



Whatcom County Youth Baseball/Softball League Rules

Subject to Change-Updated 1/11/17

General Spring Baseball/Softball League Rules

Including Official Babe Ruth Baseball/Softball Rules and Exceptions:

- Recreational Leagues:** K-1st T-Ball, 2nd-3rd Grade Pitching Machine (Rookie), 3rd-4th Grade Baseball (Minor B), 11/12 Year Old Baseball (Major B), 10-U Fastpitch, 12-U Fastpitch, and 14-U Fastpitch
- Competitive Leagues:** 9/10 Year Old Baseball (Minor A) and 11/12 Year Old Baseball (Major A)
- Time Limit:** Teams must have 8 players to play the game within 10 minutes of the scheduled start time for it to not be a forfeit.
T-Ball/Pitching Machine: 1 hour and 15 minutes (unless field supervisor permits game to go longer)
Minor B, Major B, 10-U, 12-U, and 14-U: No new inning starts after 1 hour and 30 minutes
Minor A and Major A: No new inning starts after 1 hour and 45 minutes
- Innings:** T-Ball and Pitching Machine: Each will play with time limit listed above
All other leagues: 6 Innings is a complete game. An extra inning may be played if it is tied and if it begins before the time limit (unless both coaches and umpire agree to stay after time limit). 3 ½ innings is the minimum number of innings to record an official game.
- Playing Time:** No player may sit out consecutive innings and it is encouraged to have players play multiple positions during the season. However, every player will still be in the batting order.
- Ground Rules:** Out of play lines are in effect, one base on an overthrow. Balls leaving the field of play while in play will be ruled by the umpire (ground rule double, triple, homerun) based on how and where the ball left the field.
- Defense:** T-Ball: 6 infielders with all other players in the outfield (be sure to rotate players each inning/game)
Pitching Machine, Minor B, 10-U, and 12-U: 6 infielders and 4 outfielders
Minor A, Major B, Major A, and 14-U: 6 infielders and 3 outfielders
- Warm-Up:** All warm-ups shall be done in the outfield. Please do not tear up groomed infield prior to the game beginning. Grounders may be taken in foul territory next to the dugouts.
- Base Length:** Each league will play with 60' base paths (some 12 year old competitive teams will play at 70')
- Pitching Distance:** 10-U: 35'
Pitching Machine, Minor B, and 12-U: 40'
14-U: 43'
Minor A and Major B: 46'
Major A: 46' and 50' (if playing with 70' bases)
- Game Balls:** -It is the home teams/fields responsibility to provide two games balls to the umpire prior to the start of the game.
T-Ball: official t-ball will be used
Pitching Machine: dimpled pitching machine balls will be used. It is recommended that a bucket of balls is provided so the speed of play is faster
10-U Girls: 11 inch
12-U/14-U Girls: 12 inch
Baseball: regulation full grain leather
- Bats:** Baseball: Bats shall not be more than 33 inches in length, nor have a bat barrel in excess of 2¼ inches. Bats shall be stamped "Approved For Play in Babe Ruth Baseball"
Softball: Bats shall not be more than 34 inches in length, and not more than 2¼ inches in the diameter at its largest part and not exceed 38 ounces in weight. The bat shall be marked "OFFICIAL SOFTBALL" by the manufacturer.
- Shoes:** Shoes with metal cleats or spikes are **not** permitted to be worn by any player, coach, or manager.
- Jewelry:** Jewelry is prohibited. Players shall not wear jewelry. Medical alert and religious bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewelry. If worn, they must be taped to the body so as to remain visible. Wireless communication devices are not allowed.
- Player Safety:** All players while base running, batting, or base coaching must wear a helmet. All on-deck batters must stand behind the batter. All other players will remain in the dugout

General League Rules Continued

- Base Running:** If a play is being made on the runner, the runner must slide OR avoid all contact. If the runner does not slide and runs into the fielder or intentionally interferes with the thrown ball, the runner will be out. All slides should be feet first with the exception of dives back to the base.
- Hit By Pitch:** Batter is awarded first base if hit by pitch outside of the strike zone and attempts to get out of the way (umpire judgment). A ball or strike will be called on a pitch hitting a batter that does not make an attempt to get out of the way. When the batter is touched by a pitched ball which does not entitle him/her to first base, the ball is dead and no runner may advance. Ball hitting the ground is live until hitting a batter attempting to get out of the way.
- Bunting:** Allowed in all leagues except t-ball and pitching machine. See new rule for slash bunting below.
- Intentional Walks:** A Team may not give an intentional walk by telling the umpire. All pitches need to be thrown.
- Pitchers Warm-Up:** Pitchers are allowed 5 warm-up pitches between each inning or when a new pitcher comes in.
- Pitching Rule:** Delivering one pitch in an inning constitutes having pitched an inning. Starting pitcher may re-enter as a pitcher later in the game. See specific league rules for other regulations.
- Catcher Rule:** Flagrantly running into the catcher results in an automatic out, player ejection, and dead ball. This is the umpire's judgment call.
- Infield Fly:** Only Minor A and Major A play with the infield fly rule.
- Third Strike:** Dropped third strike is in effect for Major A (70') and 14-U. All other leagues do NOT require the catcher to catch the third strike. 12-U (upper division) will play with third strike for second half of the season
- Sportsmanship:** -Offer praise and encouraging words for all athletes, including the opponents. Never openly berate, tease, or demean any child athlete, coach, or referee while attending a B&GC sporting event and do not let kids do the same to each other.
-The B&GC will not hesitate to act if the standards of the B&GC are compromised.
- Field Conduct:** -Good citizenship at the schools, parks, and all field locations is crucial to the success of the program. Please pick-up all your garbage and no tobacco or alcohol is allowed at any program site. Please do not bring pets to fields including NW Baseball/Soccer Fields. Thanks you for your cooperation.
- Umpires:** -There will be 1-2 officials for each game for leagues that are kid pitch. T-Ball/Pitching Machine does not require umpires and each coach is to make calls for their own team. Thank you for always supporting them.
- Schedule:** -The schedules will be made available on the website at www.whatcomclubs.org as soon as they become available. Older divisions will have a split schedule and teams will be placed in a division based on results from the first 4 games.
- Score:** No official score/record is kept for T-Ball and Pitching Machine. The home team must provide the official scorebook for all other leagues that have official score/records. Minor B and higher baseball and 10-U and higher softball all keep official score.
- Standings:** Standings will be updated weekly based on scores that have been reported.
- Score Reporting:** It is the winning team's responsibility to report all scores within 2 days of each game. Please email game scores to Sam Hobbs at shobbs@whatcomclubs.org. Please report ONLY the date, division, team numbers, and scores for each team. Scores may also be called into 384-0753 or 527-9777.
- Rainout Policy:** Parents/Players should report to the scheduled game unless they hear from their coach. Each field will be decided by that respective areas director or coach. If the weather is questionable, only the coach is encouraged to check with that person. Decisions on weeknight rainouts will be made after 4:00pm and not until Saturday morning for weekend games. If a coach knows a game is rained out, it is encouraged that the first call is to the opposing coach. Please Note: some fields may be rained out on a day where other fields are not. We will make every attempt to post rainout info on the Athletics Facebook page. Below is a list of phone numbers for coaches:
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| Ferndale: | Sam Hobbs or Randy Ashe | 384-0753 |
| Bellingham | Sam Hobbs or Randy Ashe | 527-9777 |
| Other | Coaches ONLY-Call opposing coach | |
- Make-Up Games:** Teams are scheduled to play 12 games. Games will be rescheduled to make sure each team plays a minimum of 10 of those 12 scheduled games. The location that cancelled the game is responsible for rescheduling games.
- Fake Bunt – Slash Bunt:** New (as of 2015) -A batter is out for illegal action when the player fakes a bunt and then takes a full swing, thus eliminating a player from fake bunting (slap-hitting) the ball. Penalty: Batter is out, the ball is dead, and no runners may advance.

Specific League Rules:

T-Ball Specific League Rules:

- Every player will be placed in the batting line-up and will get to bat once every inning. Coaches are encouraged to change the batting/fielding line-up each inning
- Teams do not have to bat the same number of players as the opposing team
- One base per overthrow
- Pitcher will remain at pitching rubber until the ball is hit
- Once batted ball returns to the infield all runners stop at nearest base
- There is no on-deck batter for safety reasons
- Batters must take a full swing; no bunting allowed
- No leading off or base stealing. The runner must wait until the ball is hit before advancing
- 5:30 games will likely have a game after theirs. Please be sure to watch the time and finish as close to 6:45 as possible
- Please be sure to leave all game gear at the field (Tee, ball, helmets, bat)
- Players that are tagged or thrown out may still run the bases to learn how
- Batter hitting the tee may be ruled a foul ball
- One coach in the outfield on defense and one at home plate on offense.

Pitching Machine Specific League Rules:

- Players must take full swings, no bunting allowed
- Teams bat through the order once per inning regardless of the number of players
- No leading off or stealing. Players can only run when the ball is hit
- Batter may watch the first pitch of each at bat. After that, they become strikes. After the first two weeks the batter does not get to watch the first pitch.
- Ball hitting the machine is a base hit and runners will advance one base
- The hitting team provides someone to feed the machine. Players get 3 strikes and do not strike out on a foul ball (the pitching machine will occasionally throw a bad pitch and this will not count as a strike)
- After two weeks teams may play with three out ONLY if both coaches agree. Otherwise, each player bats in every inning

10-U Girls Specific League Rules:

- A player pitcher will pitch to each batter. When 4 balls are called, the coach or a parent will pitch to their own team until the player puts the ball in play or is out. The coach will come in with the same strike count the pitcher had on the batter. The player pitcher is to stand on either side of the coach by the pitching rubber.

-Hit By Pitch: Player may choose to continue batting or take a base. Player must continue batting if hit by own coach pitch.

- Pitching Technique: Windmill or modified delivery of pitch is allowed.
- Pitching Motion: In the act of delivering the ball all movement must be forward. The pivot foot must stay in contact with the ground before ball is released.
- Pitching Rule: Pitchers may pitch 2 innings per game.
- Pitching Circle: Once a player has control of the ball inside the 16 foot pitching circle, runners must continue without hesitation to a base, otherwise, they may be called out by the umpire.
- Stealing: There is no leading off and runners may steal only 2nd and 3rd base as soon as the ball crosses home plate. There is no stealing home and once the runner reaches third may only score on a batted ball or force walk. Stealing is not allowed while a coach is pitching.

Run Rule: If a team is ahead by 10 or more runs after 4 innings (3 ½ if home team) the game is completed. Once a team reaches the run rule the opposing team has a chance to get within the run limit. Teams may continue play if both teams and umpire agree to stay.

- Runs Per Inning: Teams will bat their entire order or until 3 outs have been made. Teams with fewer players may bat the same number of players as the opposing team in an inning.

12-U Girls Specific League Rules:

- Pitching Motion: Pitcher must begin position with both feet in contact with pitcher's plate. In the act of delivering the ball all movement must be forward. The pivot foot must stay in contact with the ground before ball is released. If the pivot foot does not stay in contact with the ground, the umpire will give the pitcher one warning and then call "ball" for any other pitch that is pitched illegally.
- Illegal Pitch: If a pitcher starts her motion and doesn't finish, this is ruled an illegal pitch and a "ball" is awarded.
- Pitching Rule: Pitchers may pitch 3 innings per game.
- Pitching Circle: Once a player has control of the ball inside the 16 foot pitching circle, runners must continue without hesitation to a base, otherwise, they may be called out by the umpire.
- Stealing: There is no leading off and runners may steal as soon as the ball leaves the pitchers hand (including home).
- Drop 3rd Strike: After 6 games are played, teams will be divided into "blue" and "green" divisions. When this happens, the BLUE division will play with drop 3rd strike. Before this division, teams can play with Drop 3rd Strike if coaches agree to before the game begins.
- Run Rule: If a team is ahead by 10 or more runs after 4 innings (3 ½ if home team) the game is completed. Once a team reaches the run rule the opposing team has a chance to get within the run limit. Teams may continue play if both teams and umpire agree to stay.
- Runs Per Inning: Teams will bat their entire order or until 3 outs have been made. Teams with fewer players may bat the same number of players as the opposing team in an inning.

Specific League Rules Continued:

14-U Girls Specific League Rules:

- Pitching Motion: Pitcher must begin position with both feet in contact with pitcher's plate. In the act of delivering the ball all movement must be forward. The pivot foot must stay in contact with the ground before ball is released. If the pivot foot does not stay in contact with the ground, the umpire will give the pitcher one warning and then call "ball" for any other pitch that is pitched illegally.
- Illegal Pitch: If a pitcher starts her motion and doesn't finish, this is ruled an illegal pitch and a "ball" is awarded.
- Pitching Rule: Pitchers may pitch 10 innings a week (Monday-Sunday).
- Pitching Circle: Once a player has control of the ball inside the 16 foot pitching circle, runners must continue without hesitation to a base, otherwise, they may be called out by the umpire.
- Stealing: There is no leading off and runners may steal as soon as the ball leaves the pitchers hand (including home).
- Run Rule: If a team is ahead by 10 or more runs after 4 innings (3 ½ if home team) the game is completed. Once a team reaches the run rule the opposing team has a chance to get within the run limit. Teams may continue play if both teams and umpire agree to stay.
- Runs Per Inning: Teams will bat their entire order or until 3 outs have been made. Teams with fewer players may bat the same number of players as the opposing team in an inning.

Minor B Specific League Rules:

- Stealing: There is no leading off and runners may steal only 2nd and 3rd base as soon as the ball crosses home plate. There is no stealing home and once the runner reaches third the player may only score on a batted ball or force walk.
- Run Rule: If a team is ahead by 15 or more runs after 4 innings (3 ½ if home team) the game is completed. Once a team reaches the run rule the opposing team has a chance to get within the run limit. Teams may continue play if both teams and umpire agree to stay.
- Runs Per Inning: Teams will bat their entire order or until 3 outs have been made. Teams with fewer players may bat the same number of players as the opposing team in an inning.
- Pitching Rule: A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 3 innings a game and no more than 6 innings a week (including rescheduled or makeup games). A calendar week is Monday-Sunday. A pitcher must have (2) calendar days rest between pitching assignments if pitched in more than 2 innings in any one game.

Minor A Specific League Rules:

- Stealing: There is no leading off and runners may steal as soon as the ball crosses home plate.
- Run Rule: If a team is ahead by 10 or more runs after 4 innings (3 ½ if home team) the game is completed. Once a team reaches the run rule the opposing team has a chance to get within the run limit. Teams may continue play if both teams and umpire agree to stay.
- Runs Per Inning: Teams will bat until 3 outs have been made.
- Pitching Rule: A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 6 innings a week (including rescheduled or makeup games). A calendar week is Monday-Sunday. A pitcher must have (2) calendar days rest between pitching assignments if pitched in more than 2 innings in any one game.

Major B Specific League Rules:

- Stealing: There is no leading off and runners may steal as soon as the ball crosses home plate.
- Run Rule: If a team is ahead by 10 or more runs after 4 innings (3 ½ if home team) the game is completed. Once a team reaches the run rule the opposing team has a chance to get within the run limit. Teams may continue play if both teams and umpire agree to stay.
- Runs Per Inning: Teams will bat their entire order or until 3 outs have been made. Teams with fewer players may bat the same number of players as the opposing team in an inning.
- Pitching Rule: A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 3 innings a game and no more than 6 innings a week (including rescheduled or makeup games). A calendar week is Monday-Sunday. A pitcher must have (2) calendar days rest between pitching assignments if pitched in more than 2 innings in any one game.

Major A Specific League Rules:

- Stealing 60': There is no leading off and runners may steal as soon as the ball crosses home plate.
- Stealing 70': There is leading off and runners may lead off and do not have to wait for the ball to cross home plate.
- Run Rule: If a team is ahead by 10 or more runs after 4 innings (3 ½ if home team) the game is completed. Once a team reaches the run rule the opposing team has a chance to get within the run limit. Teams may continue play if both teams and umpire agree to stay.
- Runs Per Inning: Teams will bat until 3 outs have been made.
- Pitching Rule: A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 6 innings a week (including rescheduled or makeup games). A calendar week is Monday-Sunday. A pitcher must have (2) calendar days rest between pitching assignments if pitched in more than 2 innings in any one game.
- Balks 70': Pitchers may be warned of a balk prior to it being called. Repeated offenses will allow runners to advance one base. Additional bases may be taken at runners own risk. The purpose of the balk rule is to prevent the pitcher from deliberately deceiving the base runner. Please refer to rule 8.05 in the rule book for specific Balk Rule.