

# Middle School League Rules

Updated 4/14/2026

## 1. TEAM ROSTERS AND PLAYERS

- 1.1. All teams must submit their final rosters before the first game of the season to the league commissioner.
  - 1.1.1. Failure to submit team roster to league commissioner by stated date, may result in team forfeiting games and/or removal from league.
  - 1.1.2. Once a player is rostered and roster is submitted, that player may not switch and play for another team. Tampering with players rostered on any teams could result in forfeit and removal from the league.
- 1.2. Only officially registered team members may participate. NO EXCEPTIONS.
- 1.3. A minimum of seven (7) players are needed to start a game or a forfeit will result.
  - 1.3.1. Call-ups may only be made to bring a team to nine (9) players. For example, a team with nine players may not call-up a tenth player.
  - 1.3.2. Call-ups must bat at the bottom of the batting order and can only play outfield positions defensively.
  - 1.3.3. If a call-up does end up being a tenth player at any point during a game, they may not play in the field defensively and can only bat (at the bottom of the lineup, behind all regular players).
  - 1.3.4. Call-ups must not have or miss a scheduled game at the same time for their primary team in the lower age division.
  - 1.3.5. All call-ups must be coordinated through and approved by the commissioners of both divisions that are affected to ensure compliance with these call-up guidelines.
  - 1.3.6. In the case of an injury, a team may finish the game with 6 players. When the injured player's spot comes up in the batting order the batter is skipped, it is NOT an out.
  - 1.3.7. If a player is ejected when the ejected player's spot comes up in the batting order, it is an out. If the team has less than 6 players, the game is over.

## 2. FIELD, GROUND RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1. The HOME team will prepare the field for play and will have infield practice 30 minutes before the game. The visitors will have infield practice 15 minutes before the game. Both teams will clean their respective areas and share in the cleaning of common areas after the game.
- 2.2. It is incumbent upon both teams to maintain the official score and pitch counts for both teams. Once the score and pitch counts have been agreed upon, the winning team will enter both into the Crossbar app.

## 3. SUBSTITUTIONS AND PLAYING TIME

- 3.1. All team members in attendance will play. Disciplinary actions will be allowable as long as the opposing coach is advised before the game.
- 3.2. Substitution Rule
  - 3.2.1. The free and unlimited substitution of defensive players is permitted except for pitchers, but the batting order shall remain the same.
  - 3.2.2. All players must play 2 of the first 4 innings on defense unless they do not arrive at the game in time to fulfill this requirement.

## 4. PITCHING

- 4.1. MLB Pitch Smart pitch count limits will be followed in this league as described below:

Pitch Count	Required rest in the days following	Examples
1 to 20 Pitches	0 Day Rest	19 pitches on Monday eligible to pitch on Tuesday
21 to 35 Pitches	1 Full Day Rest	25 pitches on Monday eligible to pitch on Wednesday (Tuesday Rest Day)
36 to 50 Pitches	2 Full Days Rest	40 pitches on Monday eligible to pitch on Thursday (Tuesday & Wednesday Rest Days)
51 to 65 Pitches	3 Full Days Rest	60 pitches on Monday eligible to pitch on Friday (Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday Rest Days)
66 to 85 Pitches	4 Full Days Rest	85 pitches on Monday eligible to pitch on Saturday (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday Rest Days)
Daily Max Pitches = 85 (May not face a new hitter once the daily limit of 85 pitches is reached)		

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- 4.2. In the case a game reaches the Drop-Dead time limit and the score reverts back to the last complete inning, ALL pitches, even the pitches during the time period that is lost, will count towards a pitchers daily pitch count.
- 4.3. A pitcher may exceed the daily pitch count limit to finish an at bat, but may not face a new hitter once the daily limit of 95 pitches is exceeded.
- 4.4. Each pitcher may receive no more than TWO balk warnings. Following the second balk, any subsequent balks by a pitcher will be enforced as defined in the NFHS Rules.
- 4.5. Pitcher Substitution Rule
  - 4.5.1. If the STARTING PITCHER is removed from the mound they CAN return to pitch in that game or in the completion of a suspended game.
  - 4.5.2. If a RELIEF PITCHER is removed from the mound they CANNOT return to pitch in that game or in the completion of a suspended game.

## 5. BATTING

- 5.1. Teams will bat all players on their roster in a predetermined order, a copy of which will be provided to the opposing team prior to the game. Late arrivals will be placed at the bottom of the order.

## 6. BASE RUNNING

- 6.1. In the event of an injury, a pinch runner may be placed on the bases. It must be the last player on that team who was called out.
  - 6.1.1 The injured player may not return to the game.
- 6.2. Teams may elect to use a courtesy runner for the catcher of the upcoming inning if there are two out. The pinch runner must be the last player on that team who was called out. The removed runner must be the catcher in the next half inning.

## 7. RUN LIMIT/MERCY RULE

- 7.1. MERCY RULE - If the losing team is behind by 15 or more runs after the fourth inning, or 10 or more runs after the fifth inning, the game is over.

## 8. THE PLAYING FIELD AND EQUIPMENT

- 8.1. Bases: The infield shall be 80-foot square.
- 8.2. Pitcher's mound: The distance between the front side of the pitcher's plate and home base (the rear point of home plate) shall be 54 feet.
- 8.3. Each team will supply one (1) new baseball for each game.
- 8.4. Complete and proper equipment (by position) must be worn at all times. All male players should wear athletic supporters. Male catchers must wear cups and female catcher's appropriate chest protection.
- 8.5. Metal cleats are NOT permitted
- 8.6. Bats may not exceed 2 3/4 inches in diameter, may not exceed 34 inches in length, and the unit differential, namely the difference between bat length measured in inches and bat weight measured in ounces, may not exceed 5 units (-5).
  - 8.6.1. Non-wood bats shall be labeled with a BPF (bat performance factor) of 1.15 or less.
  - 8.6.2. BBCOR bats are allowed, as long as they are BBCOR Certified.
  - 8.6.3. USA Bats are allowed, as long as they meet the differential.
  - 8.6.4. Wood bats are permitted..
- 8.7. All offensive players must wear batting helmets while outside the dugout. Runners who intentionally remove their helmets while on the base can be called out, umpire discretion.
- 8.8. All players will wear complete uniforms as issued by their respective leagues including baseball pants.
- 8.9. No shorts will be permitted.

## 9. BASE COACHES

- 9.1. The offensive team shall station two (2) base coaches on the field during its time at bat, one at 1B and one near 3B.
- 9.2. Base coaches should be an adult manager or coach. If a base coach is a player, they MUST wear a batting helmet.
- 9.3. Base coaches shall:

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- 9.3.1. Remain within the base coaches' box at all times, except when necessary to provide space for a defensive player to make a play on a batted or thrown ball.
- 9.3.2. Talk to members of their own team.
- 9.3.3. An offending coach shall be removed from the base coach's box.

## 10. UMPIRES

- 10.1. The decision of the umpire is final. Any umpire's decision which involves judgment, such as, but not limited to, whether a batted ball is fair or foul, whether a pitch is a strike or a ball, or whether a runner is safe or out, is final.
  - 10.1.1. Protests are permitted regarding misinterpretation of rules.
    - 10.1.1.1. The adult team manager must notify the umpire of the protest prior to another pitch being thrown following the play in question
    - 10.1.1.2. The umpire will then notify the opposing manager
    - 10.1.1.3. The protesting manager must notify the league commissioner following the game on the same day for the protest to be considered
- 10.2. Only a head coach or designated speaking coach may discuss plays with the umpire. The "designated speaking coach" shall be the team's representative during the pre-game conference with the umpiring crew.

## 11. COACH, PLAYER AND SPECTATOR CONDUCT

- 11.1. Head coaches must be at all times, examples of good sportsmanship.
- 11.2. The head coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players and assistant coaches.
- 11.3. Head coaches shall, to the best of their ability, control the conduct of parents and spectators on their side of the field, making every reasonable effort to discourage any type of harassment of umpires and opposing players, coaches, and fans.
- 11.4. No manager, player, substitute, coach, trainer or bat boy shall at any time, whether from the bench, the coach's box or on the playing field, or elsewhere:
  - 11.4.1. Incite, or try to incite, by word or sign a demonstration by spectators.
  - 11.4.2. Use language which will in any manner refer to or reflect upon opposing players, a coach, an umpire, or any spectator.
  - 11.4.3. Call "Time," or employ any other word or phrase or commit any act while the ball is alive and in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit a balk or to try to distract the pitcher in their pitching motion.
  - 11.4.4. Make intentional contact with any player, coach, umpire or spectator.
  - 11.4.5. Take a position in the batter's line of vision, and with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, act in a manner to distract the batter. PENALTY: The offender shall be removed from the game and shall leave the playing field, and, if a balk is made, it shall be nullified
- 11.5. No coach or staff member will appear at any game or practice under the influence of alcohol or controlled substance.
- 11.6. Smoking and/or the use of any and all tobacco products is prohibited on the playing field and in the bench area.
- 11.7. Coaches are not to leave the field or bench area for the purpose of smoking. PENALTY: IMMEDIATE REMOVAL FROM THE LEAGUE for any coach, staff member and/or individual that violates Rules 11.4, 11.5, and/or 11.6.
- 11.8. All players must remain inside their respective dugouts unless fielding, batting, warming up, or on deck. Warning given for first offense. An out will be assessed for any further offense. Coaches may not stand behind the backstop.
  - 11.8.1. EXCEPTION - Only one batter may be "on deck" at a time. A batter may not be "on deck" directly behind the backstop.
  - 11.8.2. EXCEPTION - Only one pitcher may warm-up at a time.
- 11.9. Other than as defined in the BASE COACHES section of these rules, and the two exceptions noted in 11.8 above, all coaches are to remain in the dugout. A warning will be issued for the first offense. An ejection will be issued for any further offenses.
- 11.10. There will be no throwing of equipment such as helmets and bats. It will be in umpires' judgment to issue a warning and an out or an ejection for any infraction. If the third out has been completed, the out will be applied to the next inning. For the second offense, an out and ejection of thrower. For unintentional slipping of a bat, there will be a warning to both player and coach for first offense and an out assessed for subsequent offenses.

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- 11.11. All the following actions by a Coach or player shall be subject to ejection at the discretion of the Umpire(s).
  - 11.11.1. Use of profanity, cursing, and swearing.
  - 11.11.2. Communicating or arguing in a verbally loud, aggressive, or intimidating way with a player or Coach (either team) or an Umpire.
  - 11.11.3. Staring down or pointing aggressively at another Coach, player, or Umpire in an aggressive or intimidating manner.

## 12. EJECTIONS

- 12.1. Any player or coach who is ejected from a game by an umpire is automatically suspended from the next game played, including playoff, championship and tournament games. There is no appeal.
- 12.2. A coach who is ejected from a game must immediately leave the area in a sportsmanlike manner before play will resume. An assistant coach may be designated as head coach to resume play. If no other assistant is available, the umpire may designate a parent or player as head coach to resume play.
- 12.3. A player who is ejected from a game MUST remain in the supervision of his coach and their turn in the batting order will count as an out.
- 12.4. Umpires will report all ejections to the Head Umpires and The Commissioner of the League
- 12.5. Anyone ejected from two (2) games during a season must meet with The Commissioner of the League who may consider suspending the individual for the remainder of the season.

## 13. GAME TIMES AND DURATION

- 13.1. All games are scheduled for seven (7) innings and will begin within ten (10) minutes of scheduled starting times unless waiting for completion of an earlier game or clearing of inclement weather.
- 13.2. In the event of a tie, extra innings may be played as the time limit allows.
- 13.3. A game that is stopped for any reason with less than three and one-half innings completed will be a suspended game and will be resumed at a later date from the point at which it was stopped.
- 13.4. All games will adhere to a strict time limit of 2 hours.
  - 13.4.1. Time will officially start on the first pitch. This should be noted by the team scorekeepers and announced to both head coaches upon the delivery of the first pitch of the game.
  - 13.4.2. No new inning will be started after the 2 hour time limit.
  - 13.4.3. An inning will be considered started after the final out of the previous inning is recorded.
  - 13.4.4. If the score is tied after the 2 hour time limit and a new inning cannot be started, the game will be considered a tie.
- 13.5. A Drop-Dead rule will take effect at 2 hours and 30 minutes. The game will immediately end, regardless of the situation. The at-bat does not have to be completed if this occurs.
  - 13.5.1. When the Drop-Dead rule takes effect, if the HOME team is batting and they have scored the go-ahead run, they will be declared the winner with the current score. If the game is tied or the HOME team is behind and have not had a chance to complete their at-bat, the game will revert back to the last complete inning.
- 13.6. Pitchers will be given 5 warm-up pitches between innings or pitching changes. The fifth pitch will be thrown down to second and then "BATTER UP."

## 14. SEVERE WEATHER

- 14.1. Lightning and Inclement Weather Policy (OHSAA Policy)
  - 14.1.1. Recognition - Coaches, athletic trainers, athletes, administrators, commissioners and contest officials shall be educated regarding the signs indicating thunderstorm development. Since the average distance between successive lightning flashes is approximately two to three miles, ANYTIME that lightning can be seen or heard, the risk is already present. Weather can be monitored using the following methods:
    - 14.1.2. THIRTY-MINUTE RULE – Competition or practice shall be suspended once lightning has been recognized or thunder is heard. It is required to wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning is witnessed or thunder is heard prior to resuming practice or competition.
    - 14.1.3. Whether delays do not count against the time limit of a game.