

2019 Bantam and Varsity Divisions Tournament Rules

Welcome to the 2019 end-of-season houseleague tournament. The following are the rules that will be in force during the tournament. All coaches must take time to become familiar with the rules.

We'll start with an important friendly reminder....even though these are the "playoffs", as coaches you need to refrain from challenging umpires on judgement calls such as balls/strikes and safe/out....if there is a situation in which you think an umpire missed seeing something, then in an appropriate manner you can ask the umpire to check with their umpiring partner to see if they saw something the first ump may have missed. If you feel an umpire has mis-interpreted a rule, then again in an appropriate manner you can inform them of that. Field supervisors will be on hand at each diamond to provide you with further clarification if you need it.

Let's keep everything on a friendly basis...you won't necessarily agree with every call the ump makes but you need to respect the call and move on. It is also important that as a coach you do what you can to ensure that the parents of your players aren't getting on the umps...there should be NO communication between the parents and the umps regarding calls on the field. If a parent really needs to make a point they can make it to you or the field supervisor.

Innings/Mercy

In the bantam and varsity divisions there will be a 4-run mercy rule in effect for all games. For the last inning, if the visitors (who bat in the top of the inning) are ahead in the game or tied, they can only score four runs (a regular mercy). If the visitors are behind they can score enough runs to go ahead by four. In other words, if they are losing by two, they can score six...if they're losing by four they can score eight, etc. In the bottom of the last inning the home team can score as many runs as they need to win the game. Throughout all innings, however, the three out rule is also in effect.

In terms of how many innings will be played in the round robin games, we want to strike a balance between completing the games in a timely fashion and providing as many opportunities as we can for all players to play as many innings as possible and get as many at bats as possible. **We will therefore try to play 5 innings games, but 4 inning games will be sufficient if necessary.** If everyone works to keep the games moving and players hustle on and off the field, I'm confident that we can play five innings most if not all games. No new inning will be started after one hour and thirty minutes from first pitch.

However, there will be a firm "stop" point for the game, which will be two hours after first pitch. At that time the game will end, and if the fifth inning wasn't completed the final score will be the score at the end of the fourth inning. We realize that this may create a situation in which one or both teams were not allowed to score as many runs in the last inning of the game as they could have if it had been called "last inning", but since no teams are eliminated based upon round robin standings we feel that this is an appropriate chance to take in order to provide more playing time opportunities for more players. If we said that we were playing strictly four innings and the bottom of the fourth didn't need to be played then if the visiting team had fourteen or fifteen players at the game (which we're hoping for) then some players would only play **ONCE** in the field and possibly only bat **ONCE**. We want to avoid those situations as much as possible.

Start Time

Games will begin at the start time listed on the schedule regardless of how many players are present. Should a team not be able to field a complete team at the scheduled start time, they will field all available players. Batting teams will bat available players. Automatic outs will not be called, but if a situation arises in which the next batter listed on the batting order is on base, the half-inning will immediately end and the opposing team will go up to bat. The only exception to this is if the next batter is on base running for the catcher with two outs and there is an on-deck batter available. In that case the player on base running for the catcher will go up to bat and the on-deck batter will run for the catcher.

Run Differential

Regardless of the result, the run differential after the last completed full inning which had the mercy rule in effect will be used for purposes of tie-breaking.

Standings/Seedings

In the bantam and varsity divisions, standings will be determined by the number of points obtained during the round-robin games. There will be 3 points awarded for a win and 1 point awarded for a tie. If two or more teams are tied after the round-robin portion of the tournament, the following tie breaking sequence will be used:

- 1) Head-to-Head;
- 2) Over-all run differential (the +/- after last completed full inning with the mercy rule in effect);
- 3) Total runs against (lower is better);
- 4) Coin toss.

Playoffs

In the bantam and varsity divisions, after the completion of the round robin there will be a 1st versus 4th semi-final game and a 2nd versus 3rd semi-final game, and then the championship game. All playoff games will be six innings in length.

Pitching & Catching

Pitchers may pitch a maximum of 2 innings per game...they do not need to be consecutive innings. One thrown pitch constitutes one inning. Should a player step on the rubber at the start of an inning, that player will be required to throw at least the first pitch of the inning. Prior to each half-inning the pitcher will be allowed 6 warm up pitches, during which the fielding players will be allowed warm up balls. When the umpire calls "balls in" warm up balls must be returned to the dugout. **Pitchers may be changed during an inning, but a player may not come off the bench to replace a pitcher.** A player already playing in that half-inning must take over for a pitcher that is being replaced. In these cases pitchers will be allowed 4 warm up pitches. Catchers can't catch more than 3 innings per game.

Balks

No warning will be issued on balks in bantam and midget.

Player Rotation/Positions

Prior to the start of each game, a player line-up with sweater numbers and names listed must be provided by the coach to the official scorekeeper, who will not be a coach from either team. All players will bat in the order as presented to the official scorekeeper prior to the start of each game.

All eligible players present at the game shall be listed on the team's line-up sheet. The expectation, as it was during the regular season, is that all players will play both in the infield and outfield during each game... ***we don't want to have the same player at first base or shortstop inning after inning.*** No player will be listed on the game line-up if he is unable to play a defensive position. All players listed on the line-up sheet will bat. Scorekeepers will be monitoring this during all games.

No player will sit out a second defensive inning until everyone else has sat out at least one (Player A's second inning sitting and Player B's first inning sitting can happen at the same time), and no player should sit out two consecutive defensive innings unless injured during that game. Any player leaving the field due to an injury must remain out of the game for at least a complete defensive inning, before re-entering the game in a defensive position. A player unable to take their turn at bat, after having been removed from the field due to an injury, shall be removed from the line-up and further play in the game (this is not an out nor is it considered batting out of turn). A batter or runner may not have a pinch runner unless injured during their turn as a batter or runner. Exception: catcher on base with 2 outs.

General

All players must wear their houseleague jersey and hat in order to play. In the Bantam Division there will be no metal spikes allowed on cleats. No jewelry shall be visible. Exception: Medical Bracelets.

Coaches or players warming up pitchers either on the field between innings or in the "bullpen" must wear a protective mask. The batter shall wear a protective helmet while on deck, at bat or running the bases. The helmet may not be removed until the batter is retired, has crossed home plate or the half inning has been completed. Should the batter/runner remove the helmet while the ball is in play, he/she will be declared out. There shall be only one on-deck batter at any time; additional players out of the dugout may result in automatic outs at the umpires' discretion.

The league representatives/field supervisors at each diamond have the final authority relating to any matter that requires a ruling or clarification.