

2026 Mid-Suburban Baseball League (MSBL) All Levels Official League Rules



1. Mission Statement

The **Mid Suburban Baseball League (MSBL)** was founded to provide travel teams from local communities with a fair, flexible, and affordable way to compete in organized league and tournament play. Our mission is to promote **good sportsmanship, inclusiveness, and respect for all players, coaches, and families**, while allowing teams to shape their own schedules based on field availability and needs. Guided by member input and community collaboration, MSBL strives to create a positive environment where competition, character, and teamwork come together to strengthen the game and the players who love it.

2. League Entry

- A. Entry is by invitation only.
- B. The league entry fee is \$600.00. (~~\$800.00~~ 15/16U) Fees are payable to **Mid Suburban Baseball League LLC**. This fee is collected to cover administrative and organizational costs and entitles each team to a minimum number of league games. Refund requests will be reviewed case by case.
- C. The MSBL Tournament is included in this fee. Participation is required, however if a team cannot participate for any reason, notification must be made by February 1st. No refunds or credits will be issued. Teams who pull out of tournament after February 1st may be subject to removal from the league. Teams must complete 75% of their regular season games to be eligible to play in the MSBL Tournament.
- D. Each team is required to upload a Certificate of Insurance to the MSBL website. Copies of birth certificates must be produced within 24 hours of coach request. All requests must be made through an MSBL Director.
- E. 2025 B/National teams who won their Regular Season Championship are required to register for the A/American division in 2026, they however cannot move up to Elite until participating at least one year at the A/American Division.

3. Rostered Players and Coaches

- A. Teams must upload a COI and an electronic roster (names and #'s) with a maximum of 15 players to the MSBL website no later than your group's scheduling meeting. Teams may **NOT** add/replace players to their roster after 3/31/2026, only in extreme cases subject to prior approval by the league. (Changes made between scheduling meeting and 3/31/2026 must be submitted before 3/31/2026. Roster violations could result in forfeit of all games played by non-roster player(s). At the 14U level, high school players are eligible to play in the MSBL, unless they are

rostered on a high school baseball team during the season. If a player begins the season on an MSBL team but is later added to a high school roster, they will no longer be eligible to continue playing in the MSBL. May 1st is the age cutoff for all rostered players. Ineligible players will cause their team to forfeit all games they participate in. Team violators will be subject to removal from the league. All teams must provide a copy of birth certificates of their rostered players at the request of the MSBL coordinator.

- B. A limit of three team coaches in addition to a team manager wearing coaching attire and a team scorekeeper will be allowed in the dugout or on the field at any one time.
- C. Late arrivals will be placed at the end of the batting order.
- D. Players can only be rostered on one MSBL Team.
- E. **No “Hired Gun” rule:** In order for a player to be used in a game, any rostered MSBL player must have played in at least 70% of the games the team has played to that date (70% rule uses the first 10 games for the calculation and goes into effect on the 11th game). Violation of this rule will result in a forfeit and possible expulsion from the league.

-Exception #1: Games missed due to injury or illness will not count in the “games played” calculation (70%).

-Exception #2: House players that are rostered as fill-ins will be eligible to play, regardless of 70% rule.

-Exception #3: Travel players playing up, rostered as fill-ins will require notification and approval by the MSBL **and** opposing manager before game to play as a fill-in.

4. Games

- A. League games will be scheduled to begin no earlier than April 1st. Teams are required to play the games scheduled by the league (approximately 16-20 games, 8U will play 10-12 games). End of season, see Chart 1. for your age group end dates.

Chart 1.

8U Regular Season Ends 11:59 PM 6/22/2026, Bracket Play 6/25 – 6/28.

9U Regular Season Ends 11:59 PM 6/22/2026, Bracket Play 6/25 – 6/28.

10U Regular Season Ends 11:59 PM 7/6/2026, Bracket Play 7/09 – 7/12.

11U Regular Season Ends 11:59 PM 6/22/2026, Bracket Play 6/25 – 6/28.

12U Regular Season Ends 11:59 PM 7/6/2026, Bracket Play 7/09 – 7/12.

13U Regular Season Ends 11:59 PM 6/22/2026, Bracket Play 6/25 – 6/28.

14U Regular Season Ends 11:59 PM 7/6/2026, Bracket Play 7/09 – 7/12.

- B. Member teams will not intentionally “double book” games with other teams or tournaments, thereby causing MSBL games to be cancelled. Teams should not schedule league games in conflict with previously scheduled tournaments. Teams must give opponents at least 14-day notice to postponement due to scheduling conflicts. Affected teams must reschedule within 48 hours or the canceling team forfeits the game. ***Forfeits made without at least 10 days’ notice may result in possible disqualification in MSBL tournament and will be responsible for reimbursing the hosting team for field and umpire fees.*** There will be no disputes, however if they occur, the MSBL League Coordinator will settle them. Teams that violate this rule will be subject to removal from the league.
- C. Home team managers must make every attempt to contact visiting team managers at least 1½ hours before game time to cancel and reschedule games due to inclement weather or unplayable field conditions.
- D. Home teams are required to supply and compensate one “patched” umpire (IHSA preferred) during league games. If the umpire is not “patched” the managers must agree using a “non-patched” prior to the start of the game.
- E. Teams without a home field will pay the manager of the team with the field all fees required to compensate the umpires and other related costs associated with hosting a game, prior to the start of each game. The non-home field team will be the home team on alternating game dates or otherwise indicated on the official MSBL schedule.
- F. Home teams must provide Two (2) new game balls. ***The official MSBL Baseball for all levels will be Rawlings ROLB, ROLB1 R100 or Wilson. Alternate balls may be used if agreed upon by both managers prior to start of game.***
- G. Home team must wait 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. A game starting 15 minutes after original scheduled time may be allowed to begin with a minimum of 8 roster players. If eight players are used, the 9th spot in the batting order will be recorded as an out. If 9 roster players are available at original scheduled time, the game must begin.
- H. Each team is required to play 100% of their scheduled games. If less than 100% of your league games are completed, teams will take a loss for each game not completed. The scores will be 6-0 for the 8U, 9U and 10U division and 7-0 for the 11U, 12U, 13U, and 14U divisions. There will be no disputes, however if they occur, the MSBL League Coordinator will settle them.
- I. Hosting team selects their dugout regardless of the scheduled “home team”.

5. Playing Rules

- A. **IHSA Rules:** Games will be played using IHSA rules unless otherwise noted in this document. Each manager is encouraged to review the published rules.
- B. **Speed up Rule –** IHSA rules apply for batters in batter's box; one foot must remain in the batter's box.
- C. **Game Length 8U, 9U & 10U –** 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 ½ innings the home team is deemed the winner. If the game is tied at the end of regulation, then teams will play California Rules to determine winner. Each extra inning will start with one out and last batted out of previous inning on second base. All batters will start with a 1-1 count.
- D. **Game Length 11U, 12U, 13U, 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 ½ innings the home team is deemed the winner. If the game is tied at the end of regulation; then teams will play California Rules to determine winner. Each extra inning will start with one out and last batted out of previous inning on second base. All batters will start with a 1-1 count.
- E. **Ties -** If a game is called due to inclement weather, darkness, or previously agreed time restrictions, official game rules apply. Games that have reached complete game status and are tied when suspended will be declared a tie. Games that have not reached complete game status will be rescheduled and continued where the game left off. Games that have reached complete game status and stopped mid inning will revert back to the previous inning score.
- F. **Re-schedule -** Games that are rained out or do not reach complete game status due to inclement weather or darkness or not completed for any reason shall be re-scheduled within 72 hours. If a re-scheduled date is not submitted to a league representative within 72 hours both teams may be subject to forfeit loss.
- G. **Time Restrictions -** If a home field/umpire has time restrictions, the home field with restrictions must alert the opposing coach at the Umpires/Coaches meeting before the game and Darkness/Weather restrictions will apply and be in effect unless all parties agree to extend the game beyond the original restrictions (IE. availability changes). If no restrictions are communicated before start of game, there shall be no time limit.
- H. **Temperature Restriction -** A game may be re-scheduled due to cold temperature at game time. **Both managers must agree** not to play due to temperature at game time. If both managers cannot agree, managers may reach out to the MSBL Director for guidance, otherwise the game must be played as scheduled, or a forfeit will result for the no show team. Once the game begins it becomes an official game as described in Section 5, Item C & D.

I. **Age Specific Rules: Chart 2.**

Detail	8U	9U	10U	11U	12U	13U	14U
Base Distance	60'	65'	65'	70'	70'	80'	90'
Pitching Distance	40'	46'	46'	50'	50'	54'	60'6"
Pitching Inning Limits (An inning is three consecutive outs)	2	2	2	3	4	4	5
Breaking Balls	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Game Innings	6	6	6	7	7	7	7
Wall at 3rd	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bunts	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Steals	*Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Leadoffs	No	Yes (Amer.) **TBD (Nat.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Balks	No	1 warning per pitcher/inning	1 warning	1 warning	1 warning	No Warning	No Warning
Dropped Third Strike	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Infield Fly	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Metal Spikes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Bat Drop Min.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-8	-5
League Run Rules	12 runs after 4 innings, 10 after 5 innings						
*8U	* Steals only after the ball crosses the plate, cannot steal home.						
**9U (Nat.) Leadoffs	** 9U Nat. level will vote on leadoffs/no leadoffs after registration closes, majority rule.						
8U Run Limits	Inning will end once a team has recorded 3 outs or 5 runs have been scored. No run limit in the final inning. The umpire will determine the final inning before it starts.						

J. **Continuous Batting Rule:** will bat a continuous lineup, for all rostered players present and are allowed free defensive substitutions throughout the game to encourage maximum player participation. Any player leaving before the game is over will result in an automatic out when that player's next at bat occurs. There are two exceptions to this rule:

- i. Coaches may announce to the umpire and other coach **before** the game if a player will be leaving early.
- ii. If a player is injured and cannot bat for his designated spot in the order, thus requiring that player to leave the game. In both of these instances no penalty will occur and the place in the batting order will be skipped over.

K. **Courtesy Runners:** Will be allowed for catchers & pitchers and injury to a player. The courtesy runner must be the last batted out. An injured player who requires a courtesy runner must be removed from the game. Pitchers and catchers of the following inning may have a courtesy runner after two (2) outs.

- L. **Avoid Contact Rule:** Runners must 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. Runners do not have to slide if no play is being made at the base.
- i. If there is contact, and in the umpire's judgment, the contact interfered with the fielder making the play, the runner shall be called out. The ball is dead, and no other runners may advance.
 - ii. If there is contact away from the play, and in the umpire's judgment, it was malicious, the runner, if at fault, shall be called out. At the umpire's discretion, the runner may also be ejected from the game.
 - iii. Deliberate or malicious contact away from the play, which in the umpire's judgment was the fault of the fielder, the runner shall be awarded a minimum of one base. At the umpire's discretion, fielder may be subject to ejection.
 - iv. If there is incidental contact, which in the umpire's judgment was accidental and did not ultimately interfere with the play, no call shall be made.
- M. **Official Scoring:** Home team will keep the official scorebook. Please verify scores with opposing team every $\frac{1}{2}$ inning. Updated standings will be provided at the MSBL website at www.msbleague.org
- N. **Run Rule:** 12 Runs after 4 innings, and 10 Runs after 5 innings.
- i. If there is incidental contact, which in the umpire's judgment was accidental and did not ultimately interfere with the play, no call shall be made.
- O. **Bunt Rule:** Batters who show bunt must either bunt or take the pitch. The batter may not swing the bat at the ball. Batters will be called out whether they make contact with the ball or not and ejected from the game and that position in the batting order will be an automatic out in the line-up.
- P. **Fake Tags:** Any infielder who fake tags a runner when no throw is made will be given a warning. Next occurrence will result in that player being removed from the game.
- Q. **Warm-ups:** Each team will be allowed 15 minutes of warm up time prior to the game provided they arrive early enough. Home team should be the first to warm up. Use good judgment and courtesy in order to get the game started on time.
- R. **Pitching Rules**
- i. Mound Visits

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.

ii. Pitching Rubber

A major league sized pitching rubber should be used. Fields may or may not have mounds.

iii. Removal of Pitchers

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

iv. Warmup Pitches

Pitchers will receive a maximum five (5) warm-up pitches every inning. Relief pitchers will receive a maximum of ten (10) warm-up pitches.

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

vi. A pitcher hitting three batters with a pitched ball in a game requires the removal of the pitcher.

6. Equipment

A. **Metal spikes may not be worn at the 8U, 9U, 10U, 11U, 12U divisions.**

B. Batters, on deck hitters, and base runners must wear helmets.

C. Players may not wear jewelry.

D. For a bat to be legal it must be permanently marked "1.15 BPF" "USSSA", or "USA", or "BBCOR" or be a wood bat. The 13U division must be no lighter than -8. The 14U division will be the only division that must use a -5 or -3 bat.

E. Players coaching bases must wear a helmet.

F. For safety reasons all players must wear a protective cup. Catchers must wear protective catcher's equipment and a protective cup.

G. The umpire prior to the start of the game may approve a non-identical ball.

7. Conduct

A. Only team managers may discuss a call with an umpire and only if the discussion is a question about rules call. Judgment calls are final.

B. Players Ejected will have an out recorded at their position in the batting order.

C. **Ejections:** Any manager, coach, player, or family member ejected from a game; the following penalties will be assessed:

1st Ejection: Will include a warning and up to a 1 game suspension.

2nd Ejection: Minimum 3 Game suspension.

3rd Ejection: Subject to Disciplinary Committee decision.

Note: Any manager, coach, player, or family member ejected from a game for any reason must be reported by both managers to the MSBL within 24 hours.

D. Team managers 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 or subject their team to a forfeit.

E. All teams are asked to clean up their dugout and bleacher areas after each game.

F. Players who “accidentally” (deemed by Umpire) throw or lose their bat will be given one warning. Players who purposely throw their bat or a tantrum and toss their bat, helmet or any equipment in a dangerous manner will be ejected.

G. Players are not allowed to sing or chant. No distracting noises during the pitcher’s wind-up. Vocal support for their team is allowed in the form of cheering and voicing encouragement. Any form of vocal distraction during a pitcher’s wind-up or delivery is not allowed (Example: To raise your voice and yell “go” to a base runner while a pitcher is in their wind-up).

H. No protests will be allowed. However, any one team repeatedly accused of supplying unfair umpires will be subject to review by the MSBL League Coordinator and subject to penalty.

I. Dispute Committee – If there is a rules dispute (NOT a judgment call by the umpire) that is not clearly defined by the IHSA rules or the rules here within, then a formal dispute should be logged with the MSBL by email. A final decision will be made by the MSBL and will be final.

8. Tie Breakers – Divisional Standings (Regular Season)

A. Dispute Committee – If there is a rules dispute (NOT a judgment call by the umpire) that is not clearly defined by the IHSA rules or the rules here within, then a formal dispute should be logged with the MSBL by email. A final decision will be made by the MSBL and will be final.

B. Team with the best record in head-to-head competition.
(Only applicable when 2 teams are involved. Anytime more than 2 teams have the same record in division/pool play head-to-head is thrown out and the next tie-breaker is in effect.)

- C. Team with the best division/conference record, if applicable.
- D. Team allowing the fewest runs overall.
- E. Team scoring the most runs overall.
- F. One game playoff

9. MSBL Tournament

- A. *All MSBL teams are required to participate in the MSBL Tournament.
*See section 2 Rule C.
Teams must complete 75% of their regular season games to be eligible to play in the MSBL Tournament.
- B. Tournament Format: All Leagues
All teams advance to Single Elimination Tournament.
Teams will be seeded based on the regular season record into a “Gold” or “Silver” Bracket. We will have two Tournament winners at each League Level. A Gold Winner and a Silver Winner.

Seeding Tie Breakers will be:
Best Record head-to-head competition.
(Only applicable when 2 teams are involved. Anytime more than 2 teams have the same record in division/pool play head-to-head is thrown out and the next tie-breaker is in effect.)
Runs Allowed
Runs Scored
Coin Flip
- C. Specific MSBL Tournament guidelines will be provided by MSBL Director once registration numbers are finalized. Guidelines will include, but not limited to, specific tournament rules, trophies, concessions, umpires, game time limits, etc.

