

# Wake County Club Baseball League 2017 Varsity Rules and Regulations

Last Revised March 2, 2017

*Notes: Rules highlighted in blue are changes or clarifications from 2016 rules.*

## I. Player Requirements

- A. All players must attend the represented school. Exception: If a student attends a charter school or a private school that DOES NOT have a baseball program, that student will be allowed to try out and play for the team that is their Wake County Public School System base school assignment. A club team can have at most 2 players on their roster from charter/private schools. The WCPSS base school assignment is defined by the Address Lookup Tool on the WCPSS website. There is only one base school defined per address. If the student's base school assignment does not have a club baseball program, then that student is NOT eligible to play in the league. Students will not be able to choose from the calendar option schools or the magnet option schools that are returned by the Address Lookup Tool. Rosters that include charter/private school players must identify those players, list their address on the roster form, and provide proof of residency (e.g. a utility bill).
- B. Career eligibility in the WCCBL is determined by the grade level reported to the league in the players first year of participation in the league. Players first reported as 6<sup>th</sup> graders are eligible to participate in the league for a period of three (3) consecutive seasons. Players first reported as 7<sup>th</sup> graders are eligible to participate in the league for a period of two (2) consecutive seasons. Players first reported as 8<sup>th</sup> graders are eligible to participate in the league for one (1) season.
- C. Players on home schooled teams must reside in Wake County.
- D. All varsity players must be in the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and must not turn 15 on or before August 31 of the current school year.
- E. For those programs without a JV team, a maximum of two 6<sup>th</sup> graders may be used. These 6<sup>th</sup> graders must not turn 14 on or before August 31 of the current school year.
- F. A player must have a minimum 2.0 GPA in first semester to participate.
- G. If an ineligible player is used for either one (1) at bat or one (1) defensive out, the game will be forfeited by the team in violation. The head coach will be suspended for two (2) games. A second infraction by the same team/coach will result in the coach's suspension for the rest of that season. If a third infraction occurs the panel will reserve the right to suspend all league activities for the entire team the current season as well as future seasons.
- H. A complete roster of players including name, date of birth, grade and uniform # will be submitted to the website administrator at least one week prior to the start of the regular season.
- I. Players may be added to rosters for a period of 14 days after the first regularly scheduled game of the season. When an updated roster is submitted to the website administrator by 6 PM on a given day, the new players are eligible to play the following day. When an updated roster is submitted after 6 PM on a given day, the new players are eligible to play on the second day following. The website administrator will confirm to the coach and the board the time of submission of

updated rosters.

- J. Any player that plays on a high school team is ineligible to play in the WCCBL.
- K. Players listed on a school's WCCBL varsity roster are not permitted to play for the school's JV team.
- L. If a varsity team is unable to field 9 players to start a game, the varsity team may temporarily "call up" 7th graders from the JV team in order to field a team of no more than 10 players to play the game. The varsity team may not call up any more players than the number needed to field a team of 10 players. The coach must inform the opposing coach of the names of any JV players that were called up for the game.

## II. Rules

Games will be played utilizing the NFHS Rules (Available [here](#)) with the following changes and clarifications to the specific cited rules:

**Rule 1:** The home team is responsible for preparing fields and providing game baseballs. The league will supply umpires for all scheduled games, including makeup games. Each team is responsible for reporting, at a minimum, the game score, pitchers for their team (name and jersey #), innings pitched, and number of pitches thrown per pitcher on the league's Website.

**Rule 1-3-1:** Balls must have an NFHS stamp. Home team will provide at least four (4) game baseballs to the coaches/umpire meeting held at home plate previous to game start. Coaches and umpires will concur on use of supplied baseballs.

**Rule 1-3-4:** Bats may be 2 3/4" or 2 5/8" barrel, -5 drop or heavier. Coaches should use best judgment as related to size and strength of each individual player.

1. Adult Bats (-3 drop), must have a BBCOR stamp (shown below) on the barrel of the bat.
2. Any other bat must have the new USSSA 1.15 BPF stamp (shown below) on the barrel of the bat. The new USSSA 1.15 BPF Stamp must include the graphic and the text.

BBCOR



USSSA



**Rule 1-5:** All players must wear a protective cup.

**Rule 1-5-3:** All catchers must use either a throat guard or a hockey style helmet.

**Rule 1-5-4 Penalty:** If a player is found not to have the required protective equipment

while playing, they will be removed from the playing field by the umpiring crew until equipment can be implemented.

**Rule 3:** Once a pitcher is removed from the mound, he may not return to the mound in that game.

**Rule 3-1-2:** When a pitcher is replaced on a field that uses portable mounds, and bans the use of cleats on those mounds, teams may (but are not required to) use a free substitution so as not to delay the game. If the replacement pitcher is playing another position on defense, he may be substituted for, and the game allowed to continue while the replacement pitcher changes shoes. The substitution is a free substitution and will not count in the enforcement of the substitution rules. If the original pitcher pitches to more than 2 batters before being replaced by the replacement pitcher, the free substitution shall revert to a regular substitution, subject to all substitution rules.

**Rule 3-1-3:** Starters may be withdrawn and re-entered once, with the exception of the starting pitcher who may not return to the mound.

**New Rule 3-1-7:** A team may (not mandatory) elect to bat a tenth player, known as the extra hitter (EH). The use of the extra hitter must be declared at the time of lineup exchange prior to the start of the game. Once a team elects to use an extra hitter, that team must bat ten players for the duration of the game. If a team chooses not to use the EH, the team must bat nine players for the duration of the game. The extra hitter is treated as if it were a defensive position, that is:

- a. The EH can be exchanged with any defensive player at will without costing a substitution. Such exchanges must not alter the position of the players in the batting order.
- b. The starting EH may be withdrawn and re-entered once, provided the player occupies the same spot in the batting order, just as any other starter.

**Rule 3-2:** Only one coach may be outside the dugout and on the field at any given time when the ball is in play. First and third base coaches are excluded when their team is on offense. Only head coaches may approach the umpire to discuss a game situation.

**Rule 3-3:** Any coach or player ejected from a game is suspended for the remainder of that game as well as the next two games. Email and/or phone notification must be made to your divisional rep. within 24 hrs of game's end by both coaches and both umpires. All ejections may be appealed to the panel. To appeal an ejection, notify your division rep within 24 hours of game's end. If an ejection is appealed, the two game suspension is deferred while the panel considers the reports of the umpires and coaches. The panel may vote to reaffirm the suspension, reduce the suspension to one game, or eliminate the suspension all together. The ruling of the panel is final.

**Rule 3-3-1p:** Tobacco products of any kind are strictly prohibited from the fields or dugouts. No exceptions! First offense is ejection and immediate removal from premises. Second offense is season suspension and team forfeiture of current game!

**Rule 3-4-1:** The Varsity league will use the charged conferences rule as written in the NFHS Baseball Rulebook; that is, a team gets 3 charged conferences per 7 inning

game, and one charged conference per extra inning. Every conference thereafter results in the removal of the pitcher. Any conference where the pitcher is removed does not count toward the team limit.

**Rule 4:** All games that are postponed must be rescheduled by the league's Schedule Coordinator and reported to the league's Website Administrator.

**Rule 4-1-1:** The home coach shall decide whether the grounds and other conditions are suitable for starting the game. After the game starts, the umpires are sole judges as to whether conditions are fit for play. If a game is not started, umpires are paid 1/2 of their fee. Once a game is started, the umpires retain their full fee

**Rule 4-1-3:** Each team must begin the game with a minimum of eight (8) players.

**Rule 4-2-1:** A regulation game consists of 7 innings or until a time limit is reached. The field on which the game is played dictates the game's time limit. There are 3 different limits under which league games are played: No Limits, Two Hour Time Limit, and Drop Dead Limit. At the home plate meeting prior to the start of the game, coaches and umpires must agree what limits the game is being played under.

- a. Games played under No Limits shall play a full 7 inning game, unless the game is ended early by the run rule or extended because of a tie game after 7 innings of play. See Rule 4-2-2.
- b. Games played under a Two Hour Time Limit shall not begin a new inning after 1 hour, 45 minutes of play, and will enter a drop dead state after exactly 2 hours of play. See Rule 4-2-4 for completion of game in a drop dead state. Multiple games played on the same field on the same day (e.g. Saturdays at Bond Park) are generally played under a Two Hour Time Limit.
- c. Games played under a Drop Dead Limit will enter a drop dead state when the drop dead time is reached, regardless of what time the game started. See Rule 4-2-4 for completion of game in a drop dead state. On fields with a Drop Dead Limit, no new inning shall begin with less than 15 minutes remaining until the drop dead time. For example, all games at Middle Creek Park and Thomas Brooks Park have a drop dead time of 6:00pm. On these fields no new inning may begin after 5:45pm, and the game enters a drop dead state at exactly 6:00pm.

Exception: Games that are suspended, then resumed after a brief weather delay may waive the no new inning limit and play until the drop dead time, whereupon coaches must choose to resume the game at a later date under Rule 4-2-3, or enter the drop dead state under Rule 4-2-4.

Note the difference between a Two Hour Time Limit and a Drop Dead Limit. A game played under Drop Dead Limit may be shorter than a game played under the Two Hour Time Limit (if the game started late), or it may be longer than a game played under a Two Hour Time Limit (if the game started early). Coaches may be able to get a few extra minutes of play on Drop Dead Limit fields if they can agree with the umpires and the opposing coach to start a game a few minutes early. See the Case Examples below.

### **Case Examples**

- I. Weekday game at South Park. Start time is 4:00pm. No subsequent activity is scheduled on the field, and the home team's rental does not specify any time limits. Ruling: Game is played under No Limits.
- II. Saturday game at Bond #6. Start time is 2:00pm. The previous game on the same field began at 12:10pm and ended at 2:05pm. Game gets underway at 2:10pm. Ruling: Game is played under Two Hour Time Limit. No new inning after 3:55pm. Drop Dead at 4:10pm.
- III. Weekday game at Middle Creek Park. Start time is 4:00pm. One team arrives late and game does not get underway until 4:10pm. Ruling: Game is played under Drop Dead Limit. No new inning after 5:45pm. Drop Dead at 6:00pm.
- IV. Weekday game at Thomas Brooks Park. Start time is 4:00pm. Umpires arrive at 3:45pm. Both teams complete warm-ups and agree with umpires to start game early. Game gets underway at 3:50pm. Ruling: Game is played under Drop Dead Limit. No new inning after 5:45pm. Drop dead at 6:00pm.
- V. Weekday game at Middle Creek Park. Start Time is 4:00pm. Game gets underway at 4:00pm. At 4:30pm, game is delayed for 45 minutes because of lightning, and is resumed at 5:15pm. Ruling: Play continues until Drop Dead Time at 6:00pm, whereupon coaches agree to enter drop dead state, or complete game on a later date.

**Rule 4-2-2:** The 10 run rule is adopted (10 run lead after 4½ or 5 innings). In an effort for more playing time, play may continue to completion as defined in Rule 4-2-1, but the winner is determined at the time of the invocation of the rule.

If the game remains tied after the completion of nine (9) innings, the following procedures will be implemented during extra innings ("international rules"):

- a. Each team will begin the 10th inning (and any subsequent necessary extra innings) with a player on first and second, no outs.
- b. To begin the 10th inning, representatives from each team will meet at home plate and will indicate (at the same time) to the home plate umpire where the team wishes to begin the batting order. That is, the teams have the option of beginning the 10th inning anywhere in the existing batting order that was in effect when the 9th inning ended. Note that this is not a new lineup (just potentially a different order), and it may very well be the same lineup that ended the 9th inning. The rationale for doing so is to ensure that both teams have an equal chance at having what they consider to be their best hitters and base runners in a position to score in the 10th inning.
- c. For example, if the team decides to have the #8 hitter in the lineup hit first, then the #6 hitter will be placed at 2B and the #7 hitter will be placed at 1B. Furthermore, if the team decides to have the #3 hitter in the lineup hit first, then the #1 hitter would be at 2B and the #2 hitter would be at 1B.
- d. Once those players/runners are determined for the 10th inning, the order of any subsequent innings will be determined by how the previous inning ended. That is, if the 10th inning ends with the #6 hitter having the last plate appearance (PA), then the 11th inning begins the #7 hitter at bat, and the #5 hitter at 2B and the #6 hitter at first base.

- e. With the exception of beginning the inning with runners on 1B and 2B with no one out, all other rules will remain in effect during extra innings required to determine a winner.
- f. No player re-entry is permitted during tiebreaker innings.

**Rule 4-2-3:** A non-regulation game suspended for any reason (weather, light failure, etc) may be completed at a later date upon mutual agreement of the two teams, but must be continued from the point of suspension with the same batting order and lineup as the moment of suspension as if the game had never stopped. Pitchers who had pitched in the game prior to suspension may not take the mound again, and the pitcher of record is limited to the pitch count limitations as defined in rule 6-1-6. Note that pitchers are still subject to their mandatory rest limits, such that if at the time of the continuation, the pitcher of record is within a mandatory rest period based on his most recent appearance on the mound, he must be replaced upon the resumption of the game.

If the two teams cannot agree on whether or not to resume a suspended game, then the game is resolved as follows:

- a. If 4 innings (3 ½ with home team ahead) have been played, the game is official.
- b. The team that is behind may concede the game to the team that is ahead.
- c. If less than 4 innings (3 ½ with home team ahead) have been played, and the team that is behind does not concede, then the panel will make the final decision on if/how to proceed.

**Rule 4-2-4:** When a game enters a drop dead state, the current batter is allowed to finish his at bat if:

- a. he has already begun his at-bat (i.e. the count is anything other than 0-0), AND...
- b. his at-bat could have an effect on the outcome of the game. An at-bat can affect the outcome of a game if:
  - i. the current batter is a member of the home team, the home team is tied or behind, and the tying/winning run is on base or at bat, OR...
  - ii. the current batter is a member of the home team, the road team tied the game or took the lead in the top half of the inning, and the current batter is the potential third out.

If the current batter is allowed to finish his at-bat, the game is called upon the completion of the at-bat; otherwise the game is called immediately upon entering the drop dead state.

The away team cannot gain an advantage in a game that ends in a partially completed inning. If the away team has gained an advantage (went from trailing to tied/leading during the partially completed inning, or went from tied to leading during the partially completed inning), the final score is reported as the score at the end of the Last Completed Inning. When pitching stats are reported as of the Last Completed Inning, coaches should be aware of any unreported pitching statistics, and use sound judgment to protect arms from injury.

Games that enter a drop dead state are considered complete and regulation when called, even if less than five innings have been played, unless the game was suspended under Rule 4-2-3 and coaches mutually agree to complete the game at a later date.

**Rule 6-1-6:** No pitcher may throw more than ninety-five (95) pitches in one game. A pitcher may complete the plate appearance in which his 95<sup>th</sup> pitch occurs. A mandatory rest period is imposed based on the number of pitches thrown in a game.

| <b>Pitches Thrown</b> | <b>Required Rest<br/>Calendar Days</b> |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <b>20 or less</b>     | <b>0 days</b>                          |
| <b>21 – 35</b>        | <b>1 day</b>                           |
| <b>36 – 50</b>        | <b>2 days</b>                          |
| <b>51 – 65</b>        | <b>3 days</b>                          |
| <b>66+</b>            | <b>4 days</b>                          |

Note that the Required Rest Period is calculated in Calendar Days, not 24 hour periods. The rest period begins at midnight of the day on which the player last pitched, and concludes at midnight following the required number of calendar days.

Each team is responsible for maintaining the pitch counts of their own pitcher. Teams are encouraged to maintain a pitch count of opposing pitchers, but the official count is the one maintained by the pitcher's own team. Scorekeepers from each team should periodically check with each other to verify that their pitch counts are in sync with each other – especially as any pitcher nears the pitch limit. If a pitcher throws one pitch to a new batter after reaching his pitch limit, then he is in violation of the Rule 6-1-6. Upon discovery of any violation of the Rule 6-1-6 by either coach, the pitcher shall immediately be replaced, i.e. he cannot complete the plate appearance of the current batter. The resulting penalty shall be a one game suspension of the head coach, AND the pitcher is not eligible to pitch in the next game in which he would normally be eligible to pitch. Note that a postponed or canceled game cannot save the coach/player from serving a penalty imposed by the violation of Rule 6-1-6.

### **Case Examples**

- I. Player (X) throws 50 pitches in a game starting at 9:00am on Saturday, and requires 2 days of rest. His rest days are Sunday and Monday, so he cannot pitch again until Tuesday.
- II. A team has games scheduled on the following dates: April 1, April 3, April 5, April 12, and April 14. In the game on April 1, Player (X) throws 95 pitches, and continues on to pitch to new batters following his 95<sup>th</sup> pitch, and is in violation of Rule 6-1-6. The head coach is suspended for the game on April 3. Because of the mandatory rest period required for throwing 66+ pitches, Player (X) is not eligible to pitch in the games on April 3 and April 5. He would normally regain his eligibility for the game on April 12; however, because of the penalty imposed for the violation of Rule 6-1-6, the pitcher is not eligible to pitch on April 12, and does not become eligible to pitch until the game on April 14.

**Rule 7-1-1:** Teams are encouraged to bat 9 players in the batting lineup in accordance

with NFHS rules (or 10, with an EH, as allowed by league rules), but may elect to include all eligible players in the batting order (continuous batting order). When using a continuous batting order, if a player becomes injured or ejected, and can no longer bat, an out shall be called each time that player is scheduled to bat. Coaches must inform the umpires and the opposing coach prior to the start of the game of their intention to use a continuous batting order.

**Rule 7-3-6:** If a whole bat is thrown and hits any other player, coach, umpire or spectator, the ball is dead immediately, the batter is out and the runners return. The batter is automatically ejected and suspended for two (2) games. Batters must control their bats.

**Rule 10-1-1:** Two (2) umpires are preferred for each game. One (1) umpire may be used upon agreement by both teams.

The league adopts the NFHS Courtesy Runner Rules, modified as follows:

- a. At any time, the team at bat may use courtesy runners for the pitcher and/or the catcher of record, i.e. the last pitcher or catcher to play defense. In the top half of the first inning, courtesy runners may be used for the pitcher or catcher that starts in the bottom half of the first inning. Courtesy runners **MUST** be used for the catcher with two outs.
- b. The same individual runner may not be used for both positions (pitcher and catcher) during the game.
- c. Neither the pitcher nor the catcher will be required to leave the game under such circumstances.
- d. Players who have participated in the game in any other capacity are ineligible to serve as courtesy runners. Exception: if there are no available courtesy runners, the player making the out previous to, or during, the plate appearance of the pitcher/catcher shall be available as a courtesy runner. In the case of a double play or other multiple out scenario, the player put out last shall be the available courtesy runner.
- e. A player may not run as a courtesy runner for the pitcher or the catcher and then be used as a substitute for another player in that half-inning. If an injury, illness or ejection occurs and no other substitutes are available, the courtesy runner may be used as a substitute.
- f. The umpire-in-chief shall record courtesy runner participation and also announce it to the scorer.
- g. A player who violates the courtesy-runner rule is considered to be an illegal substitute. Should an injury, illness or ejection occur to the courtesy runner, another courtesy runner for the pitcher or catcher may run.

### **III. Postseason Playoffs**

The Varsity League will conduct a post-season playoff to determine a League Champion. Five teams from the league, consisting of three division champions and two wildcard qualifiers, will make the playoffs. The team with the best division record in each division will

be named the division champion. Of the remaining teams, the two teams with the best overall record will be named the wildcard qualifiers.

The three division champions will be seeded 1 through 3 based on their overall won-lost-tied record. Two wild card qualifiers will be seeded fourth and fifth.

In the first round of the playoffs, the two wild card teams will play each other with the winner proceeding to a semifinal game to face the number 1 seed. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> seed will face each other in the other semifinal game. The two semifinal winners will face each other in the championship game.

If teams are tied for a playoff spot, the tie is broken by a set of tie breaking rules. The tie breaking rules are applied, either to determine which teams qualify for the playoffs, or to determine seeding in the playoff system. The rules below are applied in order until the tie is broken. If three teams are tied for one playoff spot and the third team is eliminated at any step, the tie breaker reverts to step one for the remaining two teams. If multiple playoff spots are at stake, the rules are applied in order until the first team qualifies, then the process is started again for the remaining teams. The tie breaking rules are as follows:

| <b>Divisional Tiebreakers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>League Tiebreakers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Head-to-head (best won-lost-tied percentage in games between the teams).</li><li>2. Best overall won-lost-tied record.</li><li>3. Best won-lost-tied percentage in common games (games played against the same opponents).</li><li>4. Strength of schedule (the combined won-lost-tied percentage of all the teams that a team has <i>played against</i>).</li><li>5. Best net runs (runs scored minus runs allowed) in common games.</li><li>6. Best net runs (runs scored minus runs allowed) in all games.</li><li>7. Coin Toss.</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Apply division tie breaker to eliminate all but the highest ranked team in each division prior to proceeding to step 2.</li><li>2. Head-to-head, if applicable. (For ties between 3 or more teams, this step is only applied if there is a head-to-head sweep; i.e., if one team has defeated each of the others or if one team has lost to each of the others.)</li><li>3. Best won-lost-tied percentage in common games, minimum of two.</li><li>4. Strength of schedule (the combined won-lost-tied percentage of all the teams that a team has <i>played against</i>).</li><li>5. Best net runs (runs scored minus runs allowed) in common games, minimum of two.</li><li>6. Best net runs (runs scored minus runs allowed) in all games.</li><li>7. Coin Toss.</li></ol> |