

## 2025 WCBA Majors Gold/Silver Rules

- 1:50 Time limit, no inning will begin after that
- No roster restrictions. Teams can pick up players only when unable to field a complete team of 9.
- Umpires have option of calling behind the pitcher on the field
- Can start and play with 8 players
- All other WCBA rules for the Gold Division applies

### Tie Game Procedures

If the game is tied after regulation innings has expired, a Tie-Breaker shall be put into effect. The game shall be played until a winner is determined.

#### Tie-breaker Rule:

The last player to have an official at bat in the previous inning begins at second base to start the new inning with no outs, balls or strikes. Once an inning begins, it will be completed.

### Mercy Rules

12 runs after four innings, or three-and-one-half innings (if the home team is ahead). 10 runs after five innings, or four-and-one-half innings (if the home team is ahead). *If the home team has run-ruled the visiting team, the game is declared complete, and the winner is named.*

### Speed Up Rules

A defensive team may intentionally walk a batter by requesting the umpire to award the batter 1st base. Teams must hustle on and off the field between each inning. Pitchers get 6 warm up pitches between innings or 1 minute whichever comes first.

### Courtesy Runners for Pitchers and Catchers

Courtesy Runners for pitchers and catchers is highly recommended but is not mandatory. Subs will be used first as courtesy runners. In the event a team doesn't have a sub then the batter who recorded the last out must be used as a courtesy runner. If a player is removed from the lineup he can be used as a courtesy runner. A player may be used as a courtesy runner only one time per inning.

#### **If a player is ejected from a game for malicious contact or any other unsportsmanlike act, the following penalties will apply:**

If roster batting, the ejected player's position in the lineup shall be declared an out. If roster matching, the ejected player may be replaced by an eligible substitute. If there are no eligible substitutes available, the position in the order shall be declared out.

### Forfeiture of Game Rules

Forfeiture of game is when a team cannot field enough players to satisfy the minimum required players as defined in these rules (Rule 10). During the regular season there will be a 15-minute grace period to begin the game (or an extended time frame as agreed upon by *both* coaches). After the grace period the game will be considered a forfeit, the winning team will be awarded a 6-0 victory. During league tournament play, no grace period will be allowed.

### Unsportsmanlike Conduct

A. Once the teams are on the field, the umpire is in charge until the game is over. The umpire is responsible for keeping the game moving and beginning and ending on time. We expect umpires to use their best judgment and to be reasonable in this, but we also expect the cooperation of coaches, parents, and players.

B. Restrain yourself, your players, and your spectators. Umpires have authority from the league director to enforce rules and to eject any coach, player, or spectator from that game for objecting to a decision or for unsportsmanlike language or behavior. One warning will be given; the next incident that occurs by a player, spectator, or coach, **the head coach will be ejected**. Any further incidents will result in immediate forfeit and the game will be scored a 6-0 win for the opposing team. Once ejected you must leave the facility and the game will not proceed until the spectator, coach or player has exited. The ejected parties will not be allowed to participate in any further games that day but may return the following day. Two ejections will result in a ban from the remainder of the season including tournament play.

No umpire wants to cause a "scene" by exercising this ultimate authority. Don't put an umpire's back to the wall. Coaches are responsible for their team's conduct, and their fans' observance of rules, and respect for the umpire's authority.

C. Judgment calls by an umpire are not grounds for a protest. Only the interpretation of the rules may be protested. The manager must inform the umpire before the next play begins that the game is being played under protest and the umpire shall inform the opposing coach. Once the protest has been made the umpire will summon the league commissioner to the field (or contacted via cell phone) and the protest will be ruled on immediately by the tournament director.

E. Only the head coach may confer with umpires.

### **Player Eligibility Guidelines (Travel Ball Player)**

**Travel Ball Player** - is defined as a player who plays outside his home school community team on a traveling baseball team composed of players from several different communities and plays in a league and or tournaments. For our purposes, the term travel ball player term is also extended to any player who plays in a league outside the WCBA, for example, a player registered in the WCBA and plays in the Wooster baseball league or in SSBL....this player would be considered a travel ball player as well.

**WCBA ENCOURAGES** Travel Ball Players to play in our league and are welcomed to play! Any travel ball player who plays less than 50% of **their rostered teams** regular season scheduled games **IS NOT** eligible for postseason play in the WCBA end of season tournament. That player or players **MUST** play at least 50% of **their rostered teams** regular season games for postseason play eligibility. If a coach is challenged on a players eligibility, **CLEAR** proof of that player(s) eligibility must be presented to the league commissioner.

- A r eligibility form will be sent to each community commissioner.
- Forms will then be forwarded to each team with a travel ball player, the head coach will then fill out during the season.
- Once the season is over, and before the start of tournament play, forward the completed form to your community commissioner.

### **Post Season (tournament) Eligibility Guidelines/Umpires**

See above concerning any travel ball players, if that player meets the guidelines, they are eligible for postseason play. The remaining spots on your post season roster **MUST** be filled with your original regular season roster. The only additions can **ONLY** come from a lower league..... **Example:** Minor team needs a player, they must only take a coach pitch player.... They **CANNOT** pull a kid from a Minor roster who was knocked out of the tournament, nor can they take an age appropriate player who has played all season up, in the Majors for example. A Major team **CANNOT** pull a kid from another Major team, or an age appropriate player from the Hot Stove league.....**YOU MUST PULL PLAYERS FROM BELOW, NOT ABOVE!** If a player is "playing up"....**Example:** Minor age appropriate player decides to roster on a Majors team, Silver or Gold, that player CANNOT play down in the Minor tournament at the end of the season, they are however available for use as needed during the regular season **ONLY** (must be the 9<sup>th</sup> player to be used). The only time a Hot Stove player who is age appropriate, can play down in a Majors (or

Minors) game (regular season only, must be the 9<sup>th</sup> player), is for the **Major Gold** team ONLY!!!. They are **NOT** eligible for the end of season tournament.

During Tournament play no family member or member of the home baseball organization will be permitted to umpire as the plate or field umpire.

### **Player Team/Community Guidelines**

All players are encouraged to play for the community that they attend school in. There are some exceptions where a player could choose to play for another community. There are no rules that prohibit this. However, a player **CANNOT** sign up in one community, for one league and play for another community in another division or the same, in the WCBA. **Example:** an age appropriate player signs up in his own community for Coach Pitch, and the signs up in another community for Minor or Majors. This player will be found to be **INELIGIBLE** for **BOTH!!**, and both teams will forfeit all games played to that point, **NO EXCEPTIONS!!!!**

### **General Rules**

1. The umpire is in charge at all times.
2. No coaches or players are permitted behind the backstop at any time during a game. The umpire may clear this area if necessary. **Parents**, NO setting up chairs directly behind backstop, failure to move upon coaches or umpires request, game will be ruled a forfeit, losing team will be decided by parents refusing to comply. Seating must be placed at a reasonable distance behind the backstop. Bleachers or permanent seating is exempt from this rule, although the umpire reserves the right to clear any bleacher/seating directly behind home plate per the umpire's discretion.
3. Players acting in an unsportsmanlike manner may be ejected from the game at the umpire's discretion. Ejection from the game will carry a TWO game suspension, two games will be the games immediately following ejection (including tournament).
4. Players, coaches or spectators removed from the game by ejection shall not remain in the area of the playing field. Ejection from the game will carry a TWO game suspension, two games will be the games immediately following ejection (including tournament).
5. Big barrel bats are allowed; All bats must have either USSA, ASA, USA certification. (Does not NEED to be USA certification)
6. Players and parents may encourage their teammates and cheer in a positive way but NO chatter is allowed. Chatter is the organized chant or cheer that directly addresses the opposing team, pitcher or batter specifically, with malicious intent on disrupting the play of the opponent. This rule **MUST** be extended to the parents as well. Once umpires warn a team about chatter, the warning is automatically extended to the parents. Failure to comply will be automatic forfeiture.
7. There will be no age limits (any age related disputes will be handled by the WCBA commissioner), only limitations will be based upon the grade obtained prior to the season beginning. See Gold/Silver guidelines.
8. Metal cleats are not permitted.
9. Teams must roster bat to the equal of the team with the fewest number of players (Gold and Silver). Every other player on the roster must play a minimum of 2 innings in the field and bat at least once per game (Silver Only – No Rule for Gold). Penalty-Forfeit of game. You can roster bat your entire team if you choose. Coaches: keep in mind the mercy rule, all players must get the minimal playing time regardless of the amount of innings the game goes. Rosters are locked once season begins. If players are required to fill in for regular season or tournament games, they must be pulled up from an active 10u roster; players must be on team (10u team) roster before the season begins.

10. Teams shall field a maximum of 9 players and a minimum of 7 players. If more than players are available; all must play as defined in rule 9.

11. If a player is ejected from a game and only 6 players remain, the game is forfeited. If a player is injured and only 6 remain, the game continues. A team may start a game with a minimum of 7 players and add players later if they show up. An out will not be taken for the missing players in this case.

### **Pitches**

12. A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 9 outs in a game.

13. Only the starting pitcher may re-enter in the same game.

14. Only 2 visits by a coach to a pitcher will be allowed per inning. Upon the second visit the pitcher must be removed.

15. A pitcher who hits 2 batters in an inning must be removed for the remainder of the inning. The pitcher may be re-entered in the subsequent inning only if he was the starting pitcher.

17. Any pitcher who hits a total of 3 batters must be pulled for the remainder of the game and cannot re-enter.

### **Base Running**

18. Leading off: There will be a chalk/hash line 12ft. off each base. The runner's feet shall not cross this line while taking his lead off. Runner may advance to the next base once the ball has crossed home plate if the pitcher is in the stretch. If the pitcher goes from the windup with runners on base, the runner can go on first movement of the pitcher. Silver Only. Stealing in Gold is at the runner's discretion (No Line).

19. The base runner will be called out if he crosses the chalk line before the ball crosses home plate if the pitcher is in the stretch. Silver Only.

20. A runner is out when.... The runner does not slide, or attempt to get around a fielder, who has the ball and is waiting to make a tag. There is no "Must Slide Rule". Depending on the severity or intent of the contact the player may be ejected, this is at the umpire's discretion.

### **Game Play**

21. Games will consist of 6 innings. There will be a time limit of 1 hour and 50 minutes for all major silver regular season games only (does not apply to tournament games or major gold). Game time limit can be dismissed if both coaches agree prior to the start of the game. If there is a game following a Major's game (8:00 for example), the games MUST have the time limit of 1 Hour and 50 Minutes. Regular season games only, will not apply to tournament games. Time limit will begin when the home team takes the field. Start time will be announced by the umpire and kept by the umpire and agreed upon by both team managers before the start of the game. No full inning will begin after the time limit is up, if the home team is winning the bottom half of the inning does not need to be played. If the game is tied, regardless of the inning, the tie breaker rules will be followed until games completion, with no time limit.

22. A team may score no more than 5 runs in any given inning. When the 5 run total is reached, the inning will end and the opposing team will resume batting.

The 5 run rule will be suspended in the 6<sup>th</sup> inning. A team will not be limited to a run limit in either the top or bottom of the 6th inning, or any extra innings. This rule will be disregarded in a game that is over the time limit as described in Rule 23, including games that result in a tie.

23. The game is considered official after 5 innings or the home team is ahead after 4 1/2 innings have been played.

24. The Infield fly Rule will be applied.

25. No SLAP bunts are allowed, Slap bunts will result in a game ejection (slap bunt is a swinging motion of the bat in a bunt position). Fake bunts are allowed. If a batter shows bunt, he is prohibited from pulling back and swinging during that pitch. Taking a full swing after showing bunt will result in an ejection for that game only.

26. Batter can advance on a dropped third strike.

27. There will be a 15-minute grace period on all WCBA games. If a team cannot play after the grace period, the game will be ruled a forfeit, including tournament games. Games must start at scheduled times, unless mutually agreed upon by both coaches.

**See attached for dropped third strike and infield fly rule definitions.**

**Let's not lose focus of why we are here. We are here for the children and let's set the example accordingly. Sportsmanship is a must for all players, coaches and parents!**

### **Dropped Third Strike**

#### **When does it matter?**

A dropped third strike only matters when first base is unoccupied OR there are two outs. If there is a runner on first base and less than two outs, then a dropped third strike doesn't matter and the batter is out.

#### **What can the batter Do?**

Once a batter either looks at strike three or swings and misses at strike three and the ball is either not caught or dropped by the catcher, the batter becomes a runner and can attempt to make it to first base before either being tagged by the catcher or thrown out at first base.

#### **What if the pitch bounces?**

99.99% of the time it is not a legal catch and the catcher (even if he fields the bounced pitch cleanly) must tag out the runner or throw him out at first base. Rule 6.05 specifies that a batter is out when a third strike is **legally caught** by the catcher and goes on to state that this must occur **before the ball hits the ground**.

0.01% of the time (and no these are not official calculations) the bounced pitch that is fielded by the catcher **would be** considered a legal catch. This can happen if the hitter swings and fouls off the pitch into the catcher's glove after the pitch has bounced. It is considered a legal catch at that point and the batter is out. What if the runner at first is stealing?

If there are less than two outs, it doesn't matter. Even on an attempted steal, first base is considered occupied and the batter is out.

#### **What happens when there are two outs?**

When there are two outs the same rule applies with the addition that first base can be occupied. In this situation a force play can be created on other bases in addition to either tagging out the batter or throwing him out at first.

Example: Bases loaded, two outs. Catcher drops the third strike. A force play has now been created at all bases as all runners must try to advance. Catcher can simply step on home plate for the force at home and third out. He doesn't have to make the out on the batter.

#### **What if a runner crosses the plate before the batter is thrown out at first or tagged?**

The run does not count. Example: Runner on third, two outs. Catcher drops the third strike, while he is picking it up and throwing to first, the runner from third crosses home plate. As long as the catcher throws out the runner at first, the run doesn't count. The force play at first is the same as if a ground ball was hit to another infielder. The run doesn't count.

### **Infield Fly Rule**

The infield fly rule always seems to be a point of confusion for players, coaches, and parents watching a game. The purpose of the infield fly rule is to prevent a defensive team from purposely dropping or not catching an infield fly with the intention of trying to turn a double play.

#### **Why we need the infield fly rule**

If there was no infield fly rule, the following could happen: Runners are on first and second with less than 2 outs. Pop fly is hit to the third baseman. He intentionally drops the fly ball, picks it up, touches third and then throws to second for a double play. It's an easy double play because both runners are tagging up on their bases expecting the ball to be caught.

### **When can the infield fly rule be called?**

- Less than 2 outs. Its purpose is to prevent a double play.
- Runner on first and second, or bases loaded. (There must to be a force at third base)

### **So where's the confusion?**

As usual, the confusion is in the details and the combination of things that can happen. One point of confusion is that many people mistakenly think that the infield fly rule applies when there is only a runner on first base. This isn't the case. When there is no force play at home or third, the only way to turn a double play, by intentionally dropping the ball, is if the batter doesn't run to first base. In this case the infield fly rule doesn't apply and the defensive team could turn a double play. I don't think anyone will feel bad for the batter in this scenario.

So now that we know the game situation that the infield fly rule can be called, let's move on to the call itself. The main thing to remember is that the infield fly rule is a judgment call by the umpire. If the umpire determines that a player can make the catch with ordinary effort, then he/she can apply the rule. After the ball is hit in the air, you should hear the umpire yell, "Infield fly, batter is out." If you don't hear the umpire yell that, then assume the rule doesn't apply. The rule is written to give the umpire the ability to determine whether to apply the rule or not. Here is an example when the rule may not be applied by the umpire. Runners on first and second. The third baseman charges toward home on a bunt coverage. The batter swings away and pops the ball up by third base. The umpire determines that the ball cannot be caught with ordinary effort, so he says nothing. The infield fly rule is not applied and the third baseman can pick the ball off the ground (if he missed it) and touch third base for a force out if the runner hasn't made it to third yet. Make sure you and your players don't assume that the infield fly rule is automatically enforced based on the situation. It is still a judgment call by the umpire.

Another point of confusion (and this is confusing) has to do with the ball being fair or foul. For example, you could have the umpire call out "Infield fly, batter is out.", and then not have the batter be out. How can that happen? The infield fly rule only applies to a fair ball. So let's say a pop up is hit down the third base line. The umpire makes his call and then the ball drifts into foul territory. Whether the ball is caught or not, the infield fly rule no longer applies. So, if the ball is dropped by the third baseman in foul territory, it's simply a foul ball and the batter is still up. In this case, umpires are taught to yell, "Infield fly if fair". The umpire may mistakenly make the first call and just because he called the batter out, doesn't mean he is out in this situation. The correct call is simply a foul ball.

A similar situation can happen if the ball hits in fair territory (before the bases) and then rolls foul (before being touched by a defensive player). You might see this on a pop-up to the catcher or pitcher. The ball is missed and the backspin takes the ball foul after it is missed. In this case just like the last, the infield fly rule doesn't apply and it's a foul ball.

To keep the same line of thought going, let's say a popup is hit to first base, the umpire yells "Infield fly, batter is out.". The first baseman misses the ball and it hits in fair territory and rolls into foul territory after going past first base. Since this would normally be a hit, the infield fly rule does apply and the batter is out.

### **Is that all of the confusion?**

Nope, there's more. Where the ball is caught can be another point of confusion. Let's say your second baseman is playing on the dirt and takes a few steps back onto the outfield grass to catch the popup and you hear the umpire call the infield fly rule. You think the player is on the outfield grass, so the call shouldn't be made. Again, the rule is written to give the umpire the ability to make the call based on his judgment. If you think about it, it really makes sense. In this situation can the umpire really determine whether the ball is going to land in the grass or the dirt? What if the grass is really close to the infield on this particular field? Or how would he make the call on an all dirt field? What he can do is judge whether the second baseman is in a position to make an ordinary catch and to visually determine and make a judgment as to the depth of the fielder. He can then determine to call the infield fly rule even if it ends up being caught in the outfield grass.

What if in that same situation the right fielder calls off the second baseman and makes the catch? The answer is that the infield fly rule would still be in effect. The rule is based on the judgment of the umpire while the ball is in the air. If the right fielder calls off the second baseman he is still catching what the umpire had determined to be an infield fly.

#### **What about the other base runners?**

The other runners can try to advance at their own risk as they would on any other fly ball. If the ball is caught, the runners must tag up before advancing. If the ball is not caught, there is no need to tag up. The difference for the runner is that since the batter is out, there is no longer a force play and the runner doesn't need to advance, even if the ball is not caught.

#### **What about a line drive or bunted ball?**

The infield fly rule doesn't apply to line drives or a bunted ball. There's an additional rule that applies to an intentionally dropped ball including line drives and fly balls when the infield fly rule is not called. This rule states that the batter is out if a defensive player intentionally drops the ball with the intention of gaining a defensive advantage by not catching it. An example is there's a runner on first and a line drive is hit to the shortstop close to second base. The shortstop drops the ball in order to try and turn a double play. This rule differs from the infield fly rule in a number of ways:

- This rule can apply with a runner on first base or first and third in addition to the force plays listed for the infield fly rule
- This rule can be called by the umpire after the play occurs. An infield fly rule must be called when the ball is in the air.
- Once the umpire has made the call, the ball is dead and the base runners must return to their original bases. They cannot advance on the play.

An important part of this rule to understand is that the rule doesn't apply if the infielder permits the ball to drop untouched to the ground. So, if the shortstop, in the example above, lets the ball hit the ground before fielding it (even though he could have caught it in the air), the rule doesn't apply.