



# 2021 Sparkler Rules & Regulations

## **1. GENERAL SAFETY**

- a. All registered players must all sign the AYBS COVID waiver.
- b. No handshakes, fist bumps, etc. Teams will observe a “hat tip” at the conclusion of each game.
- c. Any of the safety regulations in this document are subject to change at any time in accordance with updated guidelines from State and/or local authorities.

## **2. THE GAME**

- a. The Little League Rulebook, not the Tournament rules section, will be the guide for all rules not specifically addressed in this document. Situations not covered in either this document or in the Little League Rulebook will be decided by the board of Ashland Youth Baseball & Softball. The board’s decision will be final and may not be appealed.
- b. The home team provides the game balls and should provide the umpire with three balls in new/very good condition at the start of the game.
- c. AYBS will provide each team with a dozen balls for the tournament and additional balls for playoffs.
- d. No new innings shall be started after 1 hour 45 minutes from the scheduled game start time. Coaches and/or scorekeepers are responsible for monitoring time of play.
- e. A game may be called at any time by the umpire or town coordinator due to extenuating circumstances such as weather, darkness, field conditions, or unsportsmanlike conduct.
- f. A minimum of 8 players are required to start or continue a game. In the event that only eight players are available at the start of a game, the ninth roster spot shall be entered in the line-up and if not filled during the game by an eligible eight year old player, the ninth roster spot shall be an automatic out each time it is reached in the batting order. When and if the ninth player arrives, the opposing coach and umpire shall be notified. If a team starts a game with nine players, but is forced to reduce its roster to eight due to injury only, that roster spot shall be skipped in the lineup and will not be considered an automatic out.
- g. A team with less than the minimum number of players at the scheduled start time will be given 10 minutes to reach the minimum player requirements or forfeit the game. In the event of a forfeit, both teams are encouraged to use the scheduled field time to conduct a scrimmage or controlled practice. Umpires will not be available to officiate scrimmages. Forfeits shall be reported to a tournament official prior to proceeding with a scrimmage.

- h. The inning ends when 3 outs are recorded or 5 runs have scored, whichever occurs first.
- i. In the final inning, if the visiting team is losing or the game is tied, the visiting team may score unlimited runs up to a maximum of 5 more than the home team's total. If the visiting team is ahead going into the final inning, the 5 run maximum rule applies. If the home team is losing in the bottom of the last inning, they may score unlimited runs until the game is won or ended with 3 outs.
- j. Games with a 15-run differential after 4 complete innings or 3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead will be stopped and recorded as a complete game. At any time after 4 complete innings or 3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead, if one team reaches a 15-run differential, the game will be stopped immediately and recorded as a complete game. This is referred to as the mercy rule. The teams will not continue to play for practice.
- k. Teams shall play with courtesy and be considerate of the opposing team in all games.
- l. No arguing with the umpires will be allowed under any circumstances by any player, coach or fan. If any such incidents occur, the coach of the respective team will be warned (or, if appropriate in the discretion of the umpire or tournament officials, removed from the game and the field) to maintain control of the incident. Any further occurrences will result in forfeit of the team causing the problem.
- m. No unsportsmanlike conduct will be allowed by any player, coach or fan under any circumstances.
- n. Home team player areas are on the Third Base line for both fields.

## **2. SUBSTITUTIONS**

- a. Players may be freely substituted, with the exception of the pitcher (see Pitching)
- b. Continuous batting order is used. All players present are in the batting order each inning regardless of their fielding position. Players arriving after the game has started are added to the end of the batting order.
- c. All players present for the game must play at least 3 of the first 4 innings of a game and 4 of the 6 in a full game.
- d. All players must play at least 2 innings in the infield every game.

## **3. PITCHING**

- a. A pitcher will be replaced on the mound if he hits 3 batters in one game. It is the umpire's discretion to not count as hit batsmen, batters who step into a pitch, fail to move from a pitch, are hit with a bouncing, slow pitch, or any other situation where there is minimal danger of injury or lack of wildness on the pitcher's part.
- b. If a pitcher walks 4 consecutive batters in one inning they must be replaced on the mound. **This includes situations where the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive walk also ends an inning.** A hit batter is considered a walk.
- c. Scorekeepers and/or coaches shall be responsible for keeping track of walks and hit batsmen and shall replace pitchers when needed.
- d. If a pitcher takes the mound and pitches to one batter, this is considered an inning pitched. Partial innings are considered a full inning even if an out is not recorded.
- e. A pitcher that has been removed during a game may not re-enter as a pitcher in that game and must have the required rest.

- f. Pitchers are limited to 6 innings per week. The week starts on Saturday and ends on Friday.
- g. Pitchers are limited to 2 innings per game. Coaches will be responsible for entering innings pitched on the tournament website after the completion of each game.
- h. During the playoffs, a new pitching week will start on the day of the championship game.
- i. Pitchers must have one calendar day of rest after pitching 2 innings in a single game. For example, if a player pitches 2 innings on Saturday, they cannot pitch again until Monday. One inning pitched in a single game does not require a calendar day of rest.
- j. Balk rules will not be enforced but coaches should instruct as situations arise.
- k. Players shall not be used as pitchers until they demonstrate in practice enough control and poise to throw strikes to live batters in a game situation. This is to avoid innings with high numbers of walks.

#### **4. RUNNING**

- a. Each player is allowed one “successful” steal per inning. A successful steal is any base advancement after a pitch, where the ball was not put in play by the batter. Attempted steals where the runner is called out by the tag, in run down, running out of the base path or for not sliding are not considered a steal and do not count toward the allowable steals per inning.
- b. Each team is allowed 2 “successful” steals per inning. Double steals count as two stolen bases.
- c. Runners may not advance on overthrows on steals or attempted steals.
- d. A player cannot steal until the ball has passed the batter.
- e. There is no stealing of home.
- f. Runners cannot attempt to steal a base on the throwback from the catcher to the pitcher. No delayed steals.
- g. Runners will be allowed one base on an overthrow per ball put in play. For example, on an overthrow past first base, each runner may take one additional base at their own risk. As long as the overthrow remains in play, the defender will be allowed to throw out the base runner. No additional bases may be taken after the first overthrow.
- h. Runners will not be allowed to take home on an overthrow on a steal or attempted steal. Runners are, however, allowed to take home on an overthrow of a ball put in play by the batter.
- i. Runners shall slide into all bases where there is a play being made. Failure to slide will result in the player being called out if they do not slide in a close play.
- j. No advance on an overthrow of a steal.
- k. No head first sliding is allowed, unless returning to a bag. Players sliding head first into a base shall be called out.
- l. Obstruction and interference will be called.
- m. Catcher's interference will be called after one warning.

#### **5. BATTING**

- a. Helmets with face cages are recommended, but not required. It is the responsibility of each team to follow its league rules for helmets and equipment.
- b. If the batter throws the bat during a swing he will receive a warning after the first incident. Any additional occurrences will result in the player being called automatically out.
- c. There will be no on-deck batter on the back field. An on-deck batter is allowed in the caged area only on the front field (i.e., Sanchez Field).

- d. There will be no bunting in this tournament.

## **6. FIELDING**

- a. The infield fly rule will not be called.

## **7. SCORE REPORTING**

- a. We will be using the AYBS website to keep track of game results. The site address is <http://tshq.bluesombrero.com/Default.aspx?tabid=1711777>
- b. Head coaches will be given access to report scores on the website
- c. Scores and innings pitched must be reported no later than 12 hours after the completion of the game.

## **8. UMPIRES**

- a. Umpires will be patched whenever possible; however non-patched umpires may be assigned as well.

## **9. PLAYOFFS**

- a. Standings/seedings are determined based on points earned during the season; 2 points for a win, 1 point for a tie, 0 points for a loss.
- b. In the event there is a tie in the standings, head-to-head competition will be used to determine the higher seed. Run differential in head-to-head games will be the second tie breaker. If teams split evenly in head-to-head or did not face each other, a coin toss will be used to determine the higher seed.
- c. For each playoff game, the higher seed will be the home team.
- d. Playoffs are single game elimination with the winning team advancing to the next round.
- e. All teams will qualify for the playoffs.
- f. The championship game will be a single elimination game.
- g. All rules apply in the playoffs with the exception of the time limit; no new innings shall be started after 2 hours from the scheduled game start time. In the event a game is tied at the end of regulation, extra innings will be played until a winner is determined. If a playoff game is suspended due to darkness, the lighted field will be used if it is available that evening and play will resume. If a game is in progress on the lighted field, the teams will wait for this game to conclude before taking the field. The game will not resume on the lighted field after 9:00 PM, and, if necessary, the game will resume on the next available date, as determined by AYBS.

## **10. BATTING CAGES, DUGOUTS, and PRE-GAME WARMUPS**

- a. Each field has two batting cages and each cage is available 60 minutes prior to game time.
- b. There is NO infield or pitching practice allowed prior to the game. Players and coaches are permitted to take grounders and pop-ups to warm-up in the outfield area only.
- c. Each team is responsible for removing trash from its own dugout after each game.

## **11. PARKING**

- a. The parking area beyond the right field fence of the front field is reserved for head coaches and vehicles with a valid handicap parking pass.
- b. Each team will be issued one (1) parking pass prior to the season allowing one coach from each team to park along the fence across from the right field fence on the back field. Passes must be displayed on the vehicle dashboard.
- c. The area under the High Street overpass shall be reserved for umpire parking.
- d. For everyone's safety, no other vehicles are allowed to enter this area.

## **12. CONTACT INFO:**

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