



# GBBA

Greater Birmingham Baseball Association

## Official Rules

2019

Adopted by the GBBA Board on December 31, 2018

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## **Rule 1.00: Sanctioning**

- 1.1 To affiliate with GBBA and to participate in GBBA tournaments, each affiliated park must file a GBBA Affiliation form.
- 1.2 Commitment forms are due for teams participating in the 6U tournament by May 1 and in the 7U-12U tournaments by April 22.
- 1.3 Financial requirements will be set by the GBBA Board of Directors and due by May 1. Each park will responsible for an equal share of the cost of Directors & Officers Insurance for the GBBA Board of Directors. Post Season Qualifying games and the GBBA Championship Tournament are not intended to be a profitable venture for any park. It is the intent of the board to price these event at a break-even level.

## **Rule 2.00: Team and Individual Player Eligibility**

- 2.1 In order to qualify for GBBA tournament play, each participating player must have participated in his affiliated park's spring rec league which had a minimum ten (10) game schedule.
  - a. He is only eligible for the age group in which he participated during the spring rec season . One exception is that a player will be allowed to play-down from the league in which he played rec only if it would place him in his proper league age.
  - b. A team is allowed to add up to two players who did not participate in its park's spring rec league. The player(s) cannot have played in another GBBA affiliated park's rec season or been on a travel team roster at any point during the spring season.
- 2.2 A team may not be comprised of more than fifteen (15) eligible players.
- 2.3 Roster Freeze: Once GBBA post season play has begun, a player cannot be added to a roster or move from one roster to another.
- 2.4 In order for a player to be eligible for the GBBA championship tournament, he must be part of the lineup for the minimum number of games (includes seeding tournament and pool play) defined below.
  - a. 6U: three (3) games
  - b. 7U-12U: five (5) gamesIf a player does not meet this minimum requirement due to illness, injury or other circumstance deemed to be an "excused absence", the GBBA Board shall have the final discretion to determine a player's eligibility for the championship tournament.
- 2.5 Each GBBA park is responsible for verifying the eligibility of all their players involved in GBBA post season play.
- 2.6 Head coaches are responsible for all aspects of the eligibility of the players on his team and should have copies of birth certificates, play up/down requests and

- supporting documents if playing down (letter from school or report card indicating grade) with them at all games.
- 2.7 A rostered player who is found in violation of any eligibility requirement shall be considered an illegal player. All games in which the player participated will be deemed a forfeit.

### **Rule 3.00: Tournament Format**

- 3.1 Each age group tournament will be hosted by a GBBA park determined in January.
- 3.2 Each host park will designate a Tournament Director who is responsible for coordinating field space, conducting the coach's credential meeting, coordinating with the scheduler, communicating with the GBBA Board, as needed, and posting scores and pitch counts online.
- 3.3 For ages 7U-12U, there shall be a weekend Seeding Tournament prior to Pool Play comprised of a minimum of three (3) games. Teams will play in the division (AAA, AA, or A) in which they signed up. The purpose of this tournament will be to ensure teams are properly slotted into the appropriate division prior to the start of Pool Play. The GBBA Board will determine the final divisions for Pool Play, informed by the results of the Seeding Tournament.
- 3.4 Parks are encouraged to have a representing team in each division, but circumstances could dictate otherwise for 7U-12U.
- 3.5 Pool Play games will comprise of four (4) games for 6U and six (6) games for 7U-12U.
- 3.6 The Championship Tournament in all age groups will be double elimination with seeding determined by Pool Play results.
- 3.7 The tie-breaking procedures are as follows:
1. If two teams are tied:
    - a. Head-to-Head
    - b. Runs Allowed
    - c. Run Differential (max of 10 per game)
  2. If more than two teams are tied:
    - a. Head-to-Head (if all tied teams played each other)
    - b. Runs Allowed
    - c. Run Differential
    - d. When using the above identifies the high seed, but still leaves more than two (2) teams still tied, repeat steps a through c for the remaining teams.
- 3.8 For all GBBA games, except the Championship Tournament, Home/Away will be determined by coin flip. Coaches are not required to have an official present for the coin toss. In the Championship Tournament, the higher seed will have the

- choice of Home/Away, unless the two teams have already played and the lower seed won, in which case the lower seed will have the Home/Away choice.
- 3.9 Teams will have the following responsibilities in all GBBA games. Home teams will keep the official book and pitch count cards. Away teams will operate the scoreboard.
- 3.10 Head coaches are responsible for signing the official scorebook and pitch count cards after the game.
- 3.11 The only legal protest is one that involves a violation or misinterpretation of the playing rules or the use of an ineligible or illegal player. A protest of an umpire's judgement call is not allowed. Protests must be made to the umpire who will refer the protest to the protest committee, which consists of three (3) members: (1) each head coach will designate an adult (non-coach) from their team on the official scorebook and (2) a GBBA sanctioned Tournament Director who is not connected to either team. A protest of a violation/misinterpretation of a rule must be made before the next legal pitch. All other protests must be made before the teams leave the playing field. The protest committee will make a decision, and the decision is final. There is no appeal opportunity. In circumstances where the committee can't meet immediately, the official scorebook shall denote the point in the game of the protest and note that the remainder of the game is played under protest. If such protest is upheld, the protesting team will have the option of taking the result or to replay the game from the protest point. A protest fee of \$100 shall be submitted with the protest, otherwise there is no protest. The fee shall be returned if the protest is successful. Otherwise, the fee is retained and donated to charity.

#### **Rule 4.00: Ejection Offenses**

- 4.1 Physical attack on an umpire, tournament official, player, or fan, prior to, during or immediately after any GBBA game
- 4.2 Verbally threatening an umpire, tournament official, player, or fan prior to, during or immediately after any GBBA game
- 4.3 Any coach/player who engages in physical fighting
- 4.4 Unsportsmanlike conduct or abusive language, symbol tactics, or derogatory acts
- 4.5 Destruction of property
- 4.6 Use of illegal substances or alcohol prior to or during any GBBA game
- 4.7 If a coach plays an ineligible player as defined in Rule 2.00
- 4.8 If a baserunner intentionally makes malicious contact with a fielder
- 4.9 A player/coach ejected from a game must leave the park property for the remainder of that game and will not be allowed on the field or in the dugout for the next game. He may sit in the stands for the next game but is not allowed to coach or play.

## **Rule 5.00: Playing Field and Equipment**

- 5.1 Field Dimensions are as follows:  
6U: 50 foot base paths, 39 feet from point of home plate to rubber  
7U-8U: 60 foot base paths, 40 feet from point of home plate to rubber,  
9U-10U: 65 foot base paths, 46 feet from point of home plate to rubber  
11U-12U: 70 foot base paths, 50 feet from point of home plate to rubber
- 5.2 The homerun distance will be:  
7U-8U: 140-185 feet  
9U-10U: 185-250 feet  
11U-12U: 200-250 feet
- 5.3 The height of the pitching rubber above the level of home plate shall be raised by a gradual slope to six (6) inches. The strike zone will comply with major league rules.
- 5.4 Only officially registered players and coaches of the team are allowed on the bench and field during a game. Each team will be allowed four (4) coaches – one (1) head coach and three (3) assistant coaches. Spectators are not allowed on the field at any point during the game.
- 5.5 Standard baseballs will be provided by the host park for all pool play and Championship Tournament games.
- 5.6 A batting helmet with full ear flaps and a face shield shall be worn by all batters and baserunners. Players in 11U and above are permitted to use a batting helmet without a face shield.
- 5.7 The official bat shall be constructed of wood, aluminum or any other material or combination of materials. It must have a 1.15 BPF rating stamp or USA Baseball stamp to be legal. Any bat that has been altered is illegal.
- 5.8 In the event, a team violates Rule 5.7, the bat will be removed from the game immediately and the following will occur:
- a. If an illegal bat is identified prior to the batter putting the ball in play, the bat will be removed from play and the batter will continue with his at bat with a legal bat. It is the head coach's responsibility to ensure the bat is removed from the dugout and is not available for use. No exceptions.
  - b. If an illegal bat is identified after a batter put the ball in play but before a pitch is thrown to the next batter, the defensive coach will have the choice of the result of the play or the player who used the bat being called out and all base runners returning to the base they occupied prior to the ball being batted.
  - c. If the batter comes to the plate with a previously removed illegal bat, the bat will be removed again, the batter declared out and the head coach will be ejected.
  - d. It is the responsibility of the opposing head coach to ask the umpire to check the bat.

- 5.9 No metal cleats are allowed
- 5.10 For 6U-8U, the pitcher shall wear a protective face mask and heart guard.
- 5.11 Catchers must wear full catcher's equipment while on defense. Protective helmet must have a throat protector. Catcher must also wear a protective cup. Any player warming up a pitcher must wear a protective helmet.
- 5.12 Official uniforms must be complete with matching team jerseys with numbers that are non-duplicating. Coaches should wear coordinated team hats and shirts.

### **Rule 6.00: Official Playing Rules**

- 6.1 The official playing rules of GBBA will follow the Rules of Major League Baseball, with the exceptions and variations contained in this document.

#### ***Game Time***

- 6.2 Qualifying game time limits will adhere to the following with no new inning starting after the expiration of the time limit. Only the Championship Game in the Championship Tournament will be untimed.
  - a. 6U: 4 innings or 75 minutes
  - b. 7-8U: 6 innings or 90 minutes
  - c. 9-10U: 6 innings or 105 minutes
  - d. 11-12U: 6 inning or 105 minutes
- 6.3 For a game to be considered official, it must reach the limit listed in Rule 6.2, except for the following exceptions:
  - a. Enforcement of the Mercy Rule as defined in Rule 6.6
  - b. Any game stopped for weather is considered a complete game after 4 complete innings or 3.5, if the home team is ahead. A game that is stopped after the 4<sup>th</sup> inning, but not in a complete inning, reverts back to the last completed inning.
- 6.4 6U pool play games can end in a tie. For 6U elimination games and all 7U-12U games, if any game is tied after the limit listed in Rule 6.2 is exceeded, the following format will be followed.
  - a. Each half inning will begin with the player making the last batted out on second base.
  - b. Each inning will begin with one (1) out
  - c. This format will be used until a winner is determined
- 6.5 In the event a game is halted or delayed before completion, it must be resumed from the point of delay when the game is rescheduled by the Tournament Director, with as nearly the same lineup as possible. All pitching rules still apply and should be adhered to.

- 6.6 Mercy Rule – if a team is leading its opponent, as defined below, the game shall be deemed complete and the team in front declared the winner:
- a. 6U: 11 runs after 3 innings (2.5 if home team is ahead)
  - b. 7U-12U: 21 runs after 4 innings (3.5 if home team is ahead); 11 runs after 5 innings (4.5 if home team is ahead)

### ***General***

- 6.7 In order to start a game, a team must have eight (8) players present. If other players arrive, they will be inserted at the end of the batting order.
- 6.8 If eight (8) players are not available within fifteen (15) minutes of the scheduled start time, the game shall be ruled a forfeit and the score recorded 6-0.
- 6.9 If a team is playing with less than ten (10) players in 6U-8U or nine (9) players in 9U-12U, they must have a complete infield, including a pitcher and catcher.
- a. For 6U through 8U, all available players will bat in continuous order. A team with less than ten (10) players shall submit a blank(s) in its batting order. In all games prior to the Championship Tournament, no “out” will be taken for vacant batting positions. In the Championship Tournament, an “out” will be recorded each time the blank comes up.
  - b. For 9U through 12U, all available players will bat in continuous order. A team with less than nine (9) players shall submit a blank(s) in its batting order. In all games prior to the Championship Tournament, no “out” will be taken for vacant batting positions. In the Championship Tournament, an “out” will be recorded each time the blank comes up.
  - c. No “out” will be recorded if the player can’t play due to illness, injury or circumstances that would be deemed an “excused absence” at school. The Tournament Director shall have final discretion to determine an “excused absence”.
  - d. An “out” will be recorded for an ejected player, but not for an injured player who can’t continue to play in the judgement of the home plate umpire. No injured player shall return to the game once he is deemed injured.

### ***Offense***

- 6.10 There is a maximum of ten (10) runs per inning in all games (both qualifying and tournament) for all age groups, except 6U which has a ten (10) batter limit.
- 6.11 Coaches cannot physically assist base runners. If a base runner is touched by an offensive coach before the play has been called dead, the base runner shall be declared out.



- 6.12 Leadoffs are not allowed in the 9U and below age groups. Any baserunner leaving the base before the ball reaches home plate, in the umpire's sole discretion, shall be declared out. The ball is considered dead and a no pitch.
- 6.13 Leadoffs are allowed in the 10U-12U age groups.
- 6.14 If a runner misses a base, it will be an appeal play to the umpire.
- 6.15 After one (1) warning (per game, per player) for slinging his bat, a batter will be declared out, a dead ball called, and no runners shall be allowed to advance.
- 6.16 Any runner is out when he does not slide or attempt to avoid the fielder, in the proximity of a base, who has the ball or is awaiting a throw. If malicious contact is made the baserunner will be ejected. Enforcement of this rule is a judgement call by the umpire.
- 6.17 Head-first sliding into the next base is not allowed except for 11U and above. Head-first sliding back into a base is allowed in all age groups. If a runner violates this rule, he will be declared out.
- 6.18 Slashing, the act of faking a bunt and then resetting and taking a swing, is prohibited. Faking a bunt is legal. If a slash is ruled, the batter will be declared out and no runners shall be allowed to advance.
- 6.19 A coach shall only go onto the playing field to talk to a batter (or a batter going to the dugout/bench to talk to a coach) one time per batter per inning. Violation of this rule will result in the batter being declared out.
- a. A visit due to injury or during a timeout called by the defensive team doesn't count.
- 6.20 For speed of play, a courtesy runner may be used for the catcher (all age groups) and the pitcher (9U-12U) **of record** any time they reach a base. The courtesy runner shall be last made out in the lineup.
- a. "Of record" means the player who last played the position when the batting team was in the field. If the batting team has not played in the field, a courtesy runner may only be used for the pitcher and/or catcher designated in the starting lineup.
  - b. The courtesy runner will not be allowed after the next batter has received a pitch.
  - c. If a courtesy runner is needed in the 1<sup>st</sup> inning, prior to an out being recorded, the batter in the lineup farthest from the pitcher/catcher will be the courtesy runner.
- 6.21 No player shall be intentionally walked more than once per game.

### ***Substitutions***

- 6.22 Free substitutions are allowed on defense for ages 6U-10U. The batting order shall not be changed during the game.
- 6.23 11U-12U head coaches have the option to bat 9 players, 10 players (using the EH as outline in the rules below) or his entire roster. The option must be declared to the

- official scorekeeper prior to the start of each game. Coaches may choose a different option from game to game, but the team must complete a game using the option the chose to start the game.
- 6.24 The use of an extra hitter (EH) is allowed, but not required. The EH is considered a field position and can be moved around defensively freely; however, his batting position shall remain in the same spot of the starting batting order.
- 6.25 11U-12U coaches who chose to bat 9 or 10 players, will play under re-entry substitution. Any starting player (pitcher included), may be removed from the game by being replaced with a substitute. The substitute will take the starters spot in the batting order. The starter may return to the game one time; however, the starter must replace the player who replaced him and be inserted into the same position in the batting order that he originally possessed.
- a. A substitute who replaces a starter may be replaced by another substitute. By doing so, the starter and the original substitute are both out of for the remainder of the game.
  - b. Once a substitute has been removed from a game he can't return.
  - c. A coach must notify the official scorekeeper of each batting substitution when made. Failure of a coach to notify the scorekeeper will result in the coach receiving a warning from the umpire once the opposing coach identifies the infraction. This does not constitute a "batting out of order" infraction. If the violation is not identified by the opposing coach before the inning ends, it is not a violation. The opposing coach, not the scorekeeper, is responsible for raising the issue of a violation.
- 6.26 If a head coach has used all of his eligible players and a player is ejected, injured, or becomes ill and can't continue, then the opposing head coach must select a bench player(s) (who have already been in the game) to replace the player(s). An ejected player can't return to the game under any circumstance. If there are no players available for selection, then the team will play the remainder of the game short that player. When that players spot in the batting order comes up, Rule 6.9(d) will govern whether an out must be recorded.
- 6.27 Any coach who calls time and goes onto the playing field more than one (1) time in one (1) inning per pitcher will be required to remove the current pitcher from the mound. Once removed, the pitcher shall not return to the mound during the game.

### **Rule 7.00: Special Rules for Coach Pitch**

- 7.1 Any batted ball in fair territory in front of home plate will be a live ball per the rules of Major League Baseball.
- 7.2 The pitching coach shall pitch at a minimum distance, defined below, from the point of home plate on a straight line to the center of the pitcher's circle. A line

- will be marked on the field that the pitching coach shall remain behind throughout the delivery of the pitch.
- a. Twenty (20) feet for 6U
  - b. Thirty (30) feet for 7-8U
- 7.3 Each batter will receive up to five (5) pitches to put the ball into play. After three (3) strikes or five (5) pitches the batter will be declared out. If the third strike or fifth pitch is batted foul, the batter will be offered another pitch until the ball is put into play or the pitch is missed. If the batter has two (2) strikes or is on the fifth pitch and hits a foul ball that is caught, he is out.
- a. Three (3) strikes is an out, even if the catcher doesn't catch the ball.
- 7.4 The pitching coach will pitch to his own batters. The coach must immediately leave the playing field and remove the bat, if needed, once the ball is put into play. The coach cannot talk to the runner while the ball is in play. After one warning from the umpire, the coach will be replaced.
- 7.5 If a batted ball hits the pitching coach and, in the umpire's judgment, the pitching coach made an effort to avoid contact or was protecting himself, it will be considered a dead ball and no-pitch will be declared. If the pitching coach intentionally contacts the ball, in the umpire's judgment, the batter will be out and no baserunners may advance.
- 7.6 No bunting will be allowed. Half-swings will be called a bunt. In the event of a bunt, it will count as a strike against the batter.
- 7.7 For 6U only, there is a maximum of ten (10) batters per inning or three (3) outs. The offensive head coach must inform the defensive head coach when the last batter comes to the plate. Play will be as if there are two outs per regular baseball rules for the last batter. Any legal out or a fielder with the ball stepping on home plate will end the inning. If the last batter is not declared, the defensive head coach will have the option of the results of the play or a re-bat.
- 7.8 For 6-8U, maximum ten (10) players on defense – all infield positions must be filled, including pitcher and catcher.
- 7.9 When the ball is hit, the pitcher must have one foot inside of the pitcher's circle and be no closer to home plate than the rubber. Penalty – offense gets choice of play or re-bat.
- a. The pitcher's circle shall be 10 foot in diameter.
- 7.10 Outfielders will be positioned twenty (20) feet behind the base path until the ball is hit.
- 7.11 Play shall be stopped by a defensive player stopping the lead runner. Any other runner may continue at his risk. Any play made on a runner other than the lead runner will release the lead runner. If no runners are attempting to advance the umpire may call time, at his sole discretion.
- 7.12 Infield fly is not in effect.
- 7.13 Three (3) offensive coaches are allowed outside of the dugout – the pitching coach, 1B coach and 3B coach.

- 7.14 Only one defensive coach is allowed outside of the dugout.
- 7.15 There will be one (1) offensive and one (1) defensive timeout per inning, each of a one minute duration.

**Rule 8.00: Pitching Rules**

- 8.1 Balks will only be called by the umpires in ages 10U-12U. A fake 3<sup>rd</sup>-to-1<sup>st</sup> pickoff move is legal.
- 8.2 For 9U-10U, three (3) strikes in an out, even if the pitched ball is dropped by the catcher. For 11U-12U, an uncaught third strike is not an out and is a live ball.
- 8.3 A pitcher shall only make one (1) appearance on the mound per game. Once a pitcher is removed from the mound, he can't return to the mound to pitch in that game.
- 8.4 The home team starting pitcher must be warmed up and ready to pitch after eight (8) warm-up pitches or two (2) minutes immediately after the umpire notifies the teams to play ball.
- 8.5 For intentional walks, the pitcher must throw the pitches to the batter.
- 8.6 The daily number of pitches allowed for a pitcher and required rest periods are defined in the table below and are set to protect the arm health of the pitchers. These limitations are consistent with MLB Pitch Smart, a series of practical age-appropriate guidelines to help avoid overuse injuries and foster long, healthy careers for youth pitchers. The guidelines were developed by leading orthopedics, including Dr. James Andrews.

		<b>Required Rest Period (Calendar Days)</b>				
<b>League Age</b>	<b>Pitches per day</b>	<b>0 Days</b>	<b>1 Day</b>	<b>2 Days</b>	<b>3 Days</b>	<b>4 Days</b>
9-10	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
11-12	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+

- Calendar day means a full calendar day rest. For example, if an 9YO pitched 15 pitches on Monday night, he could pitch again on Tuesday; if he pitched 25 pitches on Monday, he can't pitch until Wednesday; if he pitched 40 pitches on Monday, he can't pitch until Thursday; if he pitched 60 pitches on Monday, he can't pitch until Friday; and if he pitched 75 pitches on Monday, he can't pitch again until Saturday.
- 8.7 Every pitch counts. A pitcher cannot exceed the daily limit to finish a batter, nor adjust the required rest period because of pitches needed to finish a batter. These pitch restrictions apply to all GBBA games, including the Championship Tournament.
  - 8.8 The pitch counts do not include warm-up throws, throws from other positions, or practice throws. While these pitch limits govern GBBA games, the GBBA strongly

- encourages them to be adhered to if pitchers play in non-GBBA games during the GBBA season.
- 8.9 The official scorekeeper will track pitch counts in/with the official scorebook. Both coaches must sign the scorebook at the end of the game and provide the pitch counts to the Tournament Director. It is the responsibility of the head coaches to agree on eligible pitchers and pitch limits prior to each game.
- 8.10 Should a pitcher exceed the daily pitching limit or violate the required rest period, the head coach and team may be penalized, including, but not limited to, a reprimand, suspension, or game forfeiture. The penalty will be issued by the Tournament Director. The offending head coach may appeal the penalty to the GBBA Board for final determination.
- 8.11 A pitcher who has reached 41 pitches in a day cannot play catcher for the remainder of that day.

#### **Rule 9.00: Miscellaneous Rules**

- 9.1 A player or coach who is bleeding or who has an open wound shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment has been administered. If treatment can be administered in a reasonable amount of time, in the umpire's discretion, the player will not have to leave the game. The reentry rule shall not apply to players in the case of a bleeding injury. If there is an excessive amount of blood on the uniform, it must be changed before reentry.
- 9.2 If a player is seriously injured during a play, the umpire has the sole discretion to stop the play and award players one base. Coaches must not enter the field until time is called by the umpire. Enforcement of this rule is a judgement call by the umpire and can't be appealed or protested.
- 9.3 Tobacco products are not allowed to be used on the field.
- 9.4 Artificial noisemakers (horns, megaphones, whistles, bells, etc.) are not permitted and shall not be used during an GBBA post-season game. Tournament Directors have the option of allowing music to be played from the stands. Umpires are responsible for enforcement of this rule.
- a. The first time the umpire detects the use of an artificial noisemaker, the umpire will issue a verbal warning to both head coaches.
  - b. On a subsequent offense, the user of the artificial noisemaker will be ejected from the ballpark.
- 9.5 Once approved, these rules will remain in effect and unaltered for the 2019 season. In the event that a situation or issue arises that is not covered in these rules, the GBBA board will make the fairest possible ruling, which will be the final ruling on the issue.