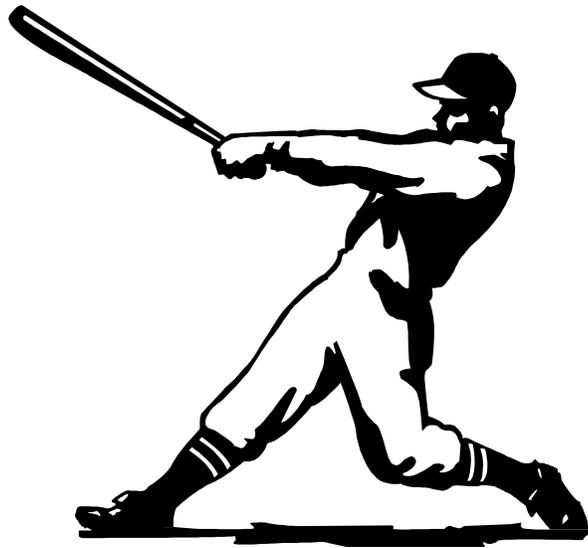




Hudson Youth Baseball Minor League Rules & Information



Revision 10: April 2018

VISION STATEMENT

Cal Ripken, Jr. and Babe Ruth League have always shared a common vision: To provide every youngster the opportunity to play baseball and have fun. Teaching them to play "The Ripken Way" will assure the accomplishment of that goal.

GOALS

"It's our goal that each youngster who plays in the Cal Ripken Baseball Division will not only learn the basics of the game, but will also experience the same level of excitement Cal Ripken felt every day he put on his uniform to get ready to play. There's nothing else like it!"

OBJECTIVES

The Babe Ruth Baseball and Cal Ripken programs, above all, are of, by and for youth. It especially tries to make better citizens through proper supervision of regulation competitive baseball in addition to promoting mental and physical development. In adopting rules, in establishing standards and in all planning, the primary consideration is the welfare of the participants.

What the players should learn at this level:

Code of Ethics for Players & Coaches:

1. It is the duty of the manager and coach to be in control of his/her players at all times in order to prevent any unsportsmanlike act toward opponents, officials and/or spectators.
2. Managers and coaches are expected to comply wholeheartedly with the intent and spirit of the rules. The deliberate teaching of players to violate the rules is indefensible, and could lead to coaches being suspended or expelled from the league.
3. Managers and coaches should teach their players to act in a dignified manner, to show respect for the game, the officials, their opponents, their coaches and their teammates.
4. Managers and coaches should limit their discussions with umpires to the interpretations of the rules and not challenge umpire decisions involving judgment, such as ball/strike and safe/out.
5. Cursing, obscene language, and malicious or personal remarks should not be tolerated at any time. Rather, the players should spend their energies encouraging their teammates. It is highly recommended that coaches not address players on the other team during a game even in a friendly way, due to the possibility of distracting them from the game and instructions from their own coaches.
6. Managers and coaches must recognize that they serve as role models. They set the standard with regard to their team's behavior. Therefore, managers and coaches must refrain from any personal action that might incite players or spectators to unsportsmanlike behavior, such as arguing with umpires, taunting opponents, or venting frustrations by throwing equipment.

Pre-Game & Post-Game Maintenance Duties for Managers & Coaches:

1. Pre-Game: Line the fields, i.e. create the foul line from home to first and home to third; and create the batters' boxes and coaches' restriction line.
2. Post-Game: Clean the bench area. Ensure all trash ends up in a trash can.
3. Post-Game: Clean out the base boxes and put the plugs back in.
4. Post-Game: Rake/Drag the infield after every practice/game.
5. Post-Game: Ensure bases are returned to their proper storage container.
6. Post-Game: Report games scores on the HYBS web site. (Home team's job)

Game Rules for the Minor League Level:

Section 1 -- Game Preliminaries

1. One coach from each team should always meet with the plate umpire before the game starts to discuss the following:
 - Ground rules for the field
 - Key exceptions to OBR (Official Baseball Rules). They key things to tell the umpire include no infield fly, no dropped 3rd strike, no catcher's interference (CI), "slide or avoid", no balks, no walks, and the rules surrounding runners leaving early. Several of these are discussed in detail in these rules.

Note: MBUA umpires are trained to officiate "live ball" under full baseball rules with little to no modification. Basically, they're used to high school rules. It's incumbent upon coaches to clarify with the umps that we have vast differences at the minor league level from high school. Some of these rules, like those cited above, can be clarified prior to the game. Others, like our base-running/throwing error rules need to be self-enforced because they don't lend themselves well to a pre-game discussion.

2. A coaching staff for any given game shall consist of no more than four (4) adults (i.e. 18 years old or more). No adult is to participate as a coach in any game (or practice) unless s/he has been CORI'd and approved by the league for participation. The 4 adults present during a game consist of a head coach/manager, two base coaches and a scorekeeper.
3. Other than the players and coaches, no one else should be on the bench, in the dugout or in the bench area interacting with game participants. This includes parents and other adult relatives of players, siblings of players, friends of players, and players from other teams.

4. As part of the pre-game field prep, coaches will chalk a coaches' restriction line (about 4 ft. long) that runs perpendicular from the bench/dugout toward the base line. This line will be drawn about two-thirds of the way from home to first and home to third. Coaches are not to stand closer to home plate than this line, except during time outs for things like injuries and discussions with umpires. The purpose of this limitation is twofold: to lower the risk of injuries from foul balls and to let batters, catchers and umpires focus without the distraction of too many adults being so close by.
5. The coaches from the home team are responsible to ensure that umpires have three brand new baseballs – the MacGregor 74 CAL baseballs and not the safe-soft balls that are used at the lower levels.
6. A minimum of eight (8) players will constitute a full team. When a coach knows that s/he will be missing players, which may result in a forfeit, that coach must contact the Minors Director. The game can be re-scheduled if the Minors Director, the HYBS VP of Baseball and both coaches can agree on the details and an umpire can be arranged. At game time, however, if a team is unable to field a sufficient number of players at the game's scheduled start time, that team will forfeit the game. Use of players other than those on the official team roster or those loaned from the opposing team is not allowed. When a game is forfeited, a "sportsmanship game" should be played for the purpose of getting players "reps". In such cases, it is ok for a team to lend fielders to the other team. The results of the sportsmanship game are irrelevant. The game goes as a forfeit. In no case should a non-HYBS player be allowed to participate in a sportsmanship game for liability reasons.
7. In cases of bad weather, the league president (or another league official designated by the president) will decide whether a game can start. Once it starts, only the umpire(s) can delay it or postpone it. See "Suspended Games" in Section 2, Paragraph 2.
8. Equipment & Uniform:
 - **Batting helmets with approved face guards MUST BE WORN** by: (1) on deck batter, (2) batter, (3) all base runners, (4) any player coaching a base.
 - **Bats.** USA Baseball Marking, 2 5/8" Barrel Maximum. No BBCOR Bats. Coaches will be responsible for monitoring bat compliance.
 - Athletic protective **cup MUST BE WORN** by all catchers.
 - No metal spikes are allowed.
 - Players must be in full uniform and wear their uniforms (including hats) correctly at all times. Shirts must be tucked in and hats must face forward (not backwards, sideways or inside-out).

Section 2 -- Game Limitations:

1. *Official Game:* Three and one-half (3 ½) innings completed with the home team ahead, or four (4) full innings with the home team behind will be considered a complete game in the event that a game is "called" due to darkness, weather, etc. Any inning played beyond this and not completed, the score will revert back to the previous full inning. Example: Score is tied after 4 complete innings. Visitors take the lead in the Top of the 5th. While home team is at bat in the bottom of the 5th, ump calls the game due to rain. Result: The 5th inning never happened. The score was tied after 4 full innings. 4 full innings is considered a complete game, so the game ends in a tie.

2. *Suspended Games*: If a game needs to be stopped due to weather or darkness before it becomes an official game, the game will restart at a later date. When the restarted game is played, it will start exactly where the game was stopped, including the player at-bat, baserunners, balls, strikes and outs. Example: Ump calls the game in the 2nd inning. This does not meet the official game standard, so the game is suspended and picked up from this exact point when the makeup is scheduled. Both coaches should note their scorebooks accordingly. It is the responsibility of the two managers to contact the Minors' Director and the HYBS VP of Baseball with the rescheduled date/time.
3. *Time Limit*: The only time limits are as follows: The top of a new inning shall not commence at 7:30 or later for games with no new game immediately following on the same field. When there is a following game on the same field, the top of a new inning shall not commence on or after 7:15pm. If there are differences among the coaches as to what time it is exactly, the umpire will be the arbiter of the time.
4. *Mercy Rule*: 5 runs per inning. No exception in the final inning. This rule will be altered for playoff purposes when coaches are called together to discuss playoff rules. Teams do not need to play the 6th inning if there is no hope of a comeback due to the mercy rule. However, the losing team will bat in the 5th no matter what. For example, after 4 full innings, the home team is ahead 11-0. The visitor could score, at most, 5 in the 5th and 5 in the 6th and therefore, has no chance of a comeback win. The game is NOT over at this point. The visitor will nevertheless bat in the 5th and score, at most, 5 runs, after which time the game shall be considered over. Coaches are under no circumstances to negotiate a different arrangement about how long a game will last. This level is about player repetitions and not about giving up because a win is unattainable.
5. *Protests*. There are no protests on umpires' interpretations of rules at this level. There will be a mechanism for protests at playoffs. However, because all minor league teams make the playoffs anyway and makeups/reschedules are difficult to arrange, protests of minor league games are not in the league's best interest. Whatever the umpire says, stands. However, coaches should always work together to help umpires on calls that involve our modified rules.

Section 3 -- Player Limitations & Substitutions:

1. *Late-Arriving Players*. Notwithstanding the forfeit rule (Section 1 – Paragraph 6), any players arriving late should adhere to the following with respect to the batting order:
 - Arrives **before** his/her spot in the lineup has been reached. Example: The player is shown in the lineup to be batting 7th. Player arrives while the 6th hitter is at-bat for the first time. That late-arriving player is immediately on deck and will take that 7th spot.
 - Arrives **after** his/her spot in the lineup has been reached. Assume the team consists of 11 players + the late arrival. Example: The player is scheduled in the lineup to be batting 7th. The player arrives while the 9th hitter is batting. This means the coach batted the 6th hitter, skipped the 7th hitter because s/he wasn't there, and followed with the 8th hitter and now 9th hitter. The 10th and 11th hitter will then bat and this late arrival will be slotted into the 12th spot and will remain in the 12th spot for the game's duration. **Under no circumstance will an out be declared for a scheduled hitter arriving late or not showing up at all.**

2. *Players Leaving the Game Early.* When a player needs to leave early, his/her coach will inform the other team and when that player's at-bat comes up again, it will be skipped. No out will be declared for that spot being skipped.
3. *Substitutions & Batting Order.* Free substitution -- players may be taken out or re-entered into a game at any time, except for pitcher, which has specific governing rules in Paragraph 6 of this Section. See also exception regarding injured players in Paragraph 4 of this Section. The batting order shall be continuous. All players present shall be in the batting order the entire game -- see exceptions in No. 1 and 2 of this section.

No player will sit twice until every player has sat once. By the end of the fourth inning, all players must have played a minimum of two (2) innings in the field. By the end of the sixth inning, all players must have played at least four (4) innings in the field. Each player must play a minimum of two (2) innings in the infield (pitcher and catcher count as infield). These requirements apply weather permitting. Coaches will exchange a player position plan & batting order sheet (template on HYBS website) prior to the start of each game. Knowing some games will not go the full 6 innings, the purpose of the player position plan & batting order sheet is to document that it was the intent of the coach to adhere to these playing time rules.

4. *Injured Players.* Injured, for the purposes of this rule, includes players who are feeling ill. If a player is injured while on offense and cannot continue, a courtesy runner shall be used. The choice of the courtesy runner is not up to the coaches but should instead be the last runner to have made an out, even if that means looking back to the previous inning. Because of the free substitution rule for fielders, players injured on defense can be substituted for by any player on the bench. Injured players need not play in the field and teams who have players who decline to play in the field due to injury are "absolved" from the playing time requirements. However, if an injured player cannot take his/her at bat when it comes up again in the order, that player cannot bat or play a field position for the rest of the game. Again, no outs are ever recorded for skipped batters.
5. *Catchers.* When the offense has two outs and one of the runners on base is its catcher for next inning, that catcher/runner should be removed for a courtesy runner, i.e. the last player to have made an out.
6. *Pitchers.* Any player may pitch up to two continuous innings in one game. An inning is defined as one pitch thrown from the pitcher's mound even as a warm up. Any player once removed from the pitcher's position cannot return as a pitcher. Pitching limits may be altered for playoff purposes when coaches are called together to discuss playoff rules.
7. *Bunts.* There is no bunting at this level. Accidental/swinging bunts are allowed, but true bunting technique will be reserved for the 60s level and higher. Players at the minor league level are encouraged to swing the bat.

Section 4 -- Modifications to Playing Rules:

1. No walks. Players cannot reach base via a base on balls. Umpires will call balls and strikes and when/if ball four is pitched, it will not count. At that time, a coach from the offense will take the ball on or slightly in front the pitcher's mound to take over pitching duties for the remainder of that at bat with the pitch count already in place. The defensive player playing in the pitcher's

position will take a defensive posture on either the 1B or 3B side of the mound, ready to field a ground ball or line drive. **The coach will continue to pitch until the batter strikes out or puts the ball in play.** The batter striking out or the batter putting the ball in play are the only two things that can result from a coach pitch. When coaches are pitching, there cannot be a hit batsman, a walk, or any attempts to steal a base (even on a wild pitch / passed ball).

The coach will not make defensive plays on batted balls and will do his/her best to avoid making contact with a batted ball or obstructing a fielder trying to make a play on a batted ball. If, however, a batted ball touches the coach/pitcher and/or the coach/pitcher accidentally obstructs a fielder, no call is made and the play's result stands.

2. Stealing bases. For the purposes of this rule, "stealing" includes advancing on wild pitches and/or passed balls.

Runners cannot leave their bases until the pitch crosses the plate. Violations for leaving early are discussed in Paragraph 5 of this Section.

Runners can steal 2B and 3B but not home. There is no set number of steals allowed per inning.

Steals are standalone, effectively "dead ball" plays. This means runners cannot advance because a throw gets away on a steal. For example, runners on 1B and 2B. Both steal. The catcher throws to 3B. The throw goes into LF. Both runners must hold at 2B and 3B and cannot advance further.

Runners cannot delay their steal. This means runners cannot begin to steal, stop to see if the throw goes awry, and then continue on. Once a runner stops his momentum after breaking for a base, s/he can no longer successfully steal and will have to go back to his original base once the play is over. However, if a runner violates this no-delay rule and still gets thrown out, the out stands. If, on a double steal (i.e., of 2B and 3B simultaneously) one runner violates the delay rule, both runners are guilty and must return to their original base unless either is thrown out on the play.

3. Catcher's Interference. There is no "CI" at this level. If it happens and the batter nevertheless reaches 1B safely, the CI never happened. If the batter doesn't reach 1B safely, it goes as a dead ball / no-pitch and the batter resumes the at-bat.
4. Pickoffs. If, after a pitch is made and a runner leads off a base, a pitcher or catcher attempts a pick-off on that runner, that runner has the right to attempt to advance one base.
5. Runners Leaving a Base Early. Runners cannot leave their bases until the pitch has crossed the plate. What follows are scenarios for when they do leave early, keeping in mind that if one runner leaves early, they ALL have left early.
 - On a stolen base attempt: If they leave early and get thrown out, the out stands. If they're safe on the steal, time is called and all runners return to the last base they occupied before the steal attempt.
 - On a batted ball: One or more runners leave early. The pitcher delivers the ball and the batter hits it. The runners can only advance as far as they're forced to by the batter's hit.

Example 1: Bases loaded. One or more runners leave early. Batter hits a double. The result of the play would be two runs score with runners on 2nd and 3rd.

Example 2: Runners on 1st and 3rd and either or both leave early. Batter gets a single. Result is bases loaded, no runs score.

Example 3: Runners on 1st and 2nd. Either or both leave early. Batter grounds out P to 1B. Runners return to 1B and 2B.

Example 4: Bases loaded. One or more runners leave early. Batter reaches safely on a ball hit in the infield. All runners including the batter-runner advance one base but the runner from 3rd is “erased” (but not declared out) and his run does not count.

For more details on this complicated but necessary rule, see “Cal Ripken Special Base Running Rule” in the “Protests and Rule Interpretations” section of the Cal Ripken Rule Book.

6. Wild Throws. Runners can attempt to advance one and only one additional base when a throwing error is made. Examples as follows:

- Nobody on base. Batter hits a ground ball to 3B, and third baseman throws wildly to 1B but the ball does not go out of play and is still “live”. The batter-runner may attempt to go to 2B. The fielder who retrieved the ball may attempt to get the batter-runner out at 2B. But in no case can that runner advance to 3B, even if the throw goes into the outfield. Alternatively, after the errant throw to first and the batter-runner trying for second, the fielder who retrieved the ball may attempt to get the ball back to the P on the mound. Whether he gets the ball back to the P successfully or even if it gets away from the P, the runner shall hold at 2B.
- Runners who are attempting to advance irrespective of throwing errors may do so. The one base rule applies only to runners who are clearly trying to advance because of the throwing error. Same example as above except there is a runner on 2B. Batter grounds to 3B and the third baseman throws wildly to 1B. If the runner from 2B doesn’t even break until the error at 1B is apparent, s/he cannot advance further than 3B. If however, that runner from 2B was breaking for 3B right off the batted ball or while the 3B was fielding the grounder and beginning to throw, then that runner’s “right” to try for one base off the error would extend to home, meaning s/he can touch 3B and try for home.
- Base advancement on balls that are thrown out of bounds become “dead” and the umpire will award bases accordingly.

7. Slide or Avoid. Runners do not need to slide but coaches should encourage them to do so and teach them how to do it properly. For the purposes of the rules, any runner who does not slide or attempt to avoid a tag and, in the umpires opinion, that lack of slide-or-avoid caused the runner to be safe, the umpire shall call ‘dead ball’, declare that runner out and place other runners where the umpire sees fit. Typical examples would be if the lack of slide-or-avoid caused a fielder to shy away from the tag, shy away from the throw, or cause the ball to be jarred out of a glove. Enforcement of this rule is entirely at the umpire’s discretion. Generally speaking, if the runner

doesn't slide or avoid but beats the throw to the bag, that runner should not be called out. "Avoid" means attempting to allude a tag (without committing a baseline violation).

No head first slides are allowed except going back to a bag. Violations are dead ball outs.

8. Defensive Shifting. No shifting of players is allowed. Prior to a pitch being delivered, players must position themselves in a spot on the field that makes reasonable sense for the position they've been assigned to. Infielders can play "in" but outfielders should not position themselves on the infield dirt area.

Section 5 – Postgame

1. *Field & Bench Maintenance*. Coach are responsible for cleaning up the bench areas, putting the bases away and taking care of the field as detailed in the section of these rules called, "Pre-Game & Post-Game Maintenance Duties for Managers & Coaches".
2. *Report Scores*. Home team is responsible for posting scores on the web site.
3. *Standings*. League standings will be based on 2 points for a win, 1 point for a tie, 0 points for loss. If there is a tie for a place in the standings, the tie breaker will be head-to-head between the teams; if still a tie, then runs against for the season; if still a tie, then run differential between the games played between the tied teams. A combination of the above items may need to apply if there are 3-way ties or more.
4. *Playoffs*. All teams make the playoffs. The playoff rules and format will be determined at a coaches meeting run by the Minors' Director and the HYBS VP of Baseball.

Addendum: Commonly Misunderstood Rules:

The purpose of this section is to provide coaches some guidance on items that are often seen at the minor league level but maybe not nearly as often at higher levels. Even the most experienced players and coaches often aren't aware that certain things they thought were true in the rules are actually just myths. These are actual rule book rules, not necessarily directly related to the HYBS exceptions for the minor league level.

- “The hands are part of the bat.” If a batter gets hit with a pitch on the hands that are gripping the bat, does it still count as a Hit-By-Pitch (HBP) with the award of first base, or is it just a foul ball? First, there is no such thing as “the hands are part of the bat.” The rules are far simpler than that. Only two questions need to be asked. Did the batter get hit with the pitch? And was the pitch otherwise a ball? If both are yes, the ball is dead and the batter gets first base. So, if the batter checked a swing and got hit off the fists, it's still an HBP. If the batter gets hit with a pitched ball but the pitch was a strike (either swinging or called) the ball is dead, runners cannot advance, and the pitch is called a strike with no HBP awarded.
- The pitcher delivers one in the dirt. The batter swings, makes contact, and hits the ball fair. What's the right call? Answer: Fair ball. No one doubts if the batter swings and misses, it's a strike. So, if the batter hits it fair off a bounce, it's fair. If the batter hits it foul off a bounce, it's foul. If the pitch hits the ground and then hits the batter, and the batter did not swing, then it's an HBP. In short, the pitch hitting the ground is meaningless. It's just like any pitch.
- Fair vs. Foul. A fly ball is hit down the right field line. The right-fielder's feet are in fair territory, the ball is coming down in foul territory. The ball hits off his glove and falls to the ground. Fair or Foul? Answer: Foul. Fair or foul is all about the position of the ball, not the position of the fielder. It's basically the opposite of the football rule for wide receivers where sideline catches are determined in bounds based on the feet and not the ball. In baseball, it's about the position of the ball.
- Two runners occupying the same base. This happens often during rundowns or some other odd play. Coaches often believe that when two runners occupy the same base, one of them is automatically out, yet they're usually not sure which one. The answer is neither one of them are *automatically* out. The trail runner is out, but only if tagged. For example, R3 is caught in a rundown between 3B and home. The runner on 2B, R2, advances to 3B during this rundown. R3 makes it safely back to 3B, so both R3 and R2 are standing on 3B at the same time. R2 is out if tagged, but not automatically.
- Base line violations, a.k.a. “out of the baseline”. Runners establish their own baseline. The baseline is not the direct line between each bag. It's the line between where they're running from and where they're running to. They're only “out of the baseline” if they deviate from that established line more than 3 feet in order to avoid a tag. If they're not avoiding a tag, they can run in a zig zag if they want to.
- Foul Ball vs. Foul Tip. The key things to remember are that foul balls are dead balls and runners cannot advance. Foul tips are the opposite. If a batter barely makes contact with a pitch that then goes back and directly into the catcher's glove, it's a foul tip and it's also a

pitch that runners can steal on because it's "live". If the catcher drops that same pitch, it's not a foul tip but rather a foul ball, i.e. dead, with no runner advancement allowed.