

**MINORS LEAGUE BASEBALL RULES**  
**4th AND 5th GRADERS**  
**Revised February 2026 by Joint Rules Committee**

The following rules - as adopted by the Lake Park Little League, Okoboji Youth Little League and Spirit Lake Youth Athletic Association - are intended to protect the safety of players, promote fast, fun play, and prioritize the fundamentals of baseball and softball.

1. Have Fun! The Minors Baseball division is intended for boys who have just completed the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades.
2. Home team will be responsible for running the scoreboard from the dugout.
3. There shall be a time limit on all games of 90 minutes or 5 innings with no new inning being allowed to start once the game timer hits zero regardless of score. A new inning begins at the conclusion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> out of the prior inning. Any inning in progress prior to the 90 minutes time limit shall be allowed to finish as long as the outcome of that inning has direct bearing to the final result of the game.
4. Umpires are in charge of game timing. At the beginning of each game the umpire shall designate the "Official" starting time and announce to both teams' coaches the official starting time for each game. Control and the determination of the expiration of the time limit shall be the sole responsibility of the umpire. While it is the intent of the league to have the running "game time" for each contest reflected on the scoreboard, it will be the umpire's sole discretion to determine the correct time as per his "official" time he keeps. In case of clock failure on any scoreboard the umpire's "official" time will be the final time for all contests.
5. Games that end in a tie at the completion of the time allotment shall be recorded as a tie. End of season tournament games that end in a tie will be decided by the "International Rule" (See below for full rule explanation).
6. In the event of weather or any other outside circumstances, games shall be official after four completed innings or in the middle of the fourth inning if the home team is winning or if the visiting team is ahead by 6 or more runs entering the 4<sup>th</sup> inning.
7. If a team scores 5 runs in its half on any single inning the side shall be considered to be out and the other team shall take its turn at bat.
8. **Revised:** The 6 run rule shall be in effect after 4 complete innings.
9. Coaches are asked to play all players equally. This means that each child on the team should play a minimum of two complete innings per game. Players are expected to practice regularly with their respective teams. If a player is missing practices, it is up to the coach/coaches to investigate the reason for non- participation and attempt to alleviate the issue. The league director should also be notified and kept informed of the situation.
10. All players including substitutes will bat in order. Any player not "on the bench and ready to play" at the time of the first pitch of any game shall be inserted into the batting order upon their arrival in the last position of the order. That player may not take the field until the next new inning for their team.
11. A batter that is in the batter's box and takes a pitch when batting out of order will be considered out.
12. Only official and League approved bats can be used. Bats should bear a certified stamp as USA or USSSA approved. Illegal bats will be removed, and the batter shall be called out by the Coach/Umpire.

13. All batters shall wear an approved safety batting helmet at all times while not in the dugout. Any batters not wearing proper gear shall return to the dugout until properly equipped.
14. Pitching distance is 46 feet. Bases are set at 60 feet.
15. Pitching limitations are in place to protect young arms. Please follow the guidelines in place below. Pitch count is based upon a 7-day period, not hours. There will be a maximum of 100 pitches per 7-day period regardless of rest between day rules below.

Rest Requirements:

- 1-30 pitches in a day, 0 calendar days of rest
- 31-45 pitches in a day, 1 calendar day of rest
- 46-60 pitches in a day, 2 calendar days of rest
- 61-75 pitches in a day, 3 calendar days of rest
- 76 or more pitches in a day, 4 calendar days of rest
- 80 pitches is the max per day

If a pitcher reaches these limits while facing a hitter, the pitcher may finish pitching to that batter without moving into the next level for “days of rest”. Pitchers cannot re-enter the game as pitcher once they have been removed from the mound. See rule 31 for clarification.

Coaches from each team should track the pitch counts for every pitcher who throws in a game. Umpires will not keep track of pitch count. Each team shall provide a point of contact to keep track of pitch counts during the game.

Between innings, the coaches will verify with each other the amount of pitches thrown for each player.

We will provide a pitch count form that coaches will be responsible to maintain throughout the season for all pitchers, regardless of pitches thrown.

Any pitch count infractions will be reported to the SLYAA board for review. Failure to observe this rule can result in team disqualification.

Coaches with travel pitchers should keep these guidelines in mind when selecting their pitchers.

16. A team has one minute or is allowed 5 pitches to warm up in between innings. This would start from the time the last batter is out. The only exception would be to allow 7 pitches for a new pitcher entering in the middle of an inning.
17. There will be no intentional walks.
18. Conferences at the pitching mound with a coach can be no longer than 1 minute and no more than 2 times per game or once per inning. The second visit in any inning or third trip in any game will require a pitching change.
19. There will be no intentional curve balls. This is up to the umpire’s discretion with the first offense being a warning and the second removal from the game.
20. Home plate will be locked – The only way that a runner can advance to Home is on a Batted Ball that starts the runners moving, a walk/balk or HBP with the bases loaded.

- a. Note: Any situation that starts with a non-batted ball, home plate is locked. Including, but not limited to a steal attempt, dropped third strike or pick-off attempt. A batted ball is played out completely until runners are put out, stopped or score.
21. **Revised:** Leading off and stealing of bases shall be allowed. The only bases a runner may steal are 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base – Home will be closed on a non-batted ball.
  22. **New:** Balks will be called only if there is obvious, intentional, or repeated misuse of the rules of pitching. One warning per pitcher will be provided. Technical violations giving no advantage shall not be penalized.
  23. Overthrows – Any base runner can advance to any base as long as any of the base runner(s) have been played upon after a ball has been hit into play. The base runner can advance multiple bases at their own risk, after an overthrow.
  24. **Revised:** Balls that go out of play – If a ball is thrown out of play, the baserunner(s) will get the base they were traveling to at the time the ball left the fielders hand plus one more base. Batted fair balls that hit the ground and travel past the outfield fence will be considered a ground rule double for the batter. If a runner is on second and ground rule double is called, that runner will be allowed to score. If a runner is on first base and a ground rule double is called, that runner will be sent to third base.
  25. Sliding - Excluding first base, players must slide at any base when played upon. If played upon and the runner makes contact with the fielder without sliding, the runner is out. Played upon will be defined as a defensive player in position at a base and trying to receive a throw that is in-bound. Umpire makes the final call in these situations.
  26. No dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike in Minors Baseball. If the catcher misses the ball on strike three the batter is automatically out. The ball remains Live and Runners may advance at their own risk. Runners on third cannot steal home.
  27. The infield fly rule shall be in effect. This rule is only in effect when there are runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> or the bases are loaded with less than two outs. This call is at the discretion of the umpire and will be made when the aforementioned bases are occupied, and a batted ball can be easily caught by an infielder. In other words, the only time the infield fly rule is in effect is when it is called by the umpire. Once called, any base runners may advance at their own risk, but must tag up if the ball is caught
  28. Bunting is allowed
  29. **Revised:** Won/loss records shall be maintained for the end of season tournament seeding with seeding based on winning percentage first and head to head second. Scorebooks are required to record the batting order, innings, outs and runs. The winning coach shall report game results to the league director.
  30. Bat throwing is not allowed. Any player who throws a bat will have their team issued a warning for the first infraction. If any player from the warned team throws a bat a second time, the player will be called out. This rule will be enforced by the umpire(s). Coaches can help monitor these activities, but the umpire(s) will make the final decision.
  31. Players may be substituted and re-entered at any time. The exception is that once a pitcher is removed from that position, they cannot return to the mound later in the same game even if they have remaining pitches left for the game or week. The batting order shall remain the same throughout the game.
  32. Courtesy runners for pitchers and catchers are allowed. The last batter to make an out shall be the courtesy runner.

33. Both teams shall start the game with 9 players in the field at a time. These fielders will include a pitcher, catcher, 4 infielders and 3 outfielders. A team may play the game with a minimum of 8 players if need be but shall take an out each time the 9<sup>th</sup> batter's position comes to bat. A team must forfeit the game if they have 7 or fewer players at the start of the game. Coaches may contact other players in a lower division of the league in an attempt to have 9 players at the outset of the game. However, if 9 players from their own team are present, they may not play a player from another team. Any players playing for a team other than their own must play in the outfield and bat at the end of the batting line up. Coaches shall inform both the umpire and opposing coach of their substitute players prior to the start of the game.
- a If a player is removed from the game due to injury, they may be removed from the batting order without penalty of an out as long as 9 eligible players remain in the lineup. The injured player may not return to the lineup (offensively or defensively) once the player has been removed from the lineup. If only 8 eligible players remain in the lineup, the team shall take an out each time the 9<sup>th</sup> batter's position comes to bat.
34. Players, coaches, and spectators shall always conduct themselves in an appropriate manner exhibiting good sportsmanship. Failure to do so could result in ejection from a game and if need be from the league or forfeiture of a game.
35. Only molded plastic spikes will be allowed – no metal.
36. **Revised: International Tie Breaker rule for Baseball: (League Tournament Only)** If the game is tied after regulation the game will continue using the "International Tie-Breaker Rule". Under this rule, each team starts the inning with the player who completed the last official at bat, as **a base runner on second base**. Each subsequent inning will start the same until a manner has been determined.
37. Unless otherwise indicated, Iowa High School Boys Baseball rules shall apply.

*Cancellations Due to Inclement Weather:*

*In the case of inclement weather all teams and players will be notified via social media, text alert, or may contact their local designated League Official for updates and details. Each League (Spirit Lake, Lake Park, and Okoboji) shall be responsible for canceling the games on their fields only! It should not be assumed that games cancelled in one town mean cancelled in all towns!*