

UPPER SADDLE RIVER BASEBALL ASSOCIATION 2011 Minor League Rules and Interpretations

PURPOSE: The purpose of this document is to collect in one place an overview of the rules, rule interpretations, ground rules and general guidelines. Questions regarding the application of these rules and guidelines should be addressed to the appropriate League Director or the President of the USR Baseball Association.

I. GENERAL

1. The primary purpose of recreational baseball is to teach baseball skills and good sportsmanship. Games, as well as practices, are to be used for this purpose. **UNDUE PRESSURE TO WIN IS DETRIMENTAL TO THIS OBJECTIVE.** Both players and parents are to be monitored in this regard.
2. Managers and coaches are expected to treat all players equally and fairly regardless of age, gender, race or ability.
3. The Minor League is comprised of participants in the 3rd and 4th grades.
4. Minor League players may be requested ("guest player") to play for another Minor League team, but only if necessary to complete a roster of nine players for a given game. The guest player can not pitch, must play the outfield and bat ninth. No player may be called up more than three times for the same team.

II. SCHEDULES, GAMES, FIELDS, FORFEITURES, ETC.

1. Time of Games:
 - a) Scheduled games – weekday games will start at 5:45 PM (or earlier, provided the umpires are present and there is a mutual agreement of the coaches) unless specifically scheduled at a different time by the Minor League Director, as indicated in the official Minor League schedule. The starting times of weekend games will be determined by the League Director and posted on the official league schedules.
 - b) Cancelled games – Any games cancelled due to inclement weather or for any other reason with the consent of the Minor League Director must be cancelled no later than ONE HOUR before the official start time of the game (e.g., 4:45 PM on a weekday). If a game is cancelled on a WEEKDAY because the field has been closed by the Recreation Director due to inclement weather on or before 3:00 PM, the managers will be notified by email. On weekdays, Managers are also encouraged to check the Recreation Director's telephone message but only AFTER 3:00 PM. On weekends, the League Director will notify the Managers of field closures no later than 7:45 AM. Managers must notify the parents of their players immediately after receiving notice of a cancellation of a game. If a game is cancelled after 3:00 PM, please refer to paragraph 3 in this Section below.

- c) Make-up games – A cancelled game must be rescheduled and played unless the League Director determines otherwise. Dates and times of make-up games will be determined by the mutual consent of team managers and the League Director. Teams are required to schedule make-up games within 48 hours after a game has been postponed, otherwise the League Director will assign a make-up game date and time to the teams. All games must be made-up no later than the day of the last regularly scheduled league game, unless approved by the League Director. The League Director must be given at least 24 hours prior notice of a requested make-up game in order to ensure that an umpire can be arranged.
- d) Schedule changes – no changes to the League schedule are permitted without the approval of the League Director.

2. Game Curfews:

- a) Weekend games – games are not permitted to proceed beyond the starting time of the next scheduled game (including make-up games approved by the League Director). For the purposes of this rule, when the game has reached the starting time of the next scheduled game it will be as if the umpire had called (ended) the game on account of darkness. NFHS rule 4-2-3 will be applied to determine the winner and score of the game. "If the game is called when the teams have not had an equal number of completed turns at bat, the score shall be the same as it was at the end of the last completed inning; except that if the home team in its half of the incomplete inning, scores a run (or runs) which equals or exceeds the opponent's score, the final score shall be as recorded when the game is called".
- b) Weeknight games – the top of a new inning may not start after 8:00 PM from the beginning of the season through May 31st. From June 1st through the end of the season, the top of a new inning may not start after 8:15 PM. For the purposes of this rule, an inning starts at the moment the third out is made completing the preceding inning. In all cases, the umpires will be responsible for establishing the official time.
- c) Official Time — In all cases, the plate umpire shall be responsible for establishing the official time of any game.

3. Postponed or Interrupted Games – The primary factor in reaching a decision not to play a game, or to halt a game due to rain, darkness or poor field conditions is **PLAYER SAFETY**.

- a) On WEEKDAYS if the fields have not been closed by the Recreation Director, and inclement weather occurs between 3:00 PM and 4:45 PM, the League Director in consultation with the Managers will decide whether to cancel a game. After 4:45 PM, the decision not to start a game is the joint responsibility of the

coaches in consultation with the League Director and the umpire; provided that the safety of the players remains the paramount consideration.

- b) After a game begins, the decision to halt a game is the responsibility of the umpire. If any game is interrupted for any reason (inclement weather, darkness, curfew, etc.) prior to the game being an Official Game, the game will be suspended and completed at a later date. The game will be picked up at the point of the suspension and played to completion.
4. Length of Games — Minor League games are six innings long. An interrupted game is an Official game at the end of 4 innings, or 3 ½ innings if the home team has scored more runs after the visiting team has batted four times.
5. Home Team – is listed last on the official schedule. The home team shall:
 - a) Have its choice of dugouts
 - b) Provide three (3) new game balls (supplied by the League).
 - c) Maintain the field condition, placing bases at the proper distance and return the bases at the end of the game.
6. Pre-game warm-ups – If the field on which a game is about to be played is available, the two teams scheduled to play the next game are permitted to use the field for batting practice by alternating the players from each team. HOWEVER, all batting practice activities must cease 15 minutes prior to the time the game is scheduled to begin. At that time, the home team is permitted to take infield/outfield practice for 5 minutes, followed by the visiting team taking infield/outfield practice for 5 minutes. Neither team is permitted to use its infield/outfield practice time for batting practice.
7. Clean up – Each team shall be responsible to clean up its own dugout area.
8. Results – The winning and losing team coaches shall email to the League Director the following on the same day as the game is played, or as soon as practicable thereafter, or as may be otherwise required by the League Director from time to time:
 - a) Final score; and
 - b) Names of pitchers used by both teams, the number pitches thrown by each pitcher and the number of innings pitched by each. CC the opposing manager and travel managers.
9. Forfeitures – No game may be started unless both teams have at least eight (8) players present. The games shall be declared a forfeit if a team does not have eight (8) players fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled start of the game. However, even if a forfeit is declared, the game should still be played “unofficially” by balancing team rosters and proceeding under game conditions. Our objective is to play – players, participants and spectators all lose when games are not played. Umpires will be instructed by the League to remain under these circumstances.

10. Standings & Playoff Seeding - Points are based upon wins (3), losses (1) and ties (2).
Where there are ties in the seeding, we advance to Head-to-Head, then Coin Flip.

III. PLAYER PARTICIPATION

1. Batters – the batting order is to include ALL PLAYERS PRESENT for the game. Players arriving after a game begins are to be added at the end of the batting order.
2. Field Lineup — Each team’s field line-up shall consist of 10 players. Four outfielders will be used and will play “4-across” with no outfielder within 20 feet of the outer edge of the infield dirt. There shall be no “short” outfielder unless the manager decides to play the entire outfield, as a whole, in for defensive purposes.
3. Substitutions – Free substitution is permitted, but is subject to the following restrictions:
 - a) No player may sit out TWO consecutive innings in the field, except for injury, illness, disciplinary reasons, etc.
 - b) Every player MUST sit out one inning before any player sits out a second inning, unless the coach is disciplining the latter player.
 - c) Pitchers, once relieved, may not pitch again in the same game. However, pitchers may be assigned another position in the field.
 - d) No player may be removed from a game during a half-inning except for illness, injury, etc., except that pitchers may be removed from the game during a half inning if they are being relieved by pitchers that are entering the game from the bench (warming up in the bullpen).
 - e) The substitution rules shall be monitored by the respective managers. If an issue arises, the manager should file a protest as specified in Section VI. If a manager is determined to have violated the substitution rule, he will be sanctioned within the discretion of the League Director and/or Rules Committee of USR Baseball.

IV. DECORUM

1. Proper decorum in the stands is as important to the baseball environment as good sportsmanship on the playing field. In this regard:
 - a) Coaches are responsible for “parent control”
 - b) Each manager is responsible for controlling his team on the bench and on the fields. A manager may discipline a player by suspending him for up to one (1) game for various disciplinary problems, such as insubordination, equipment abuse, umpire abuse, failure to attend practice or games, bad language, etc. Longer suspensions may be imposed only with the approved of the League Director. All disciplinary action may be appealed by a player to the League

Director, who shall have authority to determine if the nature and extent of the disciplinary action was reasonable and proper.

- c) The home plate umpire is responsible for the area behind the backstop. Players and spectators are not to sit or climb on the backstop or fences surrounding the field and are prohibited from standing or sitting behind the backstop except at fields where bleachers are provided. Individuals sitting behind the backstop should not be allowed to distract the players.
2. Managers, coaches and players are expected to shout encouragement to their teammates. Shouting at the other team or the umpire is prohibited. The use of improper language or threat of physical harm by any manager, coach or player may result in immediate dismissal from the playing field by the umpire or, if present, the League Director or President or Vice President of the USR Baseball Association.
3. Players are not to engage in chants or other organized mayhem **DESIGNED TO DISRUPT THE OPPOSING TEAM**. Also individual players are not to bait or provoke individual players on an opposing team in an unsportsmanlike manner. Any manager or coach who encourages such conduct may be dismissed from the playing field by the umpire or, if present, the League Director, President or Vice President of the USR Baseball Association.
4. Individuals permitted inside the field of play, whether for purposes of a game or a practice, include: the umpires, managers, coaches and members of the teams that are playing on the field; provided that such managers and coaches have been certified by the Rutgers S.A.F.E.T.Y. program and are listed by Rutgers as having fulfilled the requirements for its certification program. No one else is to be allowed on the field of play. When the ball is in play, the only individuals allowed inside the field of play are the umpires, base coaches, players on the fielding team who are assigned to one of the 10 fielding positions, any baserunners and the batter.
5. All players shall wear the complete uniform that was distributed to them at the beginning of the season. Every player must wear his hat with the bill forward and shall keep his or her shirt tucked in at all times. The umpires shall enforce this rule and shall stop any game in progress until a player has complied with these requirements.
6. At the conclusion of a game, the players of each team and their respective managers and coaches shall line up and shake the hands of the opposing players, manager and coaches. The manager shall be responsible for ensuring that this ceremony occurs and may be disciplined by the League Director if he or she fails to do so.

V. ROSTERS

1. Team rosters will be determined using a balanced player draft. The purpose of the draft is to create competitively balanced teams; construction of team rosters using any other criteria should be discouraged. Draft protocol shall be determined by the Board of

trustees of the Upper Saddle River Baseball association and shall be administered by the League Director at a draft meeting scheduled by the League Director on reasonable notice to the appointed managers no later than two weeks before Opening Day.

2. No player may be dropped from or added to a roster without the League Director's approval.
3. The League Director will advise all managers of changes on any team roster.
4. Any player who quits a team during the season (for any reason but injury or illness) will be dropped from the League. In such situations:
 - a) The team manager should counsel with the player and his or her parents regarding the reasons behind the decision.
 - b) The manager should immediately notify the League Director.
 - c) The League Director should discuss the situation with the player's parents and explore the reasons behind the decision not to play.

VI. UMPIRES

1. The Umpire Coordinator appointed by Upper Saddle River Baseball Association will assign one (1) or, in certain circumstances, two (2) umpires to each game. Home plate umpires will be adults who are certified, or will be young men who have been trained as umpires. At all times managers and coaches should treat all umpires with the respect deserving of that position. The umpires have the authority to eject a player, coach or spectator from a game.
2. If an umpire fails to show up for a game, demonstrates a lack of knowledge of the rules of play or repeatedly fails to apply the rules correctly, the manager should report this fact to the League Director.
3. Umpires need the on-field support of coaches, players, and spectators. They are human and are bound to make occasional errors in judgment. It is incumbent on all managers and coaches to put these errors into proper perspective and act as role models for the young people on their teams.
4. Umpiring decisions are characterized as questions of judgment or the application of the rules of play. Managers and coaches should carefully evaluate any contested issue and determine into which of these two categories a situation falls before taking any action to appeal an umpire's decision or to file a protest.
5. Only a manager may confront an umpire regarding the protest of an umpire decision except, in the case of a base running call, one base coach may challenge the umpire's determination. Under no circumstances shall more than one member of a coaching staff

(including the manager) engage in any communication with an umpire regarding an umpiring call.

6. Umpire judgment decisions may not be disputed and shall not provide grounds for filing a protest. A manager may appeal an umpiring decision to the umpire WHO MADE THE DECISION ON THE FIELD, or request that an umpire to provide his reasoning for making any call; provided that once a decision is reaffirmed by the umpire, the manger must abide by it subject to his or her right to file a protest as set forth in these Rules.
7. Disputes arising from an interpretation of any rule are permitted and may form the grounds for a protest. Protests will be considered only if the manager adheres to the following procedure:
 - (a) The manager must notify the home plate umpire and opposing manager of his or her intent to file a protest and notify the opposing manager and home plate umpire that his or her team shall continue to play the game under protest. In order to for the protest to be heard by the Rules Committee of Upper Saddle River Baseball Association, the manager must notify the home plate umpire and opposing manager immediately after the umpire, whose call was challenged, has reaffirmed his call and before play resumes (i.e. before the next pitch is thrown) after a disputed call. If the home plate umpire and opposing manager are notified of a manager's wish to protest an umpire's determination after play has resumed, it will be dismissed by the League Director or Rules Committee without any consideration of the merits of the protest.
 - (b) Within 24 hours after the completion of the game that was played under protest subject to (a) above, a manager who wishes to protest the outcome of a game, must deliver (by email) a written protest to the League Director for referral to the Rules Committee. The written protest must set forth a brief description of the disputed call, the appeal by the manager to the umpire who made the call, the timely notification to the home plate umpire and opposing manager that the game would played under protest and the rule or rules that the manager maintains was incorrectly applied or interpreted.
 - (c) All protests that are deemed proper insofar as proper notice was given and the protest is limited to the application or interpretation of a rule or rules shall be determined by the Rules Committee. The determination of the Rules Committee shall be final and binding. If the Rules Committee determines that a game must be replayed, in whole or in part, it will convey its decision to the League Director, who will schedule the game in his or her discretion after consulting with the managers of each team.
 - (d) If a manager believes that the other team may commit an act that may lead to grounds for a protested game (e.g., a pitcher preparing to pitch when he is not eligible to do so), the manager shall inform the home plate umpire immediately so as to avoid the commission of an act which may result in the need to replay a

game. This is a courtesy only and a failure to do so shall not waive such manager's right to protest subject to the other requirements for a protest as set forth above.

VII. EQUIPMENT AND SAFETY

1. Certified managers and certified coaches may serve as base coaches. Base coaches are to remain in the coaching box during play and only one coach is permitted in the coaching box at any one time.
2. All batters, on-deck batters and base runners **MUST** wear a protective helmet with a face guard. Players may use their own helmets provided the helmet has a metal or plexiglass cage surrounding the face. All baserunners must wear a helmet with a mask.
3. All players are to remain in the dugout unless in the field, at bat, on deck, or coaching.
4. The only people allowed in dugouts are the players on the teams that are playing in the game on the field, certified coaches and managers and, if necessary, the umpires.
5. All equipment not in use must be kept in the dead ball area of the dugout at all times.
6. No player is permitted to play with metal cleats on his or her shoes.
7. Only certified managers or coaches or another player are permitted to warm up pitchers either in the bullpen or at home plate. Any players warming up a pitcher must wear a protective cup and a mask.
8. Only League approved equipment is to be used in games and during practices. Players can use their own equipment as long as it is compatible with League approved equipment.
9. Maximum bat diameter is 2¼ inches. Maximum length is 33 inches. There are no restrictions on weight/length differential. If a player completes an at-bat while using a bat that does not comply with this rule and that fact is determined by the umpire after the player has batted, the player will be called out automatically.
10. Players are permitted to wear any type of baseball glove or footwear (except metal cleats).
11. All catchers must wear a mask, catcher's helmet, chest protector, shin guards and a protective cup.
12. All other players are encouraged to wear a protective cup.
13. All coaches **MUST BE CERTIFIED** to be in the dugout or on the field of play.

14. Managers and coaches shall not smoke, drink or swear on or near the field of play and should never be under the influence of alcohol or any drug when coaching.

VIII. RULES OF PLAY

1. GENERAL — Except as amended in these Rules, the Official Little League playing rules shall govern play in the Minor League.
2. “MERCY RULE” –HALF INNINGS END when six runs score or three outs are recorded, whichever occurs first. For the last inning only there is unlimited scoring until three outs are recorded.
3. FIELD
 - a) Field Dimensions – The distance from the pitching rubber to home plate shall be 46 feet from the front edge of the pitching rubber to the rear point of home plate (closest to the catcher). The distance between bases shall be 60 feet. The distances for first and third base are measured from home plate to the rear of each base (closest to the outfield). The distance to second base from first and third bases is measured from the plane of first and third base on the baseline. The distance from home plate to second base shall be 84 feet and 10 /4 inches and shall be measured from the rear point of home plate to the center of second base. If created, a batter’s box shall be in the form of a rectangle which is no more than 3 feet wide and six feet long. The pitching mound whether created with clay or drawn shall be a 12 foot diameter.
 - b) Bases — shall be sliding or movable bases.
 - c) Appeal of a play — The procedure for making an appeal is as follows. If a ball is alive, deliver the ball to the base for which the appeal is being made and ask the umpire for a ruling. If the ball is dead, the ball must be first returned to the pitcher. The pitcher must then touch the rubber in a normal fashion (to put the ball back in play) before delivering the ball to the applicable base for an appeal.
 - d) Dead Ball — A ball is dead only when: (1) a time out is called by an umpire; or (2) it lands in a dead ball area as set forth in the Grounds Rules for the field of play.
 - e) Coaches’ Visits to the Field — A manager or coach of a team who is on the field may only enter the field of play after having been granted a time out by an umpire to confer with the pitcher or any other player or players; provided that a team is limited to two such visits by its manger or coaches, in the aggregate, per inning. Except in the event of a bona fide injury to a player, if a manager or coach enters the field of play for a third time in any inning while his or her team is the fielding team, the pitcher must be removed, whether or not such visit, is directed at the pitcher. A conference in which a player or players converge on the base lines constitutes a conference or visit for purposes of this rule.

4. BATTING

- a) Strike Zone — The strike zone is the area over home plate beginning at the batter's knees and reaching to the batter's armpits, when the batter is standing in a natural bat-swinging position. Balls and strikes will be called as usual. The batter is out if three strikes are called by the home plate umpire, regardless of whether the third strike is caught or dropped by the catcher.
- b) Throwing bats - No player is permitted to throw a bat. In the event that a player throws a bat, the umpire will issue a TEAM warning. All subsequent violations will result in the batter being called out; all base runners must return to the bases occupied at the time of the last pitch prior to the bat being thrown.
- c) Bunting — Bunting is permitted.

5. BASE RUNNING:

- a) Base Stealing — Base stealing is not permitted. A runner may not advance from the base he or she occupies until the ball is hit.
- b) Infield Fly — Rule does not apply.
- c) Overthrows. No extra base shall be awarded to the batter in the event of an overthrow to first base that results in the ball landing in dead ball area.

Similarly, no extra base shall be awarded to a base runner in the event of an overthrow to third base that results in the ball landing in dead ball area.

A base runner who is between bases at the time the ball lands in dead ball territory shall be permitted to advance to the base he or she was advancing to at the time that the overthrow landed in the dead ball area.

- d) Advancement of Base Runners. Any base runner is permitted to advance around the bases as long as the ball is alive. Except as may be otherwise determined by paragraph (c) above regarding balls thrown into dead ball territory, once a base runner's forward progress has ceased (i.e., the runner halts his forward progress or returns to the last touched base), he shall be required to return to the last touched base.

If a base runner has returned to a base or has ceased his or her forward progress and a fielder attempts to make a play designed to get any base runner out, all base runners may attempt to advance to the next base or bases at their own risk.

The objective of this rule is to prohibit a base runner from advancing if he engages in any antics such as feigning that he is ceasing his forward progress with the intent to lull a fielder into believing that the runner shall not advance. The rule is not intended, however, to discourage aggressive base running permitted in accordance with this rule.

- e) Pinch running – is NOT ALLOWED except for the following exceptions:
 - i) In the event of a player injury or illness, however, this player must leave the game and cannot return unless both managers agree.
 - ii) With two (2) outs, the player that will be catcher at the start of the next half-inning may be replaced by a courtesy runner in order to put on the catcher's equipment and speed up play. Any pinch runner MUST be the player who made the last out. If the player who made the last out is unavailable, the pinch runner must be the player who made the last out before him.
- f) Sliding – Official rules relating to interference and obstruction are reaffirmed. Application of the sliding rule is a judgment call by the umpire and is not subject to appeal. The following comments interpret the sliding rule for recreational play:
 - i) A runner must slide or attempt to get around a fielder when a tag play is developing at any base, i.e., the fielder has the ball in his possession or is preparing to field the ball that is hit or thrown by another fielder. Any runner crashing into either the catcher or a baseman is automatically out and, if the act is deemed by the umpire to be intentional, the runner is to be ejected from the game.
 - ii) Official Baseball Rules apply and specify: “If a fielder is about to receive a thrown ball and if the ball is in flight toward or near enough to the fielder so that he must occupy his position to receive the ball, he may be considered ‘in the act of fielding the ball’”. This determination is within the sole discretion of the umpire.
 - iii) If there is no collision, there can be no violation of the sliding rule. The player who is in the position of catcher, without the ball in his possession, has no right to block home plate or the pathway of the runner attempting to score unless he is preparing to receive the ball thrown by another fielder. The baseline belongs to the runner and the catcher should be there only to field the ball or when he has possession of the ball.
 - iv) If the catcher or other fielder abandons his positions solely to avoid a collision with a runner, the umpire may rule interference by the runner.
 - v) Head first slides into any base are prohibited. Every runner must slide on his legs when attempting to advance to the next base or to score at home plate if a tag or force play develops. A runner may only stand up to tag a base or to score at home plate when a tag or force play at the same base is not reasonably anticipated.

6. PITCHING

a) Pitching guidelines - The following guidelines will be in effect throughout the Rec Baseball season (i.e. Opening Day through Rec Playoffs).

b) There are four elements to the pitching rules, all of which need to be satisfied:

1) The maximum number of innings a pitcher can pitch in a game is:

Minors: 3

2) The daily maximum number of pitches a pitcher can pitch is:

Minors: 55

NOTE: Daily pitch count totals include all pitches thrown by a child in all leagues played including USR Recreation, USR Travel, School and Club teams.

3) Pitchers must adhere to the following days rest requirements:

If a player pitches 1-20 pitches in a day, no (0) calendar day of rest is required.

If a player pitches 21-35 pitches in a day, one (1) calendar day of rest must be observed.

If a player pitches 36-50 pitches in a day, two(2) calendar days of rest must be observed.

If a player pitches 51-65 pitches in a day, three(3) calendar days of rest must be observed.

If a player pitches 66 or more pitches in a day, four (4) calendar days of rest must be observed.

4) A pitcher can NOT pitch in more than two consecutive days.

c) As soon as a pitcher delivers one pitch to a batter in any inning, he is considered to have pitched ONE (1) COMPLETE INNING.

d) A pitcher hitting 3 batters in one inning must be removed as a pitcher from that game.

IX. GROUND RULES

1. Trees. A thrown or batted ball that hits any part of a tree that overhangs or is adjacent to the playing field is a dead ball and no play may be made on it.
2. Batting screen/fence. A ball that becomes caught in a screen or a fence is a dead ball and one additional base shall be awarded to all baserunners.
3. Dead Ball Area. Any ball is dead if it is thrown outside the area extending from the end of the furthest fence post of the fences in front of dugouts alongside the first and third baselines and extending as an imaginary line from the end of the first and third base fence to each foul pole, in the case of the Hess Court Minor League field, or as far as any ball may travel, in the case of the Reynolds Minor League field.
4. Artificial Barriers. Except in the event of a dead ball as described in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of this Section IX, a thrown ball that hits any artificial barrier along a baseline and rebounds into any portion of the playing field, whether in fair or foul territory, is considered a live ball.
5. Ground Rule Double. At the Hess Court Minor League field and if an outfield fence is erected at the Reynolds Minor League field, a ball hit beyond the fence after having hit the ground will result in the base runner advancing to second base and no additional base if he or she is the batter and, in the case of a base runner, two bases from the base which the base runner occupied before the ball was hit by the batter that landed beyond the fence after having hit the ground. At the Hess field, a ball hit over the fence without having hit the ground shall allow the base runner to advance to all bases including home resulting in a homerun.