

2019 WRA/NTRA Joint House League Baseball Rules

3RD & 4TH GRADE LEAGUE (REFERRED TO AS “MUSTANG LEAGUE” BY BOTH WRA & NTRA)

With the exception of the following age-specific rules, Mustang League play will be outlined in the IHSA Baseball Rule Book.

1. ELIGIBILITY: Players must have just completed 3rd or 4th grade in 2019.
2. PLAYING FIELD: Base distance will be 60 feet; pitching rubber distance from home plate will be 44 feet.
3. NUMBER OF PLAYERS: Each team must have a minimum of eight players to begin a game; **if a team cannot field the minimum number of players, a forfeit will occur 10 minutes after the scheduled start time.** Teams can still play, but umpires will not be required to stay.
4. LENGTH OF GAMES: A new inning cannot begin **75 minutes after the start of the game and 6 innings are the maximum innings to be played during the 75-minute time limit. Game times will be per published WRA schedule.** Time between innings should always be kept to a minimum to keep the game moving. Post-season tournament time limits may be different and will be provided to coaches prior to the tournament. **Official time will be kept by the umpires.** A timer will be placed on the fence behind home plate, providing as the official time remaining. The timer will start upon the conclusion of the pre-game meeting. No new inning will start after the time has expired. A new inning will be constituted as a defensive team ready on the field, a batter in the box, and the ball put in play by the umpire. The umpires will reserve the right to declare a new inning, if pace of play is not being followed during the half inning.
5. PRE-GAME WARM-UP: The visiting team on the schedule has the field from 30 minutes prior to the start time to 15 minutes prior to the start time. The home team follows until the start time. When necessary warm-ups should be performed in an adjacent (but safe) area to stay on schedule if the first game of the evening runs slightly past 75 minutes. Coaches and umpires should work together to ensure “ready play” is adhered to in order to maximize available daylight. If a team is the second game of the night on a field, warm up time may be limited due to daylight. Teams should be ready at their scheduled start time to avoid loss of game time due to daylight.
6. TEAM ON DEFENSE: All players must play defense for at least half the game (*it is recommended that all players play defense at least every other inning*). Regulation infield consists of a pitcher, catcher, first baseman, second baseman, shortstop & third baseman. Only three outfielders are permitted and players must be positioned at least 30 feet behind the baselines. There is no infield fly rule at this level.
7. TEAM ON OFFENSE: All players in the game must be in the batting order; players who arrive after the game begins are added to the bottom of the order. **If that player is still not present when his turn to bat comes up, the team will take an out.** All innings consist of three outs and teams are not limited to batting through the order. Bunting is allowed. **Players who will be catching the following inning must have a pinch runner if they reach base with 2 outs in order to get their catching gear on. The pinch runner will be the batter who made the last out.**

8. **RUN LIMIT:** There will be a 5-run limit per inning. The last inning will be unlimited. **If it is close to the time limit, it is the umpire's decision to call the last inning. They will inform both coaches that the next inning will be the last and that inning will then not be restricted to 5 runs.**
9. **MERCY RULE:** The 12-run "mercy rule" will occur if 1) the visiting team leads by at least 12 runs at the end of four innings or 2) the home team leads by at least 12 runs after 3.5 innings. Coaches may continue to play if they choose but the game will be officially over and the umpires will not be required to stay.
10. **PITCHING:** The WRA follows a pitch count policy in accordance with Little League rules. This policy is being implemented to serve as protection for young pitcher's arms. A pitcher cannot pitch in more than one game in a single day and once a pitcher is removed from pitching in a game, he may not pitch again in that game.

The coach, assistant coach, or team representative (such as a parent) must track pitch counts each game on the provided form and turn in form to the home plate umpire at the end of the game.

Rules

League Age	Pitches allowed per day
17-18	105
13-16	95
11-12	85
10 and under	75

Pitchers league ages 7 through 16 must adhere to the following rest requirements:

- If a player pitches 61 or more pitches in a day, three (3) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 41 - 60 pitches in a day, two (2) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 21 - 40 pitches in a day, one (1) calendar day of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 1-20 pitches in a day, no calendar day of rest is required before pitching again.

There will be a maximum of 5 warm-up pitches between innings unless a new pitcher is beginning the inning, then the maximum will be 10. Warm-up pitches are not counted towards the maximum number of pitches allowed.

If a pitcher reaches their limit while pitching to a batter, they may finish pitching to the batter until the batter is out or reaches base. The limit is in reference to the maximum. For example, if a 12-year-old is at 83 pitches with a new batter, they may throw more than the 85 limit until that at bat is over. **The pitch count is how many pitches the pitcher has thrown at the time of being removed from the game.**

The calendar days rest is full days. For example, if a kid throws 46 pitches on Tuesday, they will not be eligible to pitch again until Friday.

If the inning ends in the process of pitching to the batter (while the max pitch count is reached), and the batter will lead off the next inning, the pitcher will not be able to start the next inning.

Any abuse of this policy will be:

1. First offense - one game suspension
2. Second offense - suspension of remainder of season, plus one year suspension from coaching.

11. **LEADING OFF & STEALING BASES:** Base runners must stay on the base until the pitch crosses the plate. Once the pitcher is on the pitching rubber, a base runner leaving the base too early will be called out (*there will be one warning per team by the umpire*). Runners may not steal home. However, if a play is made on any base runner (regardless of the base occupied) a runner may attempt to advance from 3rd base to home.

Background: The intent of the rule is to eliminate a "free" put out attempt at 2nd base (with runners on 1st & 3rd) without risk to the runner at 3rd base advancing. Runners on 3rd base will not be able to advance on passed balls, wild pitches, or throws from the catcher back to the pitcher.

12. **BAT LIMITATIONS:** No bats greater than 2 5/8" diameter are allowed.
13. **CALL-UPS:** Only 10-year-old players are allowed to be called up to the Bronco level; players cannot play in a Bronco game if it conflicts with his regularly-scheduled Mustang game; Mustang coaches must give permission to the Bronco coach doing the calling up especially if there's a chance the player may pitch. Only FARM league players can be called up to play in the Mustang league. Players can be called up **only** if less than 9 players can be fielded to play on a team.
14. **Official Game Scorecard:** Both coaches are responsible for signing the Official Game Scorecard. The Official Game Scorecard will be filled out by the home plate umpire, signed by both umpires and both head coaches, and turned into the concession stand immediately following the game. The Official Game Scorecard will be used to track league standings, track player pitch counts, and used for documentation for umpire payment. Once the Official Game Scorecard is signed changes to the documented information will not be permitted. In case of ties, the following tie-breakers will determine the final standings: 1) head-to-head competition, 2) fewest runs allowed in head-to-head competition, 3) most runs scored in head-to-head games, 4) fewest runs allowed in all games.
15. **MISCELLANEOUS:** Rain-outs or cancelled games will be rescheduled by the WRA scheduler; coaches will be notified as soon as possible. A game will be considered complete and will not be rescheduled, if 4 innings are completed or 3.5 innings completed when the home team is winning. A loss of a player should be reported to the league representative as soon as possible. Players are encouraged, but not required, to wear a protective cup.
16. **DROPPED THIRD STRIKE:** Third strike rule does not apply. On the third strike the batter is out.