

Somerville Baseball Inc. Rules of Play

Rookie Division (Updated April 2024)

The intent of these rules is to clarify rules specific to Somerville Baseball (SBI), including those town baseball programs participating with SBI. Games shall be governed by “The Standard Playing Rules” and “Cal Ripken” and modified as specified below. Matters of contention should be addressed solely for the purpose of better educating the players on the correct way to play the game of baseball.

All participants, players, coaches, managers, as well as parents, are required to read and sign the Code of Conduct prior to playing baseball. Each individual town should have their own Code of Conduct.

Leagues / Age Requirements

Leagues are divided by player age as of June of the current year. The date is consistent with age requirements for tournament play. If a player requests to “play up” one age level, approval from the appropriate league commissioner is required. The player must demonstrate skills necessary to compete in the league which they will be playing.

- Rookie League: Ages 7 and 8
- Minor League: Ages 9 and 10
- Major League: Ages 11 and 12

Playing Field

Games will be played on a field with 60 foot base paths. Coaches will pitch from a distance appropriate for the level of play. This distance is recommended to be 46’ from home plate. no closer than 40’. If field can not accommodate 46/60, the longest possible distance should be used.

Official Game

- A) Forfeit time will be 20 minutes after the scheduled start time.
- B) No full inning shall start after 1 hour and 45 minutes from start of game.
- C) Managers shall be aware of the time.
- D) There will be an eight (8) player minimum allowed before a forfeit is decided.

- E) When a team cannot conclude a game because an injury provides that team with less than eight (8) players, the game will be suspended and continued from that point at a future date.
- F) An official game shall consist of:
 - a. A full game consists of four innings. A game is considered official after three innings if stopped due to rain and/or darkness (2 ½ innings if home team is leading).
- G) All games that are suspended or rained out will be made up at the first available date. Managers must contact the appropriate league commissioner(s) to get approval of new schedule.
- H) Once a game has completed one full inning, and the game ends due to weather, darkness, etc., the game will be considered suspended, and scheduled for a later date, continuing from the moment the game was called.
- I) If a game has completed less than one full inning before being stopped, the game will start over completely when rescheduled.

Pitching

- In all Rookie League games, pitching will be a combination of kid and coach pitch. Machine pitch is also allowed if a home team has the equipment and both teams agree to use.
- Players will throw no more than three pitches per batter before coach takes over. No player shall pitch in more than one inning.
- All pitching (player or coach) must be done overhand.
- No walks or awarding first base when hit by a pitch.
- No strikes are called, but players can strike out after three missed swings.
- Coaches pitching or working machine should make every effort not to interfere with any hit ball or subsequent play by the defense, but if a hit ball does hit said coach, it remains a live ball.
- Use of catchers is optional, but encouraged if players show enthusiasm to try out the position.

Batting & Base Running

- A) Every player on a team bats the entire game. Batting order stays the same throughout the whole game, with late arriving players being inserted at the bottom of the line-up.
- B) All bats must be USA Approved and show the approval stamp. Barrel size should be either 2 1/4" or 2 5/8" with maximum of 31" in length
- C) Each half inning will consist of three (3) outs or the scoring of a maximum of five (5) runs. This rule applies to all innings except the inning deemed the last inning of the game, where the "Five Runs an Inning Rule" will be waived and the inning will be played to three (3) outs.

- D) The next inning starting after 7:35pm shall be the final inning of the day, thereby waiving the “Fine Runs an Inning Rule.”
- E) Coaches must agree prior to the top half of the inning that an inning will be the last.
- F) The manager or score keeper shall announce to the opposing team when the fifth run of the inning has scored. If there were any additional runs scored as a result of the continuation of the play, those runs will not count.
- G) Any player who over slides a base due to movement of the base and has reached the base safely will be safe unless the runner attempts to advance to the next base. If a moveable base is pushed away during a slide, the player is to remain where the base was and not chase after the base to be considered safe.
- H) Any base runner purposely running into a fielder will be ejected from the game.
- I) Walks, stealing, tagging up and bunting are not allowed.
- J) No runner may leave the base until the ball is hit.
- K) On any third strike (missed swing), the batter is out whether the catcher catches the ball or not.
- L) Base runner may only slide feet first in the base. Additionally, base runners must slide into any base (except 1st base) where a play is being made. Violation of this sliding rule will result in the base runner being called out. Runners may dive back to a base headfirst if he/she overran the bag and is trying to get back to the base.
- M) No infield fly rule will be called.
- N) No tagging up will be allowed on fly balls. If a fly ball (or line drive) is caught, and a base runner is off the base, a play can be made to get the runner out at the base he/she should be returning to. If the play to get this runner does not succeed, the runner returns and stays at the base and cannot tag up and proceed to the next base. If no play on the runner is attempted, the play is over and the base runners must return to the base they occupied. This rule does not allow for tagging up but does teach the runner they cannot run on a caught fly ball without consequence.

Defensive Positions

- Ten (10) defensive players will be allowed in the field. The tenth defensive player must be in the outfield, where the positions are to be right field, right center, left center, and left field. The extra outfielder should NOT be positioned as a short fielder). Extra players will be on the bench.
- Two coaches may be in the field to assist players while their team is on the field. These coaches must make reasonable efforts not to interfere with any play. No more than two coaches should be on the field at any given time.

Ground Rules & Live/Dead Ball Play

- Ground rules are governed by field conditions and layout and must be discussed by both managers prior to the game.
- Players may advance one base on an overthrow, but not on a throwback from the catcher to the pitcher.
- A play is over when the ball is dead. At this time, base runners will stop at the base they are advancing to provided they advanced at least half way to that base. This is at the coach/umpire's discretion.
- On a ball hit to the outfield, the batter and the base runners can advance until the ball comes into the infield area– at which time, if there is no immediate play on a base runner, the ball will be declared dead and play will stop.
- On a ground ball to the infield, the ball is dead when an out is recorded. If no play is attempted, the ball must be returned to the pitcher/coach in the area of the pitchers mound, at which time the ball is dead.
- A legitimate attempt to get the ball to the pitcher is sufficient to end the play.

Substitution / Equal Play

- Every player must meet the minimum playing time requirements. Substitutions are the manager's responsibility. Violation of this rule will result in an automatic forfeit, which will be strictly enforced by the league commissioner.
- Defensive substitutions should be rotated into the game every time the team takes the field.
- No player may sit two (2) consecutive innings on the bench.

Non-Roster Players / Fill-In Players

- If a team needs to add a player to their roster, they must first receive approval from the league commissioner, and all teams will be notified of the roster change.
- Teams may "borrow" players from other teams within the same league level in order to field a full team for play. Players may not "play down" from a higher level. Players from a lower level are permitted to "play up" in order to field a team.
- Not following these rules for non-roster players will result in a forfeit.

Postponements / Make-Up Games

- The league must be notified of all cancellations, postponements, and rescheduled games.
- All postponed games should be made up at the earliest available date. Do not wait until the end of the season.
- Managers must show an attempt to reschedule games at the earliest available date, with every possible attempt to be made up within 15 days of the postponement, or both teams will forfeit. If one manager is not making a reasonable attempt to reschedule, their team will be forced to forfeit.
- Home managers are to notify visiting managers from other towns of postponements prior to 5:00pm, or a reasonable time. If weather is uncertain, assume there will be a game.

Miscellaneous

- All non-players in the dugout must be certified and approved coaches.
- Home team is to provide two (2) game balls. Level 5 baseballs should be used in Rookie League.
- No jewelry shall be worn by players unless deemed a religious item, at which time the jewelry must be tapped to players body or uniform.
- All players must wear their team jersey in order to play.
- Catchers must wear protective gear, including neck and groin protectors.
- No metal spikes are allowed. Any player wearing metal spikes will be asked to remove them. If the player does not comply, they will be ejected from the game.
- If a player is ejected from the game, their spot in the lineup remains empty and is recorded as an automatic out when that spot is due up to bat.
- All male players must wear a protective cup in order to play.
- Harassment of any player or coach by either team shall be cause for ejection. Taunting (deliberate distraction, belittling opponent) shall not be allowed. Clapping while on the bases (as a distraction to the fielders) will not be permitted.
- No umpires will be used at rookie level. During playoffs, umpires may be used for bases only.
- Playoff seeds will be determined by regular season results.

Game Results – Score Reporting

- Winning team is responsible for reporting scores to League Commissioner, Gregg Snyder, at greggsnyderjr@gmail.com or through text at 908-210-6252. Please report scores no later than the morning following the game being completed.