

## Gahanna Junior League Sports A-Major League Rules

The following rules are supplementary to and supersede OHSAA rules and regulations. No rules can be changed without Board approval.

- A. In all situations, the safety of the players, coaches, umpires, and spectators shall be of primary importance. To that end, and by way of example, on-deck batters shall be positioned behind the current batter, regardless of where his or her team's bench is located. Coaches shall help ensure on-deck batters are properly positioned and that teams maintain appropriate sportsmanship and behavior when an opposing team's on-deck batter is positioned in front of its bench. In addition, coaches are instructed to become familiar with how to recognize concussions and to understand and apply the proper concussion protocols when warranted.
- B. There shall be no smoking, alcohol, drugs, or profanity used by anyone on the field, in the dugouts or within the limits of the field. No jewelry or bracelets of any type may be worn.
- C. Uniforms: League-issued shirts and hats, with proper baseball pants are to be worn.
- D. The field has 60' bases and a pitching distance of 40'. Metal cleats are not allowed.
- E. **Length of game and pace of play:** All games are 6 innings. Exceptions: weather delays; games may be called due to darkness or weather at the Umpire's decision; or by time limits. Four innings constitutes a legal game; 3 1/2 innings if the home team is winning. No new inning may begin more than 1:45 after the actual start time. For any game that ended due to weather or darkness, the final score shall revert to the last complete inning. In the regular season, ties will be counted as ties. In the playoff tournament, if application of the reversion rule would result in a tie score OR if the game has not yet reached the required number of innings to be official, then that game shall be declared suspended and shall be completed at the earliest possible date as determined by the League Commissioner **Fall only:** Games must start at 5:30 PM and speed-up rules are in effect – batters must leave one foot in the box, or a strike may be called; pitchers get 3 warm-up pitches between innings.
- F. All players will bat in a continuous batting order and must play on defense at least 4 innings in a 6-inning game. Exception: Mercy Rule; Weather. (See Rule T for full participation and lineup rules.) Late arrivals will be placed at the bottom of the batting order. Teams will play with 10 defensive players: 4 in the outfield. Outfielders must be on the grass and must be at least 30' from the base line. An outfielder may not make a putout on a runner in the infield unless it is on a secondary play. For example, when a ball is hit to the outfield, an outfielder must throw the ball to an infielder; however, an outfielder backing up a thrown ball or assisting in a rundown may make a play on a runner. Play stops when the ball is controlled in the infield dirt by an infielder (see Rule R, Base running). Teams will bat a maximum of 10 players or 3 outs per inning, whichever comes first.
- G. A-Major will follow the bat rules in effect for COYBL 8U. COYBL bat rules can be found at <https://www.coybl.org/page/show/5215685-2024-bat-rules>. COYBL rules provide no weight-to-length ratio limitations. However, bats must be no more than 2 3/4" in barrel size, and must be qualified USSSA 1.15 BPF, USA Bat, BBCOR, or one-piece wood to be accepted as legal. Penalty for use of an illegal bat is an automatic out.
- H. The home scorebook is the official score book with both teams confirming the score every inning.

- I. If there are less than 8 players there is a 15-minute grace period, then a forfeit. A team can play with eight players, but the 9th batter will be an out. If a team drops to 8 players after a game starts, the automatic out is taken in the spot in the batting order vacated by the last player to leave the game.
- J. Mercy run rules: 12 runs after 4 innings OR 8 runs after 5 innings.
- L. Call up players: A player may be called up from the lower league 3 times per regular season and twice during the tournaments. A call-up may not pitch, must bat last, and must play defense per league rules.
- M. Only one offensive and defensive time-out is permitted per inning.
- N. Once the players start pitching, teams are limited to 3 coaching trips to the mound per game. A second visit to the same pitcher in the same inning requires that pitcher to be replaced. Replacing a pitcher is not considered a trip to the mound.
- O. At a coach's option, the next scheduled catcher may be afforded a courtesy runner with 2 outs. The last player to make an out shall be the runner. Unless injured, the replaced runner must catch the next inning at least until a pitching change is made. The balk rules do not apply but can be taught: no runners on, pitch from windup; runners on, pitch from the stretch.
- P. **Sliding.** Feet-first sliding applies except when returning to a base. Headfirst sliding will constitute an out. Sliding to avoid contact applies. Runners must slide or attempt to avoid contact with the fielder. If a runner violates this rule and contact results, he is to be called out. Obstruction rules apply, and no defensive player may block a base or the plate without the ball. Runners initiating hard or dangerous contact are subject to ejection at the umpire's discretion.
- Q. **Batting.** Bunting is not allowed. Slug bunting is illegal; the offending player will be called out and ejected. Batters throwing the bat will receive one team warning per game; every occurrence after that will result in the offending player being called out, the ball being immediately declared dead, and all runners returned to the base occupied prior to the pitch. Also, to avoid confusion, note that baseball rules provide that home plate is fair territory.
- R. **Base Running:** Stealing is not allowed. Runners may not lead off or leave the base until the ball passes home plate. Each runner leaving early shall get one warning per game, after one warning they will be called out for leaving early. Every runner shall have the opportunity to advance one base on any batted ball; however, a player tagging up on a fly ball must demonstrate an intention to attempt to advance before the ball would otherwise be declared dead. The 10th batter at bat is played to completion as any other at bat, regardless of the number of outs when that batter comes to the plate. NOTE: A runner who is put out in the process of advancing to the next base in a situation when the runner is required to advance to the next base, even if tagged, is considered forced out.

On balls hit in the infield:

- i. Regular interference rules apply. This means that a runner is out when he or she contacts a batted ball in fair territory before it touches an infielder or after it passes an infielder (other than the pitcher) if the umpire is convinced another infielder has a play on the ball.
- ii. Play stops when the initial play is at 1st base either by an infielder or by an outfielder determined by the umpire to have had a legitimate play at 1st base.

On balls hit into the outfield:

- i. When the ball is thrown toward the infield and controlled in the infield dirt by an infielder, all runners not forced to run on the play must return to their bases unless the runner is greater than halfway to the next empty base when the infielder controls the ball in the infield.
- ii. An infielder may retrieve the ball from the outfield and run it to the infield to stop play.
- iii. If the infielder throws the ball in an attempt to make a play on a runner, runners may continue to advance, and the overthrow rules apply.

Overthrown balls:

- i. Out of play rules do not apply.
- ii. All overthrown balls to 1st or 3rd base stops play and runners must return to their bases unless the runner is greater than halfway to the next empty base at the time the ball goes out of play, he then may continue to that empty base.
- iii. If the play attempt is at second base and an overthrow occurs, the dead ball rules will be the same as on balls hit to the outfield.

- S. **Pitching.** Coaches will pitch the first 3 innings, and extra innings, if necessary, for their own team. The Coach cannot coach base runners while pitching. Coaches will pitch a maximum of 5 pitches per batter unless the last one is fouled. There are no walks/hit batters and if there is no hit it is an out. The umpire shall not call balls and strikes while any coach is pitching.

Player Pitch: The players will pitch innings 4, 5 and 6, with the umpire calling balls and strikes. There are no walks, but a batter hit by a player/pitcher shall be awarded first base. If the umpire calls 4 balls, the coach will pitch for the remainder of the at-bat, but the number of strikes called prior to the change to coach pitch will remain. The batter will get no more than 3 pitches from the coach unless the last one is fouled. Any swinging third strike will result in an out and end the at-bat immediately. Pitchers must be replaced after a coach comes in 5 times in an inning. Hitting a batter with a pitch constitutes a “walk” for purposes of this rule.

Pitcher Innings and Rest: Players may pitch up to 1 innings in a game, and in up to 3 games per week. For purposes of this rule, a week starts on Monday and ends on Sunday. A pitcher removed from the game cannot return as a pitcher. One ball pitched constitutes an inning. Any player who pitches on 2 consecutive days must have at least 2 consecutive days of rest before pitching again.

- T. **Defense:** Coaches are strongly encouraged to exchange defensive lineups and batting orders with one another to ensure and monitor compliance with the following mandatory participation rules.

Defensive Participation: Players must enter the game on defense by the second inning. Players cannot sit out twice before everyone else sits out at least once. For safety reasons, players playing pitcher and first base positions are required to always wear a helmet with a face guard. Players must play a minimum of 2 innings in the infield and in the outfield; however, players do not have to play the same position for their 2 innings of infield and outfield. Catcher is considered an outfield position and pitcher an infield position. Except in the event of extra innings, may NOT play more than 2 innings at any one position.

Extra Innings: In the event of extra innings, the defensive lineups revert to those used in the first inning and continue in order until play is concluded. For extra innings, the batting order continues from the team’s last at bat; it does not restart.

- U. The dropped third strike rule is not in effect.

- V. The infield fly rule is not in effect.

- W. Any coach ejected from a game will also be suspended for the next two (2) games. A second ejection in the same season will result in a one-week suspension. Any ejection thereafter will result in an indefinite suspension, with reinstatement permitted only by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. Any player, parent, relative, spectator, or other person ejected from any game shall be suspended for that game and the next game. Any ejected person must immediately leave the field and remain no closer than the parking lot. Depending on the severity of the conduct, additional suspensions or actions may be taken. The League Commissioner and the Board must promptly be made aware of any ejections. See Regulation 1.04.
- X. Home team is on the 1st base side; away team on the 3rd base side.
- Y. Only Head Coaches are permitted to talk to the umpires. Head Coaches are responsible for their assistants, players, parents, and spectators.
- Z. Both Teams are responsible for field preparation (drag fields, put bases out, line fields, rake low spots, and clean up after the games). There shall be no warming up on the field until the field is ready. Then both teams will get equal warm up time if time is available.
- AA. Since at this level the umpires are still in training, special care should be taken to ensure nobody harasses or questions any judgment call by any umpire. This could result in immediate dismissal or suspension; in which case the League Commissioner and the Board must be notified immediately.

*Revised March 2024*