

St. Bonaventure Baseball League

SoftBall Rules - 2011



Summary of Rules:

The normal rules of baseball apply with the following adaptations:

1. Game begins at 6:30 p.m. sharp.
2. The game will consist of six (6) full innings, or five (5) and ½ innings if the bottom of the 6th inning is not required to be played. This will be up to the sole discretion of the umpire.
3. Teams must have a minimum of 6 players to play and can have up to 11 players in the field
4. No sliding to first base
5. Innings end after umpire calls the third out or when there have been six runs scored.

Game Length/Weather:

Regulation Games are 6 innings. A game becomes official after 4 innings. Games start at 6:30 PM sharp. Teams shall play until darkness or conditions render playing impractical at the discretion of the umpire. If an inning cannot be completed the score reverts back to the score at the end of the prior inning.

At the beginning of the game the coaches shall determine after what time no new inning shall begin with the default time being 8:00 PM in case no agreement is made.

In regular season the coaches and umpire must agree on which inning is the final inning before the inning starts and both teams must get a chance at bat to complete the inning.

Players:

Number of Players: Teams must have a minimum of six players in order to play. Should a team not have a minimum of seven (6) players, they will forfeit the game automatically. Should some players leave before the sixth inning is completed and therefore leave the team with less than six (6) players, their team will forfeit the game. It will be up to the sole discretion of the umpire to decide this rule should the players leave between the fourth and sixth innings.

Players in the Field: Teams may have up to a maximum of eleven players on the field, consisting of a regular infield and 1 additional player, the rover, stationed between 1st and 2nd base. Remaining four players are in the outfield. Coaches may not add players to the outfield once the inning has started.

Batting:

Game Begins When: Each inning will begin and end with the umpire's direction. Play will start when the umpire says "Play Ball". Batters must be prompt to the plate. It will be up to the sole discretion of the umpire to decide if a team will be penalized with an out if the batter takes far too long to come to the plate and should the umpire have to remind the team that the "Batter's Up". Each batter will have one reminder/ warning from the umpire per game. The pitcher must wait for the umpire's direction before pitching.

Play Area Free of Equipment at all Times: Teams must ensure that there is someone to keep the play area free of equipment. There should be no bats, helmets etc. discarded on the playing field. These items should be kept behind the fence. Play will resume only when these items are away and the umpire deems the area safe. If the umpire must keep reminding teams about this, the team may be penalized with an out.

Throwing the Bat: Batters must be careful not to throw their bat after hitting the ball. Should a batter throw a bat after being reminded by the umpire not to do this, he/she will automatically be called out. It is up to the coaches to remind their players of this rule.

3rd Strike Rule: On a third (3rd) strike, should the catcher miss the ball, the batter will not be automatically out. The batter may run to first base ONLY if there is no base runner at first. The batter will be out if tagged by the catcher, or if the ball is caught by a fielder at first base, in which case it will be deemed a force play. The fielder may, but is not required to tag the runner, only to catch the ball while stepping on the base before the runner touches the base. Note – missing the ball, actually refers to the lack of failing to cleanly catch the pitch. A pitch is considered uncaught if the ball touches the ground before being caught, or if the ball is dropped after being grasped

Sliding into First Base: There will be no sliding allowed at first base. Base runner may run through without being called out if he/she crosses the base before the fielder catches the ball. This rule applies ONLY to the first base. Sliding is permitted at any other base and home plate, however, base runners may NOT try to slide in an attempt to take out the fielder.

Stealing Bases Permitted/Lead Offs Not Permitted: Base runners are permitted to steal any base and home plate. Base runners must wait for the pitch to cross the plate before attempting to steal. Should a base runner be caught, (by the umpire) leading off (running before the pitch crosses the plate), he/she will be automatically out. Should a base runner be caught in the middle of the bases while legally stealing a base, he/she must be tagged by the fielder to be out.

Stealing of Home Plate: **To ensure the safety of all players, there is no stealing of home plate on a passed ball that ends up / rolls around in the backstop area.** If attempted, base runner must return to third base. Additionally, no runner will be allowed to steal home on a properly thrown ball back to the pitcher and caught. On an overthrow to the pitcher or to any other player, attempting to steal home is still allowed. In the spirit of the game and for safety, coaches will instruct / remind their batters of the need to get out of the batters box during the course of a game

Base Line Rule: Base runners must stay on the base line (or within a reasonable boundary of same) when running. This rule will be up to the discretion of the base/home plate umpires.

Base Runner Hit by a Ball: Should a base runner be hit by a thrown ball while advancing, he/she gets an extra base and any other base runners may advance an extra base. This rule does not apply to a base runner whose been hit by a batted ball

Stepping on home plate and making contact with the ball the batter is out and the ball is dead. This of course, is subject to the umpires discretion. A ball could be hit before a batter actually steps on home plate

In the Field:

Played Positions: All fielders are free to play any position for a maximum of six (6) innings for the entire game, except for the position of pitcher. Any player may only pitch in a maximum of three (3) innings per game (not 9 outs). It is expected that coaches will rotate players through more than one position in the course of a game. If extra innings are required, any pitcher is allowed to pitch in 3 additional innings

Tagging vs: Force: All base runners while advancing must be tagged by the fielder unless it is a force play. Home plate is the fourth base for purposes of this rule.

Overthrow to 1st Base on a Base Hit: When the batter hits the ball into the field, should there be an overthrow to first base during the fielding play, the batter and each base runner may take one extra base.

Overthrows during the Course of a Fielding Play: Should there be an overthrow during the course of play where the ball is missed and goes into the field, each base runner may advance. Play continues until the pitcher receives the ball. Once the pitcher receives the ball and is at the pitcher's mound the play is over and automatically stops. However, should the pitcher not stop the play and decide to throw the ball to his/her fielder, this deems the ball in play and base runners may advance.

Infield Fly Rule: The infield fly rule applies only when there are fewer than two outs, and there is a **force play** at third (runners on first and second base, or bases loaded). In these situations, if a **fair fly ball** is a hit that, in the umpire's judgment, is catchable by an infielder with ordinary effort, the batter is out regardless of whether the ball is actually **caught** in flight.

Ground Rule Double: Should a batter hit the ball far enough out into the field that the ball goes beyond the bushes area behind centre and right fields, or if the ball rolls/bounces into the bushes area behind centre and right fields, the batter and any base runners will be awarded a maximum of two bases. Should the ball roll into the newly landscaped area behind left field, the batter and any base runners will be awarded a maximum of two bases.

Ground Rules:

Foul Ball: A ball will be deemed FOUL if it is hit into foul territory. Foul territory will be the areas beyond the first and third base lines. This line will be automatically followed as an invisible line out past the infield if the ball is hit or rolls into the outfield.

- If the ball is hit into the outfield (beyond first or third base) and touches the ground in fair territory and rolls into foul territory it will be deemed a fair ball.
- Should a ball be hit into the infield and touch the ground in fair territory and roll into foul territory (before first or third base) and only if it is not touched by a fielder, it will be deemed a foul ball. In this case should the ball be touched by a fielder before it can roll into foul territory, the ball will be deemed "in play" and the batter and any base runners may advance.
- Should a ball be hit and bounce anywhere over the diamond's fence, it will be deemed a foul ball. It will be up to the sole discretion of the umpire to decide this.

Time Out Called: Play may be interrupted any time. For purposes of safety, coaches and umpires may call a time out. Should an umpire, coach, scorekeeper or player call "TIME OUT", or "TIME", play stops once the umpire has granted a timeout. It is not assumed. If a time out is called during a pitch, the pitch will not count. If a time out is called during the course of play and if there are base runners in play, base runners must stop and go backwards and not forwards to a base. **The umpire will decide if base runners may advance or not.**

Innings are Over When: Innings are over when the umpire calls the third out or when there have been six (6) runs scored. It is up to the coaches/score keepers to inform the umpire when six (6) runs have been scored. The umpire may ask to see the score sheet at any time to confirm runs scored.

Pitching:

Windmill pitching: is not permitted and will be declared a "no-pitch" and the ball is dead

The pitcher must wear the pitching helmet.

Scoring:

Scoring Runs: Base runners must touch home plate to score a run. Base runners must be tagged at home plate unless it is a force play.

Run Scored on 3rd out: During the course of play, should there be a run scored on a third out, the run will only count if the base runner crosses the plate before the third out occurs. This will be up to the base/plate umpires to decide.

Playoffs/Final Game:

- For playoffs and final, as normal there can be a maximum of 11 players on the field at one time. However, in the unlikely event of both teams having 12 players, this will be reduced to 10 players at one time on the field. No player shall sit more than one inning in the game, which means that every player will be required to sit out an inning. It is expected that scorekeepers will identify the players to the opposing team.
- Eligible playoff player rule – all players must have played in at least 3 regular season games to be eligible to play in the playoffs

Umpires:

Umpires are part of the teaching process and may advise players on matters pertaining to rules and safety. Umpires may help batters get positioned in the batters box. Umpires may not advise on strategic or competitive aspects of the game and are to remain unbiased.

Umpires and the Umpire-in-Chief can ask parents to refrain from negative cheering during and after a game. Umpire-in-Chief can remove a parent from the game if they yell at the umpire, players or other parents.

Umpires can not be related to a player or coach playing in a game which they are umpiring. The Umpire-in-Chief can make an exception to this rule.

The umpire's decision is final. Coaches who wish to discuss a rule interpretation with an umpire must do so in the presence of the other team's head coach in a calm manner and shall not intimidate or show up the umpire in any way. PARENTS MAY NOT DISCUSS UMPIRE DECISIONS WITH THE UMPIRE.

Coaches

Coaches are not allowed on the field during play.

Only one coach is allowed to stand in front of the dugout for the fielding team. One other coach may be positioned against the fence in the opening to the dugout and all others must remain inside the dugout.

The batting team may have one coach in each of the 1st and 3rd base coaching boxes.

Coaches are responsible for keeping the dugout areas that are in the field of play free of players, parents and equipment such as bats, balls and bags. Parents who are not coaching must remain behind the fences.

Coaches are to assist the umpire in ensuring appropriate behaviour from parents on their team. Parents are not allowed to negative cheer, yell at players on their team or the opposing team or at the umpire.

The Home Team is responsible for:

- Bringing out the equipment (including the pitching helmet)
- Bringing out the first aid box
- Put the equipment and first aid box back in the equipment room
- Sending the score to the league convener.

Coaches shall send the game score to their convener and bonaventurebaseball@gmail.com right after the game.

Parents

St Bonaventure Baseball League will not tolerate any negative cheering or unsportsmanlike behaviour from parents. Only positive cheering is permitted.

Parents are not to yell at the umpire at any time. If they are unhappy with a call they are to speak to their coach after the game. **PARENTS MAY NOT DISCUSS UMPIRE DECISIONS WITH THE UMPIRE.**

Parents are not to yell or speak rudely to any player on their team or on the opposing team.

Any parent who does not comply with these rules can be asked to leave the game immediately.

Parents are not allowed on the field at any time during the game and must remain behind the fence and/or benches at all times.

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