

Rookie League Rulebook

BREMEN YOUTH BASEBALL



BREMEN
Youth Baseball

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1) General

- a) This rulebook supersedes all other baseball rulebooks.
- b) All contested gameplay related rules not explicitly expressed in this rulebook shall be governed by Official Baseball Rules: 2021 Edition, found here: <https://img.mlbstatic.com/mlb-images/image/upload/mlb/atcizj9j7wrgvsm8wnjq.pdf>
- c) All in-game calls use umpire discretion. Umpires may call time to refer to the rulebook at any time. Umpire decisions are final.
- d) All discrepancies and questions regarding the rulebook shall be presented, after a game, in writing to one or more members of the Bremen Youth Baseball Board, to be discussed at the next board meeting.
- e) The rulebook may be updated at any time during the season by a Majority vote of the Bremen Youth Baseball Board.
- f) There shall be no mandatory Sunday practices.
- g) Coaches, players and/or spectators will not be allowed behind the batting screen.
- h) Game Time Limit is 1 hour 15 minutes
 - i) If there is a tie after 1 hour 15 minutes, the game will end in a tie.
 - ii) Games with a scheduled start of 5:30 P.M. shall start promptly at 5:30 P.M. with no inning starting after 6:45 PM (no exceptions) **(NEW 2026)**
 - iii) Games with a scheduled start of 7:00 P.M. shall start promptly at 7:00 P.M. with no inning starting after 8:15 P.M. (no exceptions) **(NEW 2026)**
- i) Only coaches shall be permitted out of the dugout area during a game.
 - i) Only one (1) on-deck batter shall be permitted.
 - ii) All offensive players must wear helmets while on the playing field.
 - iii) No warm-up swings will be allowed outside the playing area.
- j) Coaches on the field during the game
 - i) Only two offensive coaches are allowed on the field (1st base and 3rd base)
 - ii) Defensive coaches should be stationed in right-center and left-center
 - iii) Coaches helping catchers (if necessary).
- k) The umpire and/or any board member can stop a game at any time if they feel the game is getting out of control.
- l) A game shall be considered complete if at minimum four full innings have been played, or three and a half innings if home team is winning
 - i) If one complete inning is not played, then the game will be rescheduled and the game will start over.
 - ii) Any game stopped, for any reason, prior to the minimum will result in re-scheduled game – starting where the game was stopped, with the exception if one complete inning is not played then the game will be started over.
- m) No coach, player, or parent shall smoke, chew tobacco, or have any alcohol or illegal drugs on their person. This is to include games, practices, umpiring, while using the batting cages or while standing at the fence surrounding the playing/practice fields.
- n) All players, coaches and parents will be required to sign a Code of Conduct policy. If one is not signed and on file, the child will not be allowed to participate in any games until one is signed and on file with the Bremen Little League board.

- o) Background Check for Coaches: To ensure a safe environment for all participants, Bremen Youth Baseball (Rookie, Minor, Major, and U14) requires an annual background check for all coaches. All prospective coaches/volunteers must agree to and pass a background check before the start of our season.
 - i) Self Reporting: All coaches/volunteers also agree to self report any criminal convictions or charges to the league within 48 hours.
 - ii) All background check information will be held in confidentiality.

2) Weather

- a) Games will be halted for 30 minutes after a visible lightning bolt. If another lightning bolt appears within those 30 minutes, the 30-minute delay re-starts. Three lightning bolts within a one-hour time frame suspends or ends the game.
- b) Stoppage of play due to weather shall be at the discretion of the Home Plate Umpire and/or Board Member.
 - i) A complete game shall be considered complete if four complete innings have been played – otherwise the game shall be rescheduled.
 - ii) If one complete inning is not played, then the game will be played over.
 - iii) A complete game is a minimum of four innings, or 3 and ½ innings if the home team is winning, in the event of inclement weather at the discretion of home plate umpire or of any board member. Any game stopped prior to the minimum will result in a re-scheduled game – starting where the game ended, with the exception if one (1) complete inning is not played then the game will be played over, starting all over.

3) Eligibility

a) Players

- i) Eligibility shall be determined on a calendar year basis as follows:
- ii) Rookie League players must be six (6) by May 1st, and not nine (9) by May 1st.
- iii) Eligibility is subject to change on a case-to-case basis, or on a year-to-year basis upon approval of the Little League board of directors.
- iv) Any player eligible to play can play any position.

b) Batboys

- i) A batboy must be six years old.
- ii) A Rookie League coach must have parent's permission for a batboy to play on the team.
- iii) A batboy cannot play if there is a player on that team's roster on the bench.
- iv) Batboys shall play on a game-by-game basis and are not tied to a specific team for an entire season.
- v) Batboys are required to play an outfield position only and they must bat last in the batting order.

4) Game Play

a) General

- i) All calls are subject to the umpire's discretion.

- ii) Any live ball that bounces over or rolls under the fence shall be declared a ground rule double.
- iii) Any ball that clears the outfield fence on the fly, hits the top of the fence railing, and carries over the fence, or hits the light pole above the fence line shall be declared a home run.
- iv) If the catcher drops the ball on the third strike, then the batter shall be called out.
- v) Lineup cards will be given to the opposing coach five (5) minutes prior to game time.
- vi) All Rookie League players shall bat while fielding ten players, with the extra player being played in the outfield.
- vii) All Rookie League players must play a minimum of two (2) consecutive innings in the field, otherwise a forfeit shall be declared.
- viii) No intentional bunting / or half-swing (at the umpire's discretion) is permitted in the Rookie League.
- ix) Outfield positions must play in the grass outfield area.
 - (1) Outfielders must start at least 5 feet from the dirt. (New 2026)
- x) Only six infielders may be utilized.
- xi) Infielders may be no closer to the plate than the rubber is to the plate (45 ft.)
- xii) A ball striking the pitching machine shall be declared a dead ball with the batter being awarded first base. All base runners shall move forward one base.
 - (1) A thrown ball that hits the machine will be ruled as a dead ball as if the ball went into dead ball territory.
- xiii) Any player who shows up late must be placed at the end of the batting order.

b) Baserunning

i) General

- (1) The responsibility to avoid contact lies with the runner.
- (2) Infield Hits: an infield hit is called if they are fielded by an infielder, and the ball does not enter the outfield grass.
 - (a) Batters and runners will be allowed a maximum of 1 base on an infield hit for batter and runners, and 1 extra base for an over-throw or error to any base.
 - (b) Runners advance at their own risk.
- (3) Outfield Hits: when a batted ball enters the outfield grass or is fielded by any outfielder, it is considered an "outfield hit".
 - (a) Runners may advance as many bases as they wish at their own risk, or until the ball is controlled by the pitcher with one foot in the circle/pitcher's mound. (NEW 2026)
 - (i) Ex. If an outfielder fields a ball in the infield, it will be called an outfield hit, and runners can advance until a pitcher has one foot in the circle/pitcher's mound.
 - (b) Runners past half-way get the next base, if not, they are to return to the previous base.
- (4) A runner must slide into every base, except first, if play is being made at that base. If the runner does not slide, the runner is called out.
 - (a) Ex) the ball is thrown to a base that a runner is attempting to take.
 - (b) Ex) a fielder is running toward a base with the intent of getting the runner out.
- (5) Any runner purposely interfering with an attempted play on the ball by the fielder will be ruled out and a dead ball shall be declared.

- (6) If a batted ball hits the runner, the runner is called out. Any other runners and batter may still advance at their own risk.
- (7) Headfirst slides are not allowed except when a runner is returning to a base. If a headfirst slide occurs other than on a return to a base, then the runner is to be called out.
- (8) Leading off is only allowed after the ball has left the catcher's box on a wild pitch or passed ball. If a runner leads off prior to the ball crossing home plate.
 - (a) The baserunner will first be warned if they are leading off.
 - (b) On the second warning, the umpire shall declare an out and a dead ball called with all runners returning to their original base if a runner leaves the base prior to the ball crossing home plate.
- (9) Coaches cannot touch a runner on base to help him either advance or return to his base unless time is called.
 - (a) If contact occurs then a dead ball shall be declared, the base runner shall be declared out with other runners returning to their last base. Does not include incidental contact.
- (10) No stealing shall be allowed.

c) Pitching Machine

- i) A pitching machine shall be used in the Rookie League for all six innings.
- ii) A pitching machine can only be adjusted at the top of an inning if both coaches agree to it.
- iii) The umpire will count pitches.
 - (1) Each swing will be counted a "strike"
 - (2) Each non-swing will be considered a "ball"
 - (3) Each player will receive 3 "strikes" or 5 pitches.
 - (4) A foul ball on the 5th pitch will result in a 6th pitch, etc.
 - (5) If a batter does not hit after 5 pitches, they are out.
- iv) The player at the pitcher position must have at least one foot in the dirt and be even with or behind the pitcher's rubber when the ball is fed into the machine.

d) Mercy Rule

- i) 7 runs per inning limit - except the 5th and 6th innings which have a 10 run limit (NEW 2026)
- ii) A ten-run rule will be in place after four complete innings.
 - (1) Once a game is called due to the ten-run rule the game will be considered final.

e) Infield Fly

- i) The infield fly rule will NOT apply to Rookie League play. (NEW 2026)
- ii) On any infield fly, runners may advance at their own peril.

5) Rosters

- a) If a Coach disciplines a player, the player must be disciplined both for batting and fielding.
- b) No player shall be permitted to play if they are wearing a "plaster" (or like substance) cast without exception.
- c) Jewelry is not permitted to be worn by any player during the game. Earrings must be protected with a covering (i.e., Band-Aid, etc).

- d) Courtesy runners may be used for the catcher when the catcher is a base runner with two outs.
 - i) The courtesy runner must be a player on the team's roster who has made the last out.
- e) If a player is hurt and unable to continue to play, a batboy may enter in the hurt player's position only if there is not a player from the team's roster on the bench. If no batboy or player is available, then the batting rotation shall have the hurt player's position deleted (not out). If the player can return to the game, they must re-enter in for the same person. If a runner is hurt, then the player who made the last out before him must take his place.
- f) All Rookie League players shall play all innings both batting and fielding.
- g) Teams must field a minimum of eight players to start a game otherwise a forfeit shall be declared.
 - i) In years when teams have smaller rosters the minimum number of players to start a game can be amended as necessary at the discretion of the board.

6) Umpires

- a) Rookie coaches have to umpire other Rookie games and will be scheduled by the Board President (if necessary)

7) Equipment

a) General

- i) No metal cleats permitted for the safety of others.
- ii) All players must have their shirt tucked in and wear a hat during the game.
- iii) All equipment must be kept in the dugout or in the bat rack.

b) Catchers

- i) Catchers must wear a catcher's mitt, catcher's helmet, catcher's mask and protective cup at all games and practices.
 - (1) Each team will be provided one protective cup, but it is recommended that each catcher have his or her own.
 - (2) All players must wear a catcher's mask while warming up the pitcher.
 - (3) Coaches can warm up a pitcher without a mask.
 - (4) Each team MUST have the catcher position filled by a player. **(NEW 2026)**

c) Bats

- i) All metal bats must be stamped or printed with **USA Baseball** logo.
- ii) All wood bats must be approved by the board prior to the opening day Jamboree.

d) Field Prep and Maintenance

- i) Setup Responsibilities
 - (1) The Home team of the first game is responsible for chalking the field, bringing out the pitching machine, and installing the bases.
 - (2) Second Game Responsibilities (if necessary)
 - (a) The Home team is responsible for rechalk the lines (if necessary)
- ii) Conclusion of the last game of the night

- (1) The AWAY team's responsibility is to put away the bases, raking the field, and pitcher's mound. Do not forget to replace the plugs in the base holes. The bases belong in the appropriate field's tower.
- iii) Trash Removal
 - (1) Each team is responsible for taking the trash out of their individual dugouts after each game.

8) Sportsmanship

- a) Throwing a bat or helmet or abusing equipment shall not be tolerated.
- b) Digging holes in the playing surface with spikes shall not be tolerated.
- c) Unsportsmanlike conduct shall not be tolerated by a player, coach, or fan.
- d) Cursing or abusive language shall not be tolerated by a player, coach, or fan.
- e) Arguing strikes or balls shall not be tolerated by a player, coach, or fan.
- f) The Home Plate Umpire and/or Board Member shall have the right to remove a player, coach, or fan from the park for violation of items one (1) through five (5) listed above.
- g) No chatter shall be allowed during the game. (i.e., "hey, batter-batter...swing...". In the event chatter occurs a warning shall be given, with the second occurrence resulting in a dead ball being called and the offending person being ejected from the game.
- h) A Coach may discipline a player by keeping him out of the game. This must be reported to the opposing Coach and Home Plate Umpire along with the reason and number of innings the player is going to be disciplined. The disciplined player must be listed on the line-up batting order along with the number of innings he will not be playing.