

COLONIAL BASEBALL SUMMER LEAGUE

General League Rules - 2026 Season

Section 1. League Philosophy

The Colonial Baseball Summer League is intended to provide competitive summer baseball while preserving player development, sportsmanship, and enjoyment of the game. A teams are intended for the highest level of competition offered by the League. B teams are intended to provide meaningful competition and development for players who are not yet at the A level or who benefit from additional game opportunities.

The League is organized around town-based summer travel teams. Participating towns may continue to operate under their own local rules and regulations for internal matters, roster administration, and town-level governance, except where League-wide rules control competition, safety, scheduling, discipline, or other matters expressly reserved to the League.

Section 2. Governing Rules and Conflicts

1. These General League Rules address League administration, team formation, scheduling, participation, conduct, discipline, standings, and Board authority.
2. The CBSL Game Rules govern in-game competition. If a game-specific rule, division-specific rule, or published rules matrix differs from a more general rule, the game-specific or division-specific rule controls.
3. The Board may issue clarifications before or during the season to address safety, fairness, scheduling, competitive balance, or operational issues.

Section 3. Age Divisions

1. The League shall serve players ages 9 through 12.
2. The Board shall establish specific division structures each season, which may include separate age groups, combined age groups, regional divisions, or other groupings based on registration, field availability, and competitive balance.
3. The Board shall publish the official age cutoff date before registration opens or otherwise before team formation begins.

Section 4. Team Types

1. A Teams: A teams are more competitive teams intended to represent the highest level of play offered by the League.
2. B Teams: B teams are developmental and competitive teams intended to provide quality instruction, appropriate competition, and additional summer baseball opportunities.
3. The Board may determine how many teams at each level will be formed in each age group based on registration, field availability, coach availability, and competitive balance.

Section 5. Rosters

1. Recommended roster size is 11 to 13 players per team.
2. Teams may add or replace players only with League approval.

3. Players should be rostered at an appropriate age and competition level based on safety, development, and competitive balance.
4. Participating towns are responsible for confirming player eligibility, maintaining accurate rosters, and notifying the League of any roster changes that require approval.

Section 6. Team Selection

1. The League shall attempt to place players at an appropriate level.
2. Team placement decisions shall prioritize player safety, player development, appropriate competition, roster balance, and fairness across the League.
3. The Board may review team placement issues when needed to address competitive balance or safety concerns.

Section 7. Season Format and Scheduling

1. The League shall establish the regular-season schedule each year.
2. The Board may provide for standings, playoffs, round-robin events, end-of-season tournaments, or festival-style formats.
3. The League may modify the schedule because of weather, field conditions, holidays, field availability, competitive balance, or other operational needs.
4. Schedule changes should be coordinated between the affected teams and participating towns in the manner established by the League.

Section 8. Game Length, Regular-Season Ties, and Postseason Games

1. A regulation game shall be 6 innings, unless shortened by weather, darkness, time limit, mercy rule, or mutual agreement approved under League policy. A game is official after four innings (3.5 if home team is leading).
 2. Game time limits and no-new-inning rules shall be based on the home team's field-usage requirements as determined before the game, unless otherwise announced by the League.
 3. An inning begins immediately after the third out of the previous inning.
 4. Regular Season Ties: Regular season games may end in a tie. If a game is tied after 6 innings and time, daylight, and field availability permit, teams may continue play. If additional innings cannot be played, or if the game remains tied when play ends due to time, darkness, weather, field availability, or other conditions, the game shall be recorded as a tie.
 5. Postseason Games: Postseason games may not end in a tie. If a postseason game is tied after 6 innings, the 7th inning shall be played under the same game rules as the first 6 innings. Beginning in the 8th inning, and in each inning thereafter, the offensive team shall start the inning with a runner on second base. The runner placed on second base shall be the player who made the last completed at-bat in the previous inning.
- If the game cannot continue due to darkness, weather, field availability, or other conditions, the game shall be suspended and resumed from the point of suspension at a date, time, and location determined by the League. The original batting order, score, outs, base runners, and pitcher eligibility shall carry forward to the resumed game.
6. The Board may adopt different time limits by age level.

Section 9. Batting, Bats, Bunting, and Game Balls

1. All players present bat in a continuous batting order.

2. Late-arriving players are added to the end of the lineup.
3. Free defensive substitutions are allowed.
4. Bats must have the USA Baseball logo. USSSA bats are not permitted.
5. Bunting is allowed. Slash bunts are not permitted.
6. Approved Little League baseballs shall be used for League play.

Section 10. Defensive Participation and Playing Time

1. Teams may use a maximum of 3 outfielders and 9 total defensive players.
2. The League values participation and development.
3. No player shall sit on the bench for excessive consecutive innings except for injury, illness, discipline, or late arrival.
4. For B teams, a minimum defensive participation rule is strongly recommended.
5. For A teams, the League may permit more competitive substitution patterns, but reasonable participation standards should still apply.
6. The Board may adopt a minimum-playing-time rule by division.

Section 11. Position Eligibility and Safety

1. Catchers must wear full catcher's gear in good condition.
2. Players may not play catcher if injured or physically unable to do so safely.
3. The League may limit certain positions based on safety, experience, or skill readiness.
4. Coaches must not place a player in a position for which the player is clearly unprepared from a safety standpoint.

Section 12. Pitching and Catching

1. Pitcher usage shall prioritize arm health over competitive advantage.
2. Ages 9-10 may throw up to 75 pitches per day and may finish the batter.
3. Ages 11-12 may throw up to 85 pitches per day and may finish the batter.
4. Required rest is based on pitches thrown: 1-20 pitches = 0 days; 21-35 pitches = 1 day; 36-50 pitches = 2 days; 51-65 pitches = 3 days; 66+ pitches = 4 days off.
5. No player may pitch on three consecutive calendar days regardless of pitch count.
6. A pitcher removed from the mound may not return to pitch in the same game but may remain in the game at another position, subject to safety and substitution rules.
7. A pitcher who throws 40 or more pitches in a game is ineligible to catch later that day.
8. A player who catches 3 or more innings in a game is ineligible to pitch later that day.
9. For 9A, 10A, 9B, and 10B, a pitcher must be removed after 3 hit batters.
10. A pitcher must be removed after 2 mound visits.
11. Warm-up pitches shall be limited to 8 warm-up pitches or 1 minute of warm-up time (whichever comes first) between innings and for new pitchers entering the game.
12. Intentional walks may be executed by the defensive manager calling timeout and announcing the decision to the umpire. The automatic intentional walk is restricted to one time per game to a single batter. Four pitches are added to the pitcher's pitch count.

13. Balks shall not be called in CBSL games. Leading off is not permitted in any division, and runners may only take a secondary lead after the ball crosses the plate. Pitchers are still expected to pitch from the rubber and comply with proper pitching mechanics, and umpires may address illegal or unsafe pitching actions as appropriate.

Section 13. Base Running

1. Leading off is not permitted. Secondary leads are permitted only after the ball crosses the plate.
2. Dropped-third-strike advancement is not permitted in any division.
3. 9A and 9B: stealing is limited to one base at a time; runners may not advance on a catcher overthrow; runners may not steal home.
4. 10A, 10B, 11A, 11B, 12A, and 12B: runners may steal any base.
5. No stealing is permitted, including passed balls and wild pitches, when a team is ahead by 12 or more runs.
6. Malicious contact is prohibited.
7. Headfirst slides into a base are prohibited except when returning to a base, depending on division rules.

Section 14. Scoring, Run Limits, and Mercy Rule

1. 9A, 9B, 10B, 11B, and 12B divisions have a 5-run maximum per inning, except in the last inning.
2. 10A, 11A, and 12A divisions have no per-inning run limit.
3. The last inning should be declared before the inning begins when game conditions require identifying a final inning.
4. The mercy rule is 12 or more runs after 4 innings for the visiting team, or 12 or more runs after 3.5 innings for the home team.

Section 15. Courtesy Runners

1. Courtesy runners may be allowed for the catcher with 2 outs, or at any time for injury-related reasons, consistent with League policy.

Section 16. Equipment Rules

1. Players must wear helmets while batting and running bases.
2. The "on-deck" position is strictly prohibited. No player is allowed to handle a bat, even for practice swings inside the dugout, until it is their official turn at bat.
3. Catchers must use protective cups and full catcher's equipment.
4. Metal cleats are prohibited.
5. Coaches must remove damaged or noncompliant equipment from use.

Section 17. Umpires

1. Umpires shall have authority to enforce the rules and maintain order.
2. Judgment calls are not subject to protest.
3. Coaches may respectfully request clarification on rule interpretations.
4. Unsportsmanlike behavior toward umpires may result in warning, restriction to bench, ejection, or further discipline.

Section 18. Protests

1. Only rules misapplications may be protested.
2. Judgment calls may not be protested.
3. The protesting coach must notify the umpire and opposing coach at the time of the disputed ruling and before the next pitch or play, where feasible.
4. The League shall determine the protest review procedure.
5. The Board's decision on the protest shall be final.

Section 19. Ejections and Discipline

1. Any player, coach, or spectator ejected from a game may be subject to additional discipline.
2. A coach is responsible for the conduct of the team's spectators to the extent reasonably possible.
3. The Board may impose suspensions for fighting, abusive conduct, repeated misconduct, or serious unsportsmanlike behavior.

Section 20. Game Administration

1. Home team shall be determined by the schedule unless otherwise stated.
2. Home team is responsible for field preparation and game balls.
3. Visiting team shall assist with postgame field cleanup when appropriate.
4. Both teams shall be ready to start at the scheduled game time.

Section 21. Weather, Field Conditions, Suspended Games, and Forfeits

1. The League, site authority, or umpire may suspend or cancel games due to weather, field conditions, darkness, or unsafe conditions.
2. Lightning requires immediate suspension of play and clearing of the field.
3. A suspended game may be resumed or declared complete according to League policy.
4. A team may forfeit for failure to field the minimum number of eligible players, use of an ineligible player, refusal to continue play, or other serious rule violations, as determined by the League. For purposes of standings and tie-breakers, a forfeit should be recorded as 6-0 score.
5. The Board may adopt a clear communication procedure for postponements and field-closure decisions.

Section 22. Score Reporting and Standings

1. Teams shall report scores promptly in the manner established by the League.
2. Regular-season ties shall be recorded as ties.
3. The Board shall determine standings tiebreakers.
4. For younger developmental divisions, the League may choose to de-emphasize standings.

Section 23. Conduct Expectations

Players

1. Show respect for teammates, coaches, opponents, and umpires.
2. Hustle and pay attention.
3. Refrain from taunting, throwing equipment, or arguing.

Coaches

1. Teach and model sportsmanship.
2. Keep competition in perspective.
3. Follow League rules on pitching, safety, and participation.
4. Communicate respectfully with all participants.

Parents and Spectators

1. Encourage all players positively.
2. Refrain from coaching from the stands.
3. Avoid criticizing umpires or opposing players.
4. Maintain appropriate sideline behavior.

Section 24. Board Authority

The Board may interpret, clarify, suspend, or amend League rules when necessary to address safety, fairness, scheduling, competitive balance, or operational issues, provided any material changes are communicated to coaches and families.

