



# MUDSOCK YOUTH BASEBALL RULES

## High School League

Board Approved: April 3, 2025 Last Modified: March 31, 2025

**1. LEAGUE OVERVIEW:** The High School League is a competitive youth baseball league with a single division. These rules are in place to ensure fair play and must not be manipulated by coaches. If there is any uncertainty about a rule interpretation, the league commissioner must be consulted for clarification. During games, **umpires have the final authority** on all rule interpretation decisions. This is a youth recreational league (no contracts, no pro scouts). Set a positive example because young players are watching.

**1.1. Schedule:** Teams play one weekday and one Saturday game per week, with makeups for rainouts (if schedule permits). Pre-season practices (*if applicable*) are league scheduled. Coaches may schedule one practice per week in-season **through the league**.

**1.2. Uniforms:** Players must wear the full team uniform: **team shirt, team cap, baseball socks, and baseball pants**. Shirts must be tucked in. In cold weather, additional layers are allowed. Players out of uniform may still play unless the League Commissioner rules otherwise. A pitcher **may** wear sunglasses **unless** deemed a distraction by the umpire, in which case they **must be removed**. White long sleeves on the throwing arm of the pitcher are not allowed. The **umpire has full discretion to require the removal** of any distracting attire.

**1.3. Equipment**

**1.3.1. Ball:** A standard baseball will be used and provided by the league at equipment distribution. The home team supplies game balls.

**1.3.2. Bat:** **Only USA Certified Bats or BBCOR are permitted**, with no restriction on barrel diameter. One-piece wood bats are also allowed, but **composite wood bats are illegal**. Refer to <https://usabat.com> for approved bats. If a batter uses an illegal bat after one (1) pitch has been delivered or puts a ball in play with an illegal bat, the batter is out and all baserunners must return to their original base. A coach suspecting an illegal bat must notify the umpire **before the next batter receives a pitch**.

**1.3.3. Glove:** All defensive players must wear a **glove**. Players must provide their own gloves for practices and games. **Only** a Catcher or First Baseman is allowed to wear a mitt.

**1.3.4. Helmet:** The league provides team helmets, so players don't need to buy their own.

**1.3.5. Spikes:** Metal spikes **are allowed** in this league. However, **no metal spikes may be worn on Billerica Field pitching mounds**.

## 2. CODE OF CONDUCT

**2.1. Coach's and Parent's Code:** Be a **positive role model**. Children learn more from your behavior than your words. Emphasize **enjoyment over pressure** in competition. Respect coaches, officials, and opponents. **Do not enter the field** unless requested by an official or coach. The use of **alcohol, tobacco, and profanity is strictly prohibited** on or around the field of play.

**2.2. Player's Code:** Play for the love of the game. Be **humble in victory, gracious in defeat**. Always **play fair** and **obey the rules**. Prioritize the team's success over individual goals. **Respect officials' decisions** (no unsportsmanlike conduct). Conduct yourself with **honor** and **dignity** at all times.

## 3. PLAYING FIELD

**3.1. Field Dimensions and Locations:** This league will play at **ninety (90)** foot base paths. Fields that accommodate these dimensions are: Riverside (both) and Hatcher.

**3.1.1. Movable bases/plates:** Bases and home plate are movable at fields identified in §3.1.

- **Riverside (North & South):** Bases: 80' and 90'; Home Plate to Mound: 54' or 60'6".
- **Hatcher:** Bases: 80' and 90'; Home Plate to Mound: 54' or 60'6".

**3.1.2. Mound to Home Plate Distance:** Must measure 60'6" from the back point of home plate to the front edge of the pitching mound rubber.

**3.1.3. Bases:** Base paths measure at ninety (90) feet.



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- 3.2. **Dugout Assignments:** The Home team will occupy the 3rd Base dugout, and the visiting team will occupy the 1st Base dugout. League schedule will identify home and visiting teams.
- 3.3. **Field Maintenance**
  - 3.3.1. **Pre-Game:** The home team is responsible for field preparation. They shall remove tarps and use pillow bags/sponges to absorb water **before** applying field dry.
  - 3.3.2. **Post-Game:** The visiting team shall **cover the pitching mound** and **home plate** with tarps and return all field maintenance equipment to the equipment shed.
- 3.4. **Scoreboard Operation:** Scoreboards are not utilized at Riverside or Hatcher Fields.

## 4. ROSTER

- 4.1. **Official Team Roster:** Teams consist of **no more than 12 players** unless approved by the commissioner. Rosters are determined by a **player draft**, however, Commissioners may **add or move players** as needed.
- 4.2. **Forfeited Game:** A game will be forfeited if a team cannot field at least eight (8) players at the scheduled start time or within a 10-minute grace period. To avoid a forfeit, teams may use the Farm System (§4.3 Farm System) to bring their roster up to a maximum of nine (9) players. If a tenth player arrives after the first pitch has been thrown to the first batter, the Farm System player **may remain** in the lineup for the entire game. Farm System players may play any position (**except** pitcher) and must be **placed at the bottom of the original batting order**.
- 4.3. **Farm System:** Any current registered Mudsock Youth Baseball Player that plays in the 14U League, is a current member of 13U/14U Tigers, or is a softball player through the MYA program.

## 5. GAME OVERVIEW

- 5.1. **Pre-Game Warm-up:** Teams should arrive at the field **(30) thirty minutes before the scheduled start time**. If there is enough time, the visiting team will have the field for the first 15 minutes, followed by the home team for the last 15 minutes before the game begins. **If there are fewer than 15 minutes remaining before game time, no infield warm-ups will be allowed.**
- 5.2. **Length:** The game lasts **seven innings or 2 hours (whichever comes first)**. No new inning starts **after** the time limit. If time expires mid-inning, play continues until the completion of the current inning unless the home team is ahead while batting, in which case the game ends immediately.
- 5.3. **Maximum Run Rule:** A team can score up to ten (10) runs per inning with **no exceptions**.
- 5.4. **Run Rule:** The game ends early if a team leads by 20 runs after 3 innings, 15 runs after 4, 10 runs after 5, or 8 runs after 6.
- 5.5. **Playing Short:** A team must field at least eight (8) players or would be in violation of §4.2. If a team does field the eight (8) player minimum, no out will be recorded for the ninth batter's spot in the batting lineup.
- 5.6. **Fair Play/Guaranteed Playing Time:** All players, except in the case of injury, illness, or disciplinary action, **must** sit for one (1) inning **before** any other player can sit for a second inning. No player will sit out more than two (2) innings during a single game. The **pitcher and catcher positions are exempt** from this rule. **However**, once a player is removed from either of those positions, they shall sit out the next inning if all other players have already sat out an inning. The safety of a player should be considered at all times. Do not put a player in a position that would put them at risk of injury. If a player is not getting an opportunity to play a position due to safety concerns, it is imperative that the coach discuss this decision with the player's parents and the league Commissioner.
- 5.7. **Drop Third Strike:** The batter becomes a runner on an **uncaught** third strike if (1) first base is unoccupied **or** (2) first base is occupied with two outs. If the batter fails to run and **leaves the home plate dirt circle**, they are **out**. The batter is also out if any of the following occur:
  - They are tagged out prior to safely reaching first base;
  - The ball is thrown to first base for a force out prior to the batter safely reaching first base.



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**5.8. Infield Fly Rule:** The Infield Fly Rule is in effect when **all** of the following conditions are met:

- (1) The batter hits a **fly ball** that, in the umpire's judgment, **can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort**. For this rule, the **pitcher, catcher, and any outfielder positioned in the infield** are also considered infielders.
- (2) The fly ball is **untouched and lands or comes to rest in fair territory**.
- (3) At the time of the pitch, there are runners on first and second base, or first, second, and third base, **with fewer than two outs**.

**NOTE:** If all three conditions are met, the batter is **automatically out**, regardless of whether the ball is caught. However, the **ball remains live**, and runners may advance at their own risk if the ball is caught, or tag up and advance after the catch, just like on any fly ball.

**5.9. Offensive Timeouts:** The coach may stop play for **only** one (1) batter per inning on offense.

**5.10. Umpire:** Umpires will be provided by the league. If an umpire does not show, it is the **responsibility of the visitor team** to secure a volunteer umpire for the game. Umpire should call balls and strikes from behind the pitching mound. All **judgement calls** by an umpire are considered **final**.

**5.11. Official Scorekeeper:** The **home team** is the official scorekeeper. The scorekeeper of both teams shall consult each other at the conclusion of each half inning. Any discrepancies at the end of the half inning must be resolved at that time. Any disputes will be handled by the league commissioner.

**5.12. Game Reporting:** Coaches **must** notify the commissioner if a game is canceled due to weather or darkness. **Within 24 hours** after the game ends, they must also report the final score (along with their team name and number), any farm players used, pitchers and their pitch counts, and any other important game details to the league Commissioner.

**5.13. Protests:** This rule is not applicable to this league.

### **5.14. Weather**

**5.14.1. Lightning and Thunder:** If lightning is seen or thunder is heard, the field **must be cleared immediately**. Players and fans must leave the field and return to their cars (dugouts are **not** allowed). The game is suspended for **30 minutes** from the last lightning strike or thunder. If play cannot resume **before the game's halfway time limit**, the game will be postponed or rescheduled. (See [§5.2](#) and [§5.16](#)).

**Note:** The game clock **does not stop** during weather delays once the game has started.

**5.14.2. Rain:** As long as the field is deemed to be "playable", game play is allowed to continue. It is up to the **discretion of the umpire(s)** to determine how "playable" is defined. If an umpire is not present, **both coaches** should make a mutual decision on defining "playable".

**5.14.3. Suspended Game:** If a game is suspended due to weather or darkness, it will resume from the point of suspension and continue within the remaining time limit, if scheduling allows, unless a complete game ([§5.16](#)) has been reached.

**5.15. Ties:** If a game is tied when the time limit is reached, it ends in a tie. No extra time or rescheduling will be allowed. However, if seven (7) innings are completed and time remains, extra innings can be played to determine a winner. In extra innings, the offensive team starts with one out and the last batted-out is placed on second base. [§5.2](#) still applies for the time limit.

**5.16. Complete Game:** A complete game is defined as the **completion of 3 innings**, (2 ½ innings if the home team is leading at that point). If the 3 complete-inning mark is not reached, coaches shall notify the league commissioner so the game can be rescheduled. The game will resume at the point in which the game was suspended, with the remaining game time.



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### 6. BATTING

- 6.1. **Batting Order:** The batting order will remain consistent from inning to inning. Once a team's offensive inning has concluded, the next batter due up will lead off in their team's next offensive inning.
- 6.2. **Balls and Strikes:** Umpire will call all balls and strikes. Balls and strikes are **judgment calls** and are **not** to be argued.
- 6.3. **On Deck:** All players are to be in the dugout except for the batter and the on-deck hitter. The on-deck hitter must be wearing a helmet.
- 6.4. **Throwing-the-Bat:** Umpires will warn the batter (**and the batter's team**) on the first offense. The **second offense** (and any subsequent offense) **by any batter** on the warned team will be called **out**.
- 6.5. **Bunting:** Bunting **is** allowed in this league.
- 6.6. **Coaches on Field:** While batting, the hitting team will be allowed no more than two (2) coaches on the field of play: 1B Coach and 3B Coach.
- 6.7. **Final Batter:** This rule is not applicable to this league.
- 6.8. **Injuries and Early Departures:** If a player becomes injured (as ruled by the umpire) and is unable to continue playing, his spot in the batting order **shall be skipped** with **no automatic out recorded**. Once the injured player leaves the batting order, he may **not** reenter the game.

### 7. FIELDING

- 7.1. **Fielding Positions:** Each team will use nine (9) defensive players consisting of one (1) pitcher, one (1) catcher, four (4) infielders (1B, 2B, SS, and 3B), and three (3) outfielders (LF, CF, and RF). **All** outfielders **must** be positioned in the outfield grass, **no closer** than ten (10) feet to the infield dirt. At **no time** can an additional infielder be added to the defensive lineup.
- 7.2. **Shifts:** Shifts **are** allowed in this league.
- 7.3. **Stopping the Runner:** Not applicable in this division.
- 7.4. **Coaches on Field:** No coach is allowed on the field of play to provide instruction.

### 8. BASE RUNNING

- 8.1. **Stealing:** Base runners may steal any base at any time except during a called timeout or dead ball.
- 8.2. **Head First Slides:** Head first slides **are allowed** at any base.
- 8.3. **Lead-offs/Leaving Base Early:** Lead-offs **are** allowed.
- 8.4. **Over Throws:** Runners can run an unlimited amount of bases in the event of an overthrown ball. Play is not stopped until §7.3 Stopping the Runner has been achieved.
  - 8.4.1. **Riverside (South) Exception (due to foul territory issues):** For overthrows at 1B, 3B, or a passed ball/wild pitch, a limit of one (1) extra base is limited for all advancing runners. If no play is made on the advancing runner, the play is called dead until the pitcher is on the mound rubber and addresses the plate for the next pitch.
    - **Note:** This limits, **but does not guarantee**, extra bases. If a runner is stealing and the pitch results in a passed ball or wild pitch, all runners may advance **only** one extra base.
- 8.5. **Speed-up Rule:** If a player (who will be the catcher in the next defensive inning) is on base with **two (2) outs**, they may be replaced on base with a pinch runner (who **must** be the last batted out).
- 8.6. **Defensive Obstruction:** If a batter-runner or base-runner is obstructed while within the base path, the obstructed base-runner will be deemed safe and the play is ruled dead. No further advancement of baserunners will be allowed.
- 8.7. **Offensive Interference:** If a batter or runner intentionally interferes with a thrown ball; or hinders a fielder attempting to make a play on a batted ball, he shall be declared out.
- 8.8. **Slide Rule:** There is **NOT** an automatic slide rule at each base. Runners are to avoid any intentional and/or malicious contact with the defensive player, and are strongly encouraged to slide in the event of a play. Any runner **not avoiding intentional or malicious contact** will be **called out**.



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### 9. PITCHING:

- 9.1. A pitcher may not throw more than one hundred five (105) pitches in a single game. If pitch one hundred five (105) is thrown in the middle of an at bat, the pitcher may continue to pitch until any of the following conditions occur:

- batter reaches base
- batter is put out
- third out is made to complete half-inning

Coaches must count the number of pitches and report to the league commissioner. Information communicated to commissioner should include:

- pitcher's name
- innings pitched
- number of pitches

9.2. **Required Rest (Calendar Days Midnight to Midnight)**

Required Rest (Days)*:	0	1	2	3	4
# of Pitches:	1-30	31- 45	46 - 60	61 - 80	81+

*\*Required rest (Days) is defined as a Calendar Day (midnight to midnight)*

- 9.3. **Breaking Pitches:** Breaking pitches **are allowed** in this league.
- 9.4. **Warm-ups (between innings):** Warm-ups between innings are a maximum of five (5) pitches. There is no minimum. If a pitcher throws the maximum five (5) pitches to a coach, they do not get additional warm-up pitches to their catcher.
- 9.5. **Hit Batter:** A pitcher that hits **three batters in an inning** must be replaced with a new pitcher to finish the inning and cannot re-enter as a pitcher during the game. The new pitcher or another pitcher must also pitch the next inning.
- 9.6. **Balks:** Balk penalties will be assessed with each infraction.
- 9.7. **Intentional Walks:** This rule is **not** applicable to this league.
- 9.8. **Coach Trips to Mound:** A coach can visit the mound twice per game. On the third visit, the pitcher must be replaced. If both visits occur in the same inning, the pitcher must be removed immediately.
- 9.9. **Coach Pitching:** This rule is **not** applicable to this league.
- 9.10. **Pitcher Re-entry:** If a player is removed from the pitcher position and replaced by another player on the team, that player **can re-enter** into the pitcher position so long as they have not exceeded their pitch count for the current game.



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### 10. TOURNAMENT:

#### 10.1. Seeding

If the number of teams in the league are either eight (8) or sixteen (16) teams, a standard bracket will be utilized that results in highest versus lowest seed game. If the number of teams in the league are anything other than eight (8) or sixteen (16) teams, the regular season top place team(s) will get a bye until the amount of teams remaining can be bracketed for a championship game.

#### 10.2. Seeding Tiebreaker Scenarios: If there is a tie for a regular season place standing, tie breakers scenarios will be applied in the following order:

- (1) head-to-head game winner.
- (2) run differential.
- (3) fewest total number of runs allowed.
- (4) highest total number of runs scored.
- (5) coin toss

#### 10.3. Adhere to Season Rules: Regular season rules will apply for the tournament. This includes §5.7 Fair Play/Guaranteed Playing Time.

#### 10.4. Game Tie: If a game is tied at the end of the time limit or at the conclusion of seven (7) innings (whichever comes first), the game can enter extra innings to determine a winner. The eighth inning (and any subsequent innings) will begin with the offensive team having one out. Additionally, the last batted out from the offensive team will be placed on 2<sup>nd</sup> base to begin the inning.

#### 10.5. Championship Game: The Championship game will not have a time limit. This game will be a full seven (7) inning game. If, at the conclusion of seven (7) innings, the game is tied, teams will adhere to §10.4.

### 11. ALL STAR GAME:

#### 11.1. Not Applicable

### 12. FALL BALL RULES:

#### 12.1. Not Applicable