thereafter, the balk rules will be enforced. If one team has played two games and the other has not, this “warning” rule shall be in effect for both teams. Managers shall be responsible for advising the umpires of the number of games they have played or the teams must abide by the umpire’s decision in involving the balk rule.
3. Full lead offs are allowed.
4. Infield fly rule is in effect.
5. A batter is not out on a dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike provided (1) first base is unoccupied or (2) first base is occupied with two outs.
6. Runners may advance on overthrows, passed balls, wild pitches – they are “live balls” – runner may advance as many bases as runner can get.
7. Runners may advance to home on passed balls, wild pitches or steals.
8. Runners are encouraged, but not required, to slide on all close plays while approaching 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or home plate. HOWEVER, the base runner will be called out if he collides with a fielder at the base. “Close play” is defined as the fielder is at the base to make the play. The fielder cannot force an early slide by moving down the base line in the approaching runner’s path or the base runner shall be ruled safe. There is no blocking outside of the batter’s box. The base runner is to be called safe if the fielder violates this rule. Avoidance of collisions on the base paths and at the bases is an equal responsibility of both the fielder and base runner. Purposeful collisions will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and/or unnecessary roughness under Section 2 rule I.
9. The seven run rule is in effect, there is a maximum of seven runs per inning.
10. No player may pitch in excess of 3 innings in a game in the Midget Division. An appearance as a pitcher for any or part of an inning shall constitute an inning for the purpose of this rule. Violation will result in forfeiture of the game or games that the violation(s) took place.

#### **Junior Division Rules (7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>):**

1. Pro 2 hard baseballs shall be used in all games.
2. Each team will get one balk warning in their first league game. The pitcher receiving the warning will also receive an explanation of his/her illegal action from the umpire. Dead ball shall be declared. Thereafter, and for the rest of the season, the balk rule will be in effect.
3. Any one team can score no more than seven runs in an inning. That team’s inning shall end after the seventh run safely crosses the plate.
4. Runners may advance on all overthrows, passed balls, wild pitches- they are “live balls’ – runner may advance as many bases as runner can get.
5. Runners are encouraged, but not required, to slide on all close plays while approaching 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or home plate. HOWEVER, the base runner will be called out if he collides with a fielder at the base. “Close play” is defined as the fielder is at the base to make the play. The fielder cannot force an early slide by moving down the base line in the approaching runner’s path or the base runner shall be ruled safe. There is no blocking outside of the batter’s box. The base runner is to be called safe if the fielder violates this rule. Avoidance of collisions on the base paths and at the bases is an equal responsibility of both the fielder and base runner.

Purposeful collisions will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and/or unnecessary roughness under Section 2 rule I.

**D. Miscellaneous Rules – Applies to all Divisions**

1. Everyone on the roster that is present for the game will be put in the batting order. The batting order must not change for the entire game. If a player comes after the games starts, they are to be put at the end of the order. Defensive positions can be changed as much as the manager desires.
2. The use of the “hidden ball” trick is not allowed for any division but the Junior Division. If a pitcher moves onto the mound without the ball, a balk will be called. When the ball is in play and the pitcher is not on the mound, base runners legally leaving their bases do so at their own risk. (Applies where runners may steal.)
3. No player may pitch in excess of 3 innings in a game in the Bantam, and Midget Divisions. No player may pitch in excess of 4 innings in the Junior Division. An appearance as a pitcher for any or part of an inning shall constitute an inning for the purpose of this rule. Violation will result in forfeiture of the game or games that the violation(s) took place.
4. All players participating in league games must wear league issued uniforms.
5. Intentional walks are discouraged in WGBSL. Four pitchers must be thrown and called balls before the batter gets first base

## **VI. SECTION 6 – PLAYING RULES OF SOFTBALL**

### **A. GOVERNING RULES**

1. The current year's Official Playing Rules of Softball (Fast Pitch) as adopted by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) shall govern all play subject to the exceptions set forth in the rules contained herein.

### **B. PLAYING FIELD**

1. **Instructional Division** shall play on a field having 45 foot baselines. The pitching rubber shall be at a distance of 25 feet. An 11 inch softer-type safety softball shall be used.
2. **Bantam Division** shall play on a field having 50 foot baselines. The pitching rubber shall be at a distance of 35 feet. An 11 inch regulation softball shall be used.
3. **Midget Division** shall play on a field having 60 foot baselines. The pitching rubber shall be at a distance of 40 feet. A 12 inch regulation softball shall be used.
4. **Junior & Senior Divisions** shall play on a field having 60 foot baselines. The pitching rubber shall be at a distance of 43 feet. A 12 inch regulation softball shall be used.

### **C. EQUIPMENT – HELMETS WITH FACE GUARDS**

1. All batters, on-deck batters and batter-runners are required to wear protective helmets with face guards when the ball is in play.
2. Effect of violation:
  - a. **Instructional Division:** The umpire's warnings will be of an unlimited number.
  - b. **All Other Divisions:** The umpire will issue only one (1) warning per game, per team, regarding helmets. After the first warning per game, per team, any batter or batter-runner who assumes her position at the plate or on the bases without a face guard helmet will be declared out by the umpire.
  - c. If a participating team does not have a sufficient number of face guard helmets, the other participating team shall cooperate in loaning the offensive team helmets so that the game may be played without violation.

### **D. PLAYERS**

#### **1. REQUIRED NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

- a. A team must have 7 players present in the dugout or team area to start or continue a game. If each team has at least 7 players present at the starting time, the game shall begin on time.
- b. If either or both teams do not have 7 players present at game time, up to a 10 minute grace period shall be provided. If, during the grace period, both teams have the required number of players, the game shall start immediately. If, at the end of the grace period, one or both teams do not have 7 players, then such team or teams shall forfeit the game.
- c. In the event of a forfeit, and provided both managers agree, a scrimmage shall be played dividing the players in a manner mutually agreeable to both managers. The scheduled umpire(s) shall remain and umpire the scrimmage. An umpire's failure to do so will be an unexcused absence and the umpire will not be paid. The scrimmage shall conclude at least 30 minutes prior to the beginning of a subsequent WGBSL game.
- d. No out or outs shall be recorded at bat for any team playing shorthanded.



## 2. FIELDERS

- a. **Instructional, Bantam & Midget Divisions:** A team on defense shall consist of up to 10 players.
- b. **Junior & Senior Divisions:** A team on defense shall consist of up to 9 players.
- c. All players shall play at least 2 complete innings on defense, barring injury or other extraordinary circumstances.
- d. Except for the pitcher, there shall be permitted free and unlimited substitution of players on the field.

## 3. PITCHERS

- a. **Instructional Division:** Coaches shall pitch to batters of their own team. No strikeouts, bases on balls or hit batters may occur. If the batter does not place the ball in play after 6 pitches, the batter shall hit a ball off a batting tee to conclude her at bat.
- b. **Bantam & Midget Divisions:** A pitcher shall pitch no more than 4 innings per game. A pitcher may be replaced at any time and return later, however, each entry into the game shall be counted as one inning pitched for purposes of the 4 inning limitation.
- c. A pitcher removed and reinserted during the same inning must be removed from the position of pitcher for at least one batter.
- d. A manager or coach may ask the umpire to call time and confer with the game pitcher at any time. Upon the second conference with the game pitcher in one inning by the manager or coach, the pitcher must be removed from the position of pitcher for at least one batter.

### e. **NO WALKS—COACH PITCH RULE – 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> GRADES ONLY**

- i. When ball four is called on any batter, the pitcher gives way to a coach from the batter's team. The coach picks up the existing strike count. The coach, pitching underhanded and pitching near the rubber or at least 25 feet from the plate, throws up to three additional pitches to the batter. The coach while acting as pitcher may, before the pitch is thrown, verbally position the batter in the batter's box, but should otherwise be silent and positioned away from the play. A coach when acting as pitcher **MAY NOT** coach, cheerlead, encourage, touch, assist or instruct batters or runners during a play unless the coach has first returned to a coaching box in foul territory. If while pitching, a coach is hit by a batted ball or interferes with a fielder attempting to make a play, the batter/runner is out and the ball is dead.
- ii. Any pitch by a coach that is deemed a strike by the umpire shall be called a strike, and if the strike is the third strike, the batter is out.
- iii. If the batter does not reach base safely by the coach's third pitch, the batter is out, unless the third (or subsequent) pitch is a foul ball that does not result in the batter being out, in which case the coach throws another pitch. (As per normal rules, the batter is not retired on a foul ball unless the ball is a foul tip or otherwise caught for an out.)

## E. THE GAME

### 1. REGULATION GAME – ALL DIVISIONS EXCEPT INSTRUCTIONAL

- a. A regulation game shall consist of seven innings. A full seven innings need not be played if the team second at bat scores more runs in six and one-half innings and/or before the third out in the last of the seventh inning, or the Run Ahead Rule is applied.
- b. A game that is tied at the end of seven innings shall be continued by playing additional innings until one side has scored more runs than the other at the end of a complete inning,

- or until the team second at bat has scored more runs in their half of the inning before the third out is made.
- c. A game called by the umpire or by mutual agreement of the managers shall be regulation if five or more complete innings have been played, or if the team second at bat has scored more runs in four or more innings than the other team has scored in five or more innings.
    - i. The umpires are empowered to call a game at any time because of darkness, rain, threatening weather, unplayable field conditions or other causes that place the patrons or players in peril.
    - ii. The umpire is required to enforce the Time Limit Rule, if applicable.
  - d. A game that is not considered regulation shall resume at the exact point, including time, at which it was stopped.
  - e. A regulation tie game shall be declared if the score is equal when the game is called at the end of five or more complete innings, or if the team second at bat has equaled the score of the first team in the incomplete inning.
  - f. A game that is a regulation tie game shall be considered a complete game and shall be so recorded.
  - g. Notwithstanding the above, a game shall be considered a regulation game regardless of the number of innings played if the Time Limit Rule is in effect.

## **2. TIME LIMIT – ALL DIVISIONS EXCEPT INSTRUCTIONAL**

- a. The umpire shall state the time at which the game begins to each team immediately following the first pitch. Each team shall record such time on its scorebook.
- b. **BANTAM DIVISION:** no inning shall start after **1 hour and 30 minutes**. A new inning begins immediately after the final out of the previous inning.
- c. **MIDGET & JUNIOR DIVISIONS:** no inning shall start after **1 hour and 40 minutes**. A new inning begins immediately after the final out of the previous inning.
- d. The Time Limit Rule shall not apply for Junior and Senior divisions unless a subsequent game is scheduled to begin on the same field within 30 minutes of the implementation of the Time Limit Rule.
- e. The Time Limit Rule may be waived or extended with the agreement of both managers and both managers of the subsequently scheduled game.
- f. Each team will be given **2** minutes to have their team on the field and ready to start play. If the umpire determines a team is delaying the game for a non-injury related reason a warning will be issued. Subsequent infractions will result in the following: a ball will be issued to the batter if the defensive team delays the game; a strike will be issued to the batter if the offensive team delays the game. Additional balls and strikes will be issued if the delay continues.

## **3. REGULATION GAME & TIME LIMIT – INSTRUCTIONAL DIVISION**

- a. All play shall stop after 1 hour 30 minutes, unless both managers and, if necessary, both managers of the subsequently scheduled game agree to extend play.
- b. Both managers mutually are empowered to call a game at any time because of darkness, rain, threatening weather, unplayable field conditions, or other causes that place the patrons or players in peril.

## **4. RUN AHEAD RULE**

- a. If a team is ahead by at least 8 runs after 6 innings or at least 15 runs after 5 innings, the game is a regulation game and is completed.
- b. Complete innings must be played unless the home team scores the run ahead limit while at bat. When the visiting team reaches the limit in the top half of the inning, the home team must have the opportunity to bat in the bottom half of the inning.

**5. RUN INNING LIMIT**

- a. For the Bantam Division, if the team at bat scores 5 runs in any one inning, it shall be the same as the defense getting 3 outs, the inning shall end, and the at-bat team will take the field. To avoid confusion regarding the number of runs scored, any play in progress shall continue until play has stopped, however, runs in excess of 5 shall not be counted.
- b. For Midget, Junior, and Senior Divisions, if the team at bat scores 7 runs in any one inning, it shall be the same as the defense getting 3 outs, the inning shall end, and the at-bat team will take the field. To avoid confusion regarding the number of runs scored, any play in progress shall continue until play has stopped, however, runs in excess of 7 shall not be counted.

**F. BATTERS – INSTRUCTIONAL DIVISION ONLY**

1. **SIX PITCH LIMIT.** No strikeouts, bases on balls or hit batters may occur. If the batter does not place the ball in play after 6 pitches, the batter shall hit a ball off a batting tee to conclude her at bat.

**G. HIT BATTER – ALL DIVISIONS EXCEPT INSTRUCTIONAL DIVISION**

1. When a pitched ball not swung at nor called a strike touches any part of the batter's person or clothing, a hit batter occurs. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter. The batter's hands are not to be considered part of the bat.  
EFFECT:
  - a. The ball is dead. The batter is entitled to one base without liability to be put out.
  - b. If the batter is hit on the hands while swinging at a pitch and hits the ball fair or foul, the ball is dead and a strike called. If it is strike three, the batter is out.

2. **Instructional Division:** The hit batter rule does not apply.

**H. DROPPED THIRD STRIKE – MIDGET, JUNIOR & SENIOR DIVISIONS ONLY**

1. Batter is out
  - a. When a called or swinging third strike is caught by the catcher; or
  - b. When the batter has three strikes if there are fewer than two outs and first base is occupied at the time of the pitch.
2. Batter becomes a Batter-Runner
  - a. When the catcher fails to catch a called or swinging third strike before the ball touches the ground; and
  - b. When there are fewer than two outs and first base is unoccupied at the time of the pitch or anytime there are two outs.
3. Batter-Runner is out
  - a. When the catcher drops the third strike and the batter-runner is legally put out prior to reaching first base with less than two outs and first base is not occupied at the time of the pitch.
  - b. When the batter-runner fails to advance to first base and enters the team area after a dropped third strike.
4. See underlying adopted rules for additional details.

## I. INFIELD FLY

1. The infield fly rule does not apply in **Instructional & Bantam Divisions**. The infield fly rule applies in **Midget, Junior & Senior Divisions**.
2. An infield fly is a fair fly ball (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when first and second bases or first, second and third bases are occupied before two are out. Any defensive player who takes a position in the infield at the start of the pitch shall be considered an infielder for the purpose of this rule. The infield fly is ruled when the ball reaches the highest point based on the position of the closest infielder regardless who makes the play. When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly; the umpire shall immediately declare: "Infield Fly." If the batted ball, which is otherwise an infield fly, is hit in a manner that the umpire is unsure whether the ball will be fair or foul, the umpire shall instead declare: "Infield Fly if Fair." The ball is live and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught. The runners can tag up and advance once the batted ball is touched (prior to catching), the same as on any fly ball. If a declared infield fly becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul.
3. See underlying adopted rules for additional details.

## J. COURTESY RUNNER

1. The team at bat may use a courtesy runner for the catcher with two outs. The last player making an out shall be the courtesy runner if a courtesy runner is exercised.

## K. LEADOFFS

1. A leadoff prior to the ball leaving the pitcher's hand shall not be permitted.
2. The runner is out when she fails to keep contact with the base to which she is entitled until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.

*EFFECT: The ball is dead, "no pitch" is declared when applicable, and the runner is out.*

## L. STEALING

1. **Instructional & Bantam 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Divisions**. Stealing shall not be permitted. Runners may not advance on any pitched ball unless put in play as a result of being batted, thrown to start a pick-off play or by the award of a walk.
2. **Bantam 4<sup>th</sup> Grade and Midget Divisions**. Runners are entitled to advance or steal one base only per pitch with liability to be put out. For purposes of this rule:
  - a. A runner, attempting to advance beyond the one base she is entitled to advance or steal, may be put out while between bases. A runner cannot be put out while in sole contact with a base or after crossing home plate.
  - b. After all play ceases, and the ball becomes dead, if a runner occupies a base beyond the one the runner was entitled to advance or steal or has crossed home plate, the runner will be returned to the correct base without liability to be put out.
  - c. If a batter strikes out and the ball is dropped, the ball remains live for the purpose of throwing the advancing runner out.
  - d. A batter, who receives a base on balls or reaches base as a result of a dropped third strike, cannot advance past first base. If the batter-runner advances further, once the ball becomes dead, return the batter-runner to first base.

- e. Stealing home is permitted for Midget Division. **Stealing home IS NOT permitted for Batman 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Division.**
3. **Junior Division.** All underlying rules regarding stealing apply and are not limited by league rules with the exception of delayed stealing noted below.
  4. **Delayed Stealing is Prohibited.** In any division where stealing is allowed the runner is only allowed to steal a base on the pitch, a past ball or a catcher pick off. When the ball is returned to the pitcher the runner **must** return to the base. Runners may not stand off the base in an attempt to draw a throw from the pitcher after the pitcher has received the ball from the catcher. If the catcher initiates a pick off the runner may advance to the next base with the liability of being put out. With runners and 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> the runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> base is allowed to advance to home with liability of being put out if the catcher throws to 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> base in an attempt to put out the trailing runner. The umpire will issue only one (1) warning per team, per game regarding this rule. A second violation will result in runner being called out. **Note:** in the Junior Division an errant throw from the catcher to the pitcher is a live ball and runner(s) may advance at the risk of being put out (see Paragraph O.3. below, Return of Ball to the Pitcher).

**M. PICKOFFS – INSTRUCTIONAL, BANTAM & MIDGET DIVISIONS ONLY**

1. Only the catcher may initiate a pick-off play to any base.
2. If the catcher initiates a pick-off play, runners may advance at their own risk.
3. Runners may advance only one base. No additional bases may be awarded or taken if an overthrow occurs during or following a pick-off attempt, including if the ball goes out of play or is ruled dead.
4. **Instructional & Bantam 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Divisions:** No base runner may score as the result of a pick off play.

**N. SCORING – INSTRUCTIONAL AND BANTAM DIVISIONS**

1. Runners can only score on:
  - a. A batted ball or a play related to a batted ball, including a play initiated by a batter that involves overthrows;
  - b. A base on balls or hit batter with the bases full;
  - c. Catcher's obstruction with the bases full, or
  - d. On an awarded base when the ball goes out of play following a batted ball.
2. Scoring off of pickoff plays, third strike plays, or any other action not covered above is not permitted.

**O. RETURN OF BALL TO THE PITCHER**

1. **Bantam Division.** An errant throw on the return of the ball to the pitcher is a dead ball. Runners may not advance. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the runner has made sufficient progress towards the next base at the time of the errant throw, that base may be awarded. (See next page for example.)  
*EXAMPLE 1: B1 has hit the ball to F6 who muffs the play. B1 reaches first base and makes little effort to head towards second. F6 recovers the ball and throws wild to the pitcher. B1 heads for and reaches third base. RULING: Ball is dead. B1 has not made sufficient progress towards second base when the error occurred and must return to first base.*  
*EXAMPLE 2: B1 hits the ball to F6, reaches first base and is halfway to second when F6*

- throws to the pitcher. The pitcher misses the throw and B1 is at third base when the pitcher recovers the ball. RULING: The ball is dead. The umpire judges that sufficient progress has been made to second base when the error occurred. B1 returns from third to second base.*
2. **Midget Division.** If the pitcher has possession of the ball in the vicinity of the pitcher's mound or just misplays a throw back to the pitcher, the ball is dead and runners may not advance further. In the event of an overthrow, it is the umpire's decision as to whether the throw was to the pitcher or to another player. It is also the umpire's decision as to whether the pitcher was in proximity of the pitcher's position or playing as a fielder at the time of the errant throw. If the pitcher is judged by the umpire to be acting as a fielder and the errant throw results in a ball going out of play, it is an overthrow and bases can be awarded. If the catcher makes an errant throw, as judged by the umpire, it can also qualify as an overthrow and bases can be awarded.
  3. **Junior Division.** Underlying rules apply. An errant throw to the pitcher is in play. The runners may advance at their own risk.

**P. CRASHING INTO A FIELDER WITH THE BALL (INTERFERENCE)**

1. In order to prevent injury and protect the defensive player attempting to make a play on a runner, the runner shall be called out if she remains on her feet and crashes into a defensive player holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag, or if the defensive player is about to receive a thrown ball. If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected.
2. In order to prevent the crash ruling, the runner may slide, jump over the top of the defender holding the ball, go around the defender (if outside the three-foot lane, the runner would be called out), give herself up, or return to the previous base touched. A runner may slide into the fielder.

**EFFECTS:**

1. *When a runner is called out for crashing into a fielder holding the ball, the ball becomes dead. Each runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.*
2. *If, in 1 above, the runner crashed into a fielder holding the ball before she was put out and, in the judgment of the umpire, it was an attempt to break up an obvious double play, the immediate succeeding runner will also be declared out.*
3. *If the crash occurs after the runner was called out, the runner closest to home plate will be declared out.*
4. *If an obstructed runner crashes into a fielder holding the ball, the obstruction call will be ignored and the runner will be called out. An obstruction call does not give the runner the right to violate the crash rule.*
5. *If a defensive player is fielding a thrown ball and the flight of the ball carries or draws her into the path of the base runner, this would not be a crash.*
6. *If the ball, runner and the defensive player all arrive at the same time and contact is made, the umpire should not invoke the collision rule (interference) or obstruction. This is merely incidental contact. If the ball does not enter dead ball territory in either 5 or 6, the ball remains live and is in play.*

**Q. OBSTRUCTION**

1. Runners are entitled to advance without liability to be put out when a fielder not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball, or not about to receive a thrown ball, impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases.
2. Should an act of interference occur following any obstruction, enforcement of the interference rule would have precedence.
3. If the obstructed runner is put out prior to reaching the base which would have been reached had there not been called obstruction, a dead ball is called and the obstructed runner and each

other runner affected by the obstruction will always be awarded the base or bases which would have been reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction. An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where obstructed unless properly appealed for missing a base, leaving a base before a fly ball was first touched, for an act of interference, or if passing another runner.

4. If the obstructed runner is put out after passing the base which would have been reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed runner will be called out. The ball remains live.
5. When a runner, while advancing or returning to a base, is obstructed by a fielder who neither has the ball nor is attempting to field a batted or thrown ball, or a fielder who fakes a tag without the ball, the obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction, will always be awarded the base or bases which would have been reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction. If the umpire feels there is justification, a defensive player making a fake tag could be ejected from the game.

*EFFECT: When any obstruction occurs (including a rundown), the umpire will signal a delayed dead ball. The ball will remain live.*