



WHEATON YOUTH BASEBALL ROOKIE BASEBALL LEAGUE SUPPLEMENTARY RULES

Revised & Approved: January 2026

The Rookie League was established as an intermediary step between Instructional and the A League Baseball for the purpose of introducing the skill of pitching to the game. The League is limited to those players currently in the second grade at the start of the season.

This league, like Instructional, is considered to be an introduction to organized baseball. League standings will not be kept and All Star Day and Championship Day are not applicable at this level.

League play will be governed by PONY League Baseball Rules unless otherwise stated in these supplementary rules. The intent of Wheaton Youth Baseball is to teach the rules of the game, develop skills, provide an opportunity for fun, and to teach teamwork and sportsmanship.

**MANAGERS AND UMPIRES HAVE NO AUTHORITY TO WAIVE ANY
RULES SET FORTH IN THESE SUPPLEMENTARY RULES OR ANY OTHER
REFERENCED DOCUMENTS OR RULES.**

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Coaching Youth Sports (CYS) has been adopted for use by the Wheaton Park District Youth Baseball/Softball Board of Control (Board of Control). The Wheaton Park District will provide CYC class prior to the start of the spring season. New managers are encouraged to complete this class within one year of entering the program. CYC managers will be given first priority in team assignments throughout all levels of this program.

It is the responsibility of each manager or their replacement to see to the proper conduct of themselves, their coaches, players and team fans. Failure to carry out this responsibility may result in game forfeiture, and/or disciplinary action, including removal from the baseball program.

II. THE GAME

- A. The home team bats last, uses the third base side bench and is responsible for chalking the field prior to the start of the game. Bases are located sixty (60) feet apart. Pitching rubber is forty-two (42) feet from home plate (rear point of the plate).
- B. This league, like Instructional, the Rookie League is considered to be an introduction to organized baseball. League standings will not be kept and All Star Day and Championship Day are not applicable at this level.

- C. TIME LIMIT: The game duration in all Rookie League games will be five (5) innings, except that a new inning shall not start after 8 PM on school nights. For all non-school nights and all weekend games for the entire season, the time limit for starting a new inning is 2:15 minutes after the scheduled start of the game. If the start of a game is delayed by weather, wet field conditions or by an earlier game, the time limit shall be measured from the actual start time of the game. A new inning starts as soon as the last out of the previous inning is made. In the event of a tied game after 5 complete innings, extra innings may be played until a winner is determined or the time limit is reached. No new inning can start after the 2:15 time limit is reached. Games may end in a tie.
- D. A game is official after four (4) or more innings have been played or the home team shall have scored more runs in three (3) innings or before it completes the 4th inning, than the visiting team shall have scored in four (4) complete innings.
- E. Umpires may be provided for Rookie games. In the event that an umpire is not provided, by mutual agreement, the managers shall select a substitute (i.e., Parent) to assist during the game as an umpire is required. There shall not be any postponement of the game for failure of an umpire to appear.
- F. Before game time, the home team and the visiting team shall exchange their respective batting orders. Each team's lineup card shall list the players first and last name, and a uniform number if available. Call up players **MUST** be clearly identified on the lineup card.
- G. Bad weather or field conditions may result in the postponement of a game. Having no league official in attendance, the home team manager will make the final decision. In the event of lightning or thunder, all games and practices must be held up until safe conditions are apparent (refer to storm policy). The Park District asks coaches to reschedule games if the field is too wet, rather than cause serious damage to the infield and turf areas (refer to the ball field use guidelines). Canceled games are to be rescheduled through the league vice-president as soon as possible.
- H. It is the Managers responsibility to call up players for his/her team in the event the team cannot field a team of eight (8) players. In this regard the anticipated team roster for the upcoming game(s) must not be more than nine (9) players. All Instructional players are eligible call ups. Players brought up must play in that game and cannot play any more innings than any member of the regular roster.
- I. Only the Manager may ask for a time-out to have a conference with the umpire(s). A conference shall be for the purpose of discussing some pertinent aspect or the game. Possible examples are: field conditions or to seek clarification or review of a ruling made by an umpire. A conference shall not be held to review a judgment call made by an umpire.
- J. Any player who has a bleeding injury must leave the field immediately. A player may return once the bleeding has been contained. This rule must be followed to ensure the safety of all players and officials.

- K. Slaughter rule does not apply at the Rookie League level.

III. EQUIPMENT

- A. Batting helmets must be worn by the batter at the plate, and all base runners.
- B. Baseball bats in excess of 2^{5/8} inches in diameter are prohibited.
- C. The catcher must wear the protective gear provided. (Helmet and face mask, chest protector, and shin guards). Athletic supporters and cups are recommended for all players.

IV. PITCHING

- A. Pitchers may be any player on the team roster. A player removed from pitching is not allowed to return to pitching even if he/she has remained in the game at some other position.
- B. A pitcher is limited to one (1) inning per game and a maximum of three (3) innings per week. A Pitching Week begins on Monday morning and ends on Sunday Night. A player has pitched a complete inning as soon as he throws one (1) pitch during an inning. If three (3) pitchers are used in one (1) inning, each is considered to have pitched the complete inning. A time out, called for by a Manager or coach, for a second conference with a pitcher during an inning, automatically requires a change of pitchers.
- A pitcher who hits three (3) batters with pitched balls in the same inning must be removed from pitching.
 - Pitchers may not wear wrist bands or jewelry when pitching
- C. There are no walks: If a batter takes four (4) balls from a player pitcher, the following rules apply:
1. The pitch count reverts back to 0-0.
 2. The coach comes in to pitch, and the Umpire calls balls and strikes. The coach-pitcher must be the manager or a coach from the team at bat.
 3. The batter will have a maximum of four (4) pitches to put the ball into play.
 4. Prior to the fourth pitch, the coach-pitcher will call out to the playing field, "last pitch".
 5. On the fourth pitch, the batter will be called out if the ball is not put into play. If the last pitch is fouled off, the batter will continue to bat until the batter misses the ball, does not swing or hits the ball into play.

6. No underhand pitching will be allowed. Pitcher (adult coaches) must stand ON the rubber when delivering the pitch.
 7. The player pitcher must stay within two feet (2') of the pitching rubber, and positioned so as not to interfere with the coach pitcher. The player but may not be in front of the pitching rubber.
 8. When the ball is hit, the coach pitcher will not interfere with the defensive players. He should crouch down at the mound or leave the playing field.
 9. The coach pitcher forfeits his right to coach his base runners while his team is at bat.
- D. A hit batsman by a player pitcher and catcher interference (hitting the batters bat with the catcher's glove) will be treated the same as a walk; the batter will not go to first and the Coach will come in to pitch.

V. OFFENSE

- A. The batting rotation shall consist of all team players in attendance at the game. This means that if thirteen (13) players are in attendance all thirteen (13) must bat, in order, before the first player comes to bat again. All players arriving late to a game must be inserted at the bottom of the batting order as it was at the beginning of the game and shall bat the first time that position comes up.
- B. If teams have an unequal number of players in attendance at the game, the total number of batters possible in a complete inning shall be equal to that of the team having the lesser team members in attendance at the game. If a player leaves during the course of the game, for any reason, the number of batters the opposing team can bat will not be reduced.
- C. A half inning shall consist of three outs or a complete rotation of the batting order, whichever occurs first. If three outs occur first, the following inning shall begin with the next regularly scheduled batter. An example of a complete rotation of the batting order would be to have the seventh batter through the sixth batter come to the plate before three outs have occurred. If the last batter in a rotation comes to the plate, it will be considered to be two (2) outs.
- D. There is **no** bunting in the Rookie League.
- E. A batter who throws the bat, even accidentally, shall be given a warning. Subsequent offenses by the same batter shall result in anis automatically out and all runners return to their original bases.

- F. Adult coaches are allowed at first (1st) and third (3rd) base. These coaches must remain at least three (3) feet from the base line. Any physical contact with the runner(s) during play shall result in the automatic out of that runner(s).

VI. DEFENSE AND BASE RUNNING

- A. A team may play a maximum of ten (10) players and a minimum of eight (8) players in the field. All defensive players shall generally play regular baseball positions, and the tenth player must play in the outfield at regular outfield depth, not at or around second base. No player, except the pitcher and the catcher, shall be closer than fifty-five (55) feet to the batter when the ball is hit.

- All players must play in every game and the difference between the player who sits out the least number of defensive innings and the player who sits out the most defensive innings cannot be greater than one (1).
- (Example: If 13 players are in attendance for a 6 inning game, 5 players would sit 2 innings and 8 players would sit 1 defensive inning).
- No player shall sit out two consecutive innings. The incomplete half inning of a game won by the home team is counted as having been played. Terminated games, injuries and disciplinary action are exceptions to the "required inning" rule. Failure to comply with this rule will result in game forfeiture.

- B. Free substitution is permitted on defense, except that such substitutions can take place only between innings. During an inning a player cannot be brought off the bench to play except in the event of injury, or to replace the pitcher. Players cannot change positions during an inning with the exception of the tenth player as described in rule "A" above or in the event of a change in pitchers.

C. **Definitions:**

"Possession" is defined as having the ball in one's hand or glove.

"Infield area" is defined as the imaginary rectangle formed by the extension of the backstop to a point five (5) feet beyond first and third base and turning at 90 degree angles to intersect approximately seven (7) feet behind second base. The "outfield area" is the area beyond the "infield area" and within the imaginary extension of the backstop.

"Going to" is defined as being definitely on the way to the next base. Simply being past the previous base does not automatically qualify the runner as being on the way to the next base. It is important to note that a runner is eligible to be thrown out even if they are not entitled to the base they are attempting to advance to. If a player has advanced safely to a base beyond which they are entitled, the runner is awarded a safe return to the prior base once the ball is dead and the play over.

- D. Teaching the fielders to make basic baseball plays without fear of the impact of potential failure is important to the development of the defensive player. Therefore the following rules apply to what base(s) a runner(s) is entitled to as a result of a hit ball.
- A hit fair ball is initially retrieved in the "**infield area**", the runner(s) is only entitled to the base they are going to at the time of retrieval by any player, regardless of whether the retrieved ball is "held" or "thrown". No extra bases will be allowed for overthrows.
 - A hit fair ball is initially retrieved in the "**outfield area**" the runner(s) are entitled to the base they are going to at the time the ball has been returned to the possession of any player, infielder or outfielder, who is in the "**infield area**", "Going to" is defined as being definitely on the way to the next base. Simply being past the previous base does not automatically qualify the runner as being on the way to the next base.
- E. In regard to rule "D", it is important to note that a runner(s) is eligible to be "thrown out" even if they are not entitled to the base they are attempting to advance to. If a player has advanced safely to a base beyond which they are entitled, the runner is awarded a safe return to the prior base once the ball is dead.
- F. Time out shall not be called until the ball is considered "dead". Time out must be recognized by the umpire before coaches are allowed in the playing area.
- G. A maximum of one (1) adult (at least 18 years old) defensive coach may be positioned in the "outfield area" for the purpose of giving placement and throwing advice to the defensive players on the field.
- H. Catcher may use a fielder's glove. Catcher's helmet and face mask with throat collar must be worn during the game, by the catcher and by players warming up the pitcher. A cup is recommended for all catchers.
- I. The dropped third strike rule will **not** apply.
- J. Base stealing is **not** allowed. Base runners must be in contact with the base at all times or until the ball is hit. Leaving a base too soon shall result in an automatic out for the runner and all action being replayed.
- K. All base runners must attempt to avoid a collision with a fielder in possession of the ball, about to field a batted ball or about to receive a thrown ball. Any runner who remains on his or her feet and crashes into a fielder making the play in these situations, whether intentional or not, will be called out for interference. If the act is determined to be flagrant or malicious, the player will be restricted to the bench for the duration of the game.
- L. Runners have three options to avoid a collision: slide into the base they are going to, step around a fielder, or pull up and allow themselves to be tagged.

- Note: A collision that occurs when an errant throw draws a defensive player into the path of a runner is considered to be incidental contact. It is not interference, and no penalty will be imposed to either the defensive or offensive player.
- Conversely, a fielder while not in possession of the ball, not about to field a batted ball or about to receive a thrown ball, may not impede the progress of a runner who is legally running bases. Obstruction will be called in these situations, and the appropriate ruling will be made by the umpire.

VII. POST SEASON TOURNAMENT TEAM

The Rookie League Vice President and Baseball Board of Control will work to form a Post Season Tournament Team through a tryout held toward the end of the season (May) consisting of eligible players who played in the Rookie League during the regular season. The formation of a team will be dependent on securing coaches for the team and enough proficient players to be determined and selected through a tryout.

VIII. EQUIPMENT RETURNS

All equipment is to be returned in accordance with the Equipment Managers published schedule. Managers who fail to do so may not be allowed to manage the next season.

XIV. FIELD DIMENSIONS

Rookie League:

Bases.....60'
Pitching..... 42'