

## **WSBL 2026 Rules**

2026 West Suburban Baseball League (WSBL) 8U-14U  
Official League Rules: Updated on 10.04.25 for the 2026 season

### **Mission Statement:**

To have fun playing baseball in a competitive environment.

#### **1. League Entry:**

Entry is by invitation only.

The league entry fee is \$350.00 payable to the West Suburban Baseball League. This fee is collected to cover the administrative and organizational costs associated with running the premier travel baseball league in Illinois. Your league entry fee provides for League T-Shirts, Special Events, website, and entitles each team to a minimum number of league games. Moreover, it covers the costs of Trophies and Championship Day Events as well as some of the costs associated with the End of the Season Playoffs.

#### **2. Registration Requirements: All teams seeking admission to the WSBL must complete the following:**

**Online Registration.** Send your \$350 league fee at time of registration. Send check to P.O. Box. Include team name, age level, last name of manager. Payment must be made by **February 28, 2026**.

**Medical Release and Waiver Forms** are completed electronically as part of the registration process. Each player's parent/guardian must approve the form submitted by **March 22, 2026**, for player to be eligible to participate in the WSBL.

**Check A, AA, AAA, or Elite division participation.** Note: Ultimately, Age Directors will assign teams at their discretion.

**Certificate of Insurance** must be obtained which shall list the "West Suburban Baseball League" as the Certificate Holder. The West Suburban Baseball League, its Board Members, its Directors and Officers shall be listed as additional insureds on team insurance policy. Form needs to be provided on or before **3/22/26**.

**Rosters** need to be entered prior to **3/22/26**. Rosters will be locked thereafter and changes to roster after **3/22/26** will need approval from your Age Director and the Executive Board.

**Home Field Location & Availability** needs to be provided on or before **3/22/26**. A minimum of 11 Separate Home Dates must be provided. Teams will need to input their home dates into their team page. Note: rosters, waivers and home dates must be completed online before a team can schedule games.

**T-Shirt Order Form** must be turned in to **WSBL** on or before **2/1/26** to ensure that your team receives its T-Shirts at the Coaches Meeting. Failure to timely submit your form may result in your team not receiving T-Shirts.

**Note:** All Teams should consult the **WSBL Website** regularly for any changes to the Registration Process, the **WSBL Rules**, or the Checklists provided for your convenience. The **WSBL Rules** as posted on website are the official league rules.

3. **Eligibility for WSBL:**

- A. Must have Home Field available for league play.
- B. Each Team must submit and enter a minimum of 11 Separate Home Dates.

4. **Rostered Players and Coaches**

A. Each Team must submit a roster online with a minimum of 10 and a maximum of fifteen (15) players no later than **March 22nd, 2026**. Teams may not add players to their roster after this date, except in cases subject to prior approval by your Age Director and the Executive Board of the **WSBL**. Violation of this will result in forfeit of games played by non-rostered player(s). Any coach/manager that uses a non-rostered player in a league-sanctioned game without prior approval of the Age Director will be penalized by suspension for at least one game and may be permanently barred from coaching/managing a team in the **WSBL** by the Executive Board depending upon the outcome of its investigation. A player can only be rostered on **ONE (1)** **WSBL** roster. The league is modifying the rule on player call-ups to allow a coach to utilize any rostered **WSBL** player from a lower age group. The league will no longer limit call-ups to one age level below and will allow teams to utilize rostered **WSBL** players from an outside organization. The player or players called-up shall bat at the end of the lineup.

Once rostered, a player will not be allowed to play down an age group even if the player is age eligible. *The temporary replacement must bat at the end of the batting order and may not be used as a pitcher.*

**NOTE: NO players who are ROSTERED on a high school baseball team at any time during season will be eligible for play in the **WSBL**. Players added to a high school team after being rostered on a **WSBL** team are no longer eligible to participate in the **WSBL**.**

- B. Each manager must carry copies of the Birth Certificates and Roster with

them and have each available for inspection at all WSBL games. If the opposing manager asks to view these documents, and the manager cannot provide same, OR the players in question are not rostered, eligible players, that team may forfeit the game and any other game where ineligible players were used. Outcome and final ruling will be made by Age Director and the WSBL Executive Board.

**NOTE:** Any game involving a challenged player(s) must be completed. The game will be played under protest with the final result determined by the Executive Board.

C. All rostered players must comply with the age chart below. Ineligible players will cause their team to forfeit all games in which they participate(d). Teams who violate this rule are subject to discipline up to and including removal from the league.

**8U** Must be 8 years old or younger, may not turn 9 before May 1, 2026

**9U** Must be 9 years old or younger, may not turn 10 before May 1, 2026

**10U** Must be 10 years old or younger, may not turn 11 before May 1, 2026

**11U** Must be 11 years old or younger, may not turn 12 before May 1, 2026

**12U** Must be 12 years old or younger, may not turn 13 before May 1, 2026

**13U** Must be 13 years old or younger, may not turn 14 before May 1, 2026

**14U** Must be 14 years old or younger, may not turn 15 before May 1, 2026

D. Late arriving rostered player(s) to any game must be placed at the end of the batting order and will not be considered "outs" prior to arrival if the team has nine eligible players present.

E. Players who need to leave a game early will not be recorded as an out in batting order for the remainder of the game.

F. You may start a game with eight (8) eligible players but **MUST FINISH WITH NINE (9) ELIGIBLE PLAYERS** to prevent a forfeit. The 9th spot in the batting order shall be recorded as an "out" until an eligible player arrives. If, at the time the game concludes, and one team has only eight (8) eligible players, **THAT TEAM FORFEITS THE GAME** regardless of the score. **HOWEVER**, if the "9th" Player is injured during the game and cannot continue, then **THAT SPOT WILL NOT BE AN 'OUT' IN THE BATTING ORDER AND THE TEAM WILL NOT FORFEIT THE GAME IF THEY WIN.**

G. **IF YOUR "9th" PLAYER IS EJECTED**, an out will be recorded when his

batting spot comes up. If you do not come up with another eligible player before the game ends, your team will forfeit the game, regardless of the score.

## **5 . Games & Playoff Eligibility:**

8U - 14U will have a 16 game schedule.

The spring/summer season will start April 1, 2026. Teams are required to play the games scheduled by the league.\*

\*The number of games to be completed may be adjusted due to weather but all teams should recognize that WSL places a premium on completing scheduled games when seeding teams for the Post Season Playoffs.

Teams participating in the Post Season Playoffs **should not register for tournaments that will conflict with the WSL playoff schedule which is set prior to the start of the season. Failure to comply with this rule may result in forfeits of WSL league or playoff games for the subject team.**

League teams will not be permitted to “double book” games with league teams or teams from other leagues thereby causing WSL games to be cancelled.

### **Cancellations:**

League games may only be cancelled for weather-related reasons. Any game cancelled for weather related reasons must be rescheduled and the new date provided to the Age Director within 48 hours of the cancellation. If the coaches are unable to reach agreement on the new date within 48 hours, the home team shall contact the Age Director. If the Age Director is unable to reach agreement of a new date with the coaches within 7 days of the original cancelled game, the Age Director will have discretion to enter a forfeit against the team he determines to have prevented the rescheduling of the game.

The home team manager must contact the visiting team manager at least 2 hours before game time to cancel and reschedule game due to inclement weather or unplayable field conditions. Games that are rained out or not completed due to inclement weather, darkness or for any reason whatsoever, shall be re-scheduled and played before the end of the regular season. Failure to reschedule and complete league games may result in forfeiture of the game and elimination from the league playoffs. If games are cancelled due to weather and cannot be rescheduled during the regular season after consultation with the Age Director, the game will not be counted in final standings.

H. **Scheduling Make-up Games:** If there is a dispute between teams in scheduling a makeup game, for whatever reason, each team will be required to submit two (2) open dates (open for both teams) to their Age Director. The Age Director will choose the date and location for when the teams will be required to

play. Failure to comply with the decision of the Age Director may result in a forfeit. Teams that reschedule a home game on their opponent's field may be required to compensate the manager of the team with the field for all reasonable fees for umpire(s) and other related costs prior to the start of the game. The non-home field team will be the home team and bat last. Failure to pay the reasonable costs may result in a forfeit being entered against the visiting team.

I. **Umpire Requirements for A to AAA Games:** The home team is required to supply and compensate at least one "patched" umpire (IHSA or equivalent) that has no connection to the team or organization for all WSLB league and/or playoff games. If the umpire is not "patched", the managers must agree to the use of a "non-patched" umpire *prior to the start of the game*. Any "non-patched" umpire must be at least 18 years of age. If agreement to play the game is not reached, the team providing the "non-patched" umpire is subject to forfeiting the game at the determination of the Age Director. Once the game begins, there will be no forfeit, regardless of the outcome. Please report any team using "non-patched" umpires to your Age Group Director immediately following game. The WSLB highly recommends using two (2) umpires at the 13U and 14U levels.

J. **Umpire Requirements for Elite Games:** ALL 14U Elite games MUST HAVE two (2) PATCHED UMPIRES for each game.

K. **Forfeits:** Teams that forfeit two WSLB league games *may not be eligible for Post Season Playoffs* and may be subject to removal from WSLB.

L. **Game Balls:** Home team must provide at least two (2) new game balls for each WSLB game. The WSLB requires that baseballs are NFHS (National Federation of High School Association) approved. Coaches must agree on game balls to be used before the start of each game.

M. **Game Time Limits -- NEW :**

8U-11U No new inning after 1:45.

12U - 14U No new inning after 2:00.

Any inning starting ON or before this time shall be completed. The new inning is considered to have started once the last out of the previous inning has been recorded.

UMPIRE will keep the official game start time.

Home team must wait at least fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled game time for traveling teams to arrive (or longer if agreed upon by the participating managers) before the game is forfeited. However, no game should be started when the teams are without a reasonable amount of time to complete the game (1 hour and 45 minutes).

N. Hosting team selects their dugout regardless of the scheduled "home team".

## **O. "OFFICIAL GAME STATUS" ALL AGES**

1. **8U-11U:** Games will be six (6) innings in length. A game is considered an Official game once four (4) innings have been completed. If the home team is leading after 3 1/2 innings the game is considered a completed official game.
2. **12U-14U:** Games will be seven (7) innings in length. A game is considered an official game once five (5) innings have been completed. If the home team is leading after 4 1/2 innings the game is considered a completed official game.
3. **California Rules:** If game is tied after regulation, and there is nothing preventing the completion of the game, then teams will play California Rules to determine winner. Each extra inning will start with one out and last batted out from the previous inning on second base. All batters will start with a 1-1 count.
4. **Tie Games:** Once a game reaches official status but cannot be completed due to time constraints, weather, or other act beyond the reasonable control of the teams, the score reverts back to the last completed full inning of play unless the Home team takes the lead in bottom half of the inning when the game was called. If the Home team ties the game in last inning of play before the game is called, the score will remain tied and not revert back to the score from the prior inning. A game that ends in a tie and despite reasonable attempts to reschedule cannot be completed, will be declared a tie.
5. If teams start a game, and they have played less than one (1) complete inning before the game is canceled, then the game will be rescheduled and replayed in its entirety as a NEW game. START OVER at 0-0.
6. **Suspended Games:** If teams start a game and have **completed one (1) inning** and any condition arises to cancel the game before it is deemed an Official Game, THEN the game is ruled a SUSPENDED GAME. The teams will finish playing the game on a later date until it becomes an OFFICIAL game using the same players and batting order that was in place at the time the game was suspended.

Suspended games shall be picked up at the point where the game was called – same players on base, count, etc. Each team will use the exact same line-up as the original game. A pitcher who had pitched previously and was taken out of the line-up as a pitcher cannot pitch again during the suspended game. If players who were in the suspended game are not available for the continued game, their spot in the batting line-up will be “moved up” (your 3rd hitter in the line-up is not available – your 4th batter is now up after the 2nd batter – no penalty). If players were not available for the suspended game and show up for the continued game, they will be allowed to bat at the end of the batting order and be allowed to pitch in the continued game.

If teams have another game scheduled later in the season, they **MUST** complete the SUSPENDED game prior to the next game. Even though the teams may play a double header and that 2nd game may not be completed that day, the suspended

game must be played first.

7. **Temperature Restriction** - A game may be rescheduled due to cold temperature at game time. The WSBL uses 43 degrees Fahrenheit as a minimum temperature to play games. We expect both managers to cooperate and be reasonable when determining whether to play due to temperature at game time. If both managers cannot agree, contact your Age Director who will make the decision. If the Age Director is not available, then the game will be rescheduled with the Age Director determining how any additional costs associated with the rescheduled game should be shared between the respective teams.

8. **Official Scoring & Reporting Scores:**

Official Scoring: The Home Team will keep the official scorebook for each WSBL game. Teams should verify scores with opposing team every 1/2 inning to avoid errors or confusion. The WINNING TEAM must report all scores within 24 hours of the game being played. Any team caught falsifying game results is subject to removal from league.

7. **Playing Rules**

A. Games will be played using IHSA rules unless otherwise noted in these rules. Each manager is required to review these rules and encouraged to provide a copy to the umpire(s) used in each WSBL game.

B. **Base Distances:**

For 8U& 9U: bases shall be 60 feet apart

For 9U AAA bases shall be 65 feet apart unless the infield cannot accommodate 65 feet – then bases may be set at 60 feet.

For 10U: bases shall be 65 feet apart unless the infield cannot accommodate 65 feet – then bases may be set at 60 feet.

For 11U & 12U: bases shall be 70 feet apart.

For 13U: bases shall be 80 feet apart.

For 14U: bases shall be 90 feet apart.

C. **Pitching Mound Distances to Home Plate:**

For 8U: 40 feet

For 9U: 46 feet

For 10U: 46 feet

For 11U: 50 feet. If field can't accommodate 50' then 48' shall be used.

For 12U: 50 feet

For 13U: 54 feet

For 14U: 60 feet 6 inches

Fields may or may not have mounds. The WSLB encourages the use of portable mounds. Home team field dimensions are used.

**D. Full Baseball Rules Apply for Ages 10U-14U:**

Including but not limited to Lead Offs, Infield Fly Rule, dropped third strikes and Balks with the following additions – for ages 10-12 each pitcher will receive one balk warning per outing. At 13-14 no warning will be given before a balk is called.

**E. AGE 8U & 9U - SPECIAL RULES:**

No Lead offs; leave your base after the pitched ball reaches the front of the plate.

No dropped 3rd strike.

No balks.

No infield fly rule.

Bunting is allowed

No delayed steals allowed.

Baserunner cannot “steal home” on a passed ball, wild pitch, or overthrow into the outfield.

**F. Continuous Batting Rule:** Teams will bat a continuous lineup and be allowed free defensive substitutions to encourage maximum player participation and experience. Any team that fails to follow this rule will forfeit the game.

**G.** Coaches are required to inform the opposing coach and the umpire before a game if a player must leave during the game. If a player is injured and cannot bat for his designated spot in the order, he must leave the game, and no out will be recorded.

**H. Courtesy Runners:** Will be allowed for catchers & pitchers scheduled for the following half-inning after one (1) out and in case of injury to a player. The courtesy runner used must be the last batted out. An injured player who requires a courtesy runner must be removed from the game and will not be allowed to re-enter. A team caught pinch-running for a Pitcher or Catcher that does not enter the following inning will start the next inning with an out for each improper runner used during the previous half inning and may be subject to further league discipline.

**I. Avoid Contact Rule:** Runners should slide or otherwise attempt to avoid contact at any base where the defensive player has or is about to receive the ball to make a play.

**J. Mercy Rule Ages 12U-14U:** 15 Runs after 3, 10 Runs after 4 or 8 Runs after 5 innings, 2 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead.

K. **Mercy Rule Ages 8U-11U:** 15 Runs after 3 or 10 Runs after 4 innings, 2 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead.

L. **No Fake Bunts or Slashing:** Batters who show bunt must either bunt or take the pitch. Batters who show bunt and then swing the bat *will be called out whether they make contact with the ball or not* AND will be immediately ejected from the game. **NO WARNING.** The player's spot in the batting order will be an automatic out for the remainder of the game.

M. **No Fake Tags:** Any infielder who fake tags a runner when no throw is made will be ejected from the game and his spot in batting order is an out for the remainder of the game. That person will be replaced in the field.

N. **Warm-ups:** Each team will be allowed fifteen (15) minutes of warm up time prior to the game provided they arrive early enough. The home team should be the first to warm up. Use good judgment and courtesy to get the players prepared and game started on time.

## 8. Pitching Rules:

**8U to 11U: Pitcher will be allowed to pitch 6 outs.**

**12U & 13U: Pitcher will be allowed to pitch 9 outs.**

**14U: Pitcher will be allowed to pitch 12 outs.**

*Violation of pitching limits must be reported during the inning where the violation occurs or before the next half inning begins. The manager and the pitcher involved will be immediately ejected. No exceptions. Any player who faced an illegal pitcher shall be awarded first base and no out shall be recorded.*

The WSBL endorses the Pitch Smart program. The program has age-appropriate guidelines to help parents, players and coaches avoid overuse injuries in baseball. More information can be found at [www.PitchSmart.org](http://www.PitchSmart.org).

One free trip to mound per inning by a coach or manager is allowed and only a total of two free trips are allowed per pitcher per game. On the second trip per inning or third trip per game the pitcher must be removed. Balk explanation trips are excluded as a trip to the mound.

A. A major league-sized pitching rubber should be used. Again, fields may or may not have mounds and we STRONGLY encourage teams playing on flat mound fields to provide a temporary pitching mound.

B. Pitchers – once removed from a game as a pitcher may not re-enter as a pitcher.

C. Pitchers will receive a maximum five (5) warm-up pitches prior to each inning.

Relief pitchers will receive a maximum of eight (8) warm-up pitches.

### **Pitched Ball Restrictions:**

8U to 11U: No breaking balls – including a slip pitch – will be allowed. The umpire, in his discretion, will determine whether a breaking ball has been thrown. One warning will be given. On subsequent breaking balls, the pitch will be deemed an illegal pitch, the pitch will be called a “ball”, and the pitcher will be removed from the mound.

**Breaking balls are permitted at ages 12U - 14U on all levels.**

*Pitchers may not wear white wristbands, a white batting or fielder's glove or a white long-sleeved undergarment (which may distract the batter).*

At 8U-12U, a pitcher who hits two (2) batters with a pitched ball in an inning or three (3) batters within the game will be removed from the game as a pitcher. At 13U/14U, a pitcher hitting three (3) batters with a pitched ball in an inning or four (4) batters within the game will be removed from the game as pitcher.

### **9. Equipment Rules for WSLB Games**

- A. Rubber spikes only at the 8U - 12U Divisions.
- B. Metal spikes may be worn at the 13U & 14U Divisions.
- C. Batters, on deck hitters, and base runners must wear helmets.
- D. Players may not wear metal jewelry.
- E. All Bats must be BBCOR, wood, or stamped either 1.15 BPF or USA Baseball to be used.
- F. **14U AAA will have a -3 bat restriction.** 14U A & AA will have a -5 bat restriction. BESR stamped bats are illegal and cannot be used.
- G. 13U will have a -8 bat restriction. BESR stamped bats are illegal and cannot be used.
- H. Players coaching bases must wear a helmet.
- I. For safety reasons all players must wear a protective cup. Catchers must wear protective catcher's equipment in addition to a protective cup.

### **10. Conduct Rules**

- A. Any manager, coach, player, or family member ejected from a game for disciplinary reasons must be reported by both managers to the Age Group Director within 24 hours. Any coach or manager ejected from a league-sanctioned game who fails to promptly report the ejection to the Age Director will be suspended from coaching or managing the team for two games on first infraction. Any subsequent ejection during the season may result in the coach or manager being prohibited from coaching/managing a team in the WSLB by the Executive Board. The Age Director

shall send an email to all managers informing them of the manager's ejection.

B. Ejections: For any manager, coach, player, or family member ejected from a game, the following penalties will be assessed:

**1st Ejection:** Discipline will include a warning **AND** suspension from a minimum of the next scheduled WSBL game, including playoff games.

**2nd Ejection:** Discipline will be determined by the Executive Board.

C. Only the team manager may discuss a call with an umpire and only if the discussion is a question regarding a rule. Judgment calls are final.

D. The team manager **will be responsible** for the conduct of their **coaches, players, and fans**. Umpires are authorized to throw violators out of a game and ask them to leave the park. Failure of anyone asked to leave the premises following the umpire's request will result in their team forfeiting the game.

E. Coaches shall notify all assistant coaches, players and parents that all contact with Age Directors must go through the head coach. Age Directors are not required to respond to emails, texts, and telephone calls from anyone other than the head coaches.

F. Players and fans are not allowed to sing or chant during an inning. No distracting noises shall be directed towards the opposing pitcher during the pitcher's wind-up. Vocal support for their team is allowed in the form of cheering and voicing encouragement. Each base coach may verbally coach his base runner – however, no distracting of opposing players is allowed.

G. No protests will be allowed except regarding roster violations and use of non-eligible players.

H. Dispute over Rules – If there is a dispute over the interpretation of the IHSA rules, as amended by the WSBL rules (NOT a judgment call by the umpire), then a formal dispute should be logged with the WSBL Age Group Director. The interpretation of the rule, and decision of its effect (if any) upon the outcome of a game, will be made by the Executive Board.

I. Lineup cards will be provided by each team to opposing team before the start of each game. **Lineup cards must include the first and last name for each player participating in the game together with their number.**

J. If a makeup game must be played, the original home team will remain the home team for the makeup game regardless of where the game is played.

## **11 . Tie Breakers – Divisional Standings (Regular Season)**

Division winners will be the team with the highest winning percentage as of 11:59PM on July 2nd, 2026.

In the event of a tie in number of wins:

1. Team with the best record in head-to-head competition will be the division winner. **If three or more teams are tied, proceed to the next tiebreaker.**
2. Team with best record within the division. If the division records are equal, proceed to the next tie breaker.
3. Team with the best runs against/per game average will be the division winner. In the event both teams have the same runs against/per game average, go to final tiebreaker.
4. Runs for per game average..

## **12. WSBL – End of the Year Playoffs**

**Total Teams Eligible to Participate** – The top 16 teams at each age/level will be eligible for playoffs.

**Playoff Seeding** will be determined based on standings as of 11:59PM on July 2nd, 2026. In the event two playoff teams have the same number of wins, seeding will be determined based on:

1. Team with the best record in head-to-head competition. **If three or more teams are tied, proceed to the next tiebreaker below.**
2. Runs against/per game average. In the event both teams have the same runs against/per game average, go to final tiebreaker.
3. Runs for per game average.

Deadline to Complete Playoff Games:

**First Round Games must be completed between July 6-8, 2026.**

**Rounds 2 & 3 will be held July 10-11, 2026.**

**Championship Day will be July 12th, 2026.**

**Failure to complete games within the time designated may result in a team or teams being eliminated from the post season tournament.**

**Teams that schedule tournaments during the time devoted to the WSBL Playoffs run the risk of forfeiting WSBL Playoff Games if they are not available to play the games as scheduled by the League.**

**Before scheduling tournaments during week of July 6th-12th, please make sure to confirm that your tournament will not interfere with your team's ability to play WSBL Playoffs.**

13. **Best Interest of the League:** The WSBL Executive Board retains the right to resolve all disputes regarding league play and the playoffs including the scheduling of games, the game time and location, the opponent, and all other issues with the goal of promoting the best interest of the WSBL, playing the games fairly, and to promote timely completion of the playoffs.

Any specific WSBL Playoff Tournament guidelines will be provided to each team by the WSBL Age Directors before the end of the regular season. Guidelines may include, but not be limited to; determination of playoff seeding, format, trophies, concessions, umpires, game time limits, cost reimbursement, etc.

**The WSBL strongly encourages each coach to print out and read a copy of the WSBL Rules before the start of each season to familiarize themselves with the rules and so they can inform their players of age-specific rules and regulations.**

**A copy of the rules are available to everyone on the league website.**