

**SWLA USSSA BASEBALL
RULES AND GUIDELINES
Revised 3/17/2017 – Amended 4/22/2017**

******These local rules and guidelines are intended to be used in conjunction with USSSA Official Baseball National Bylaws and Rules. See www.swlaussa.com ******

1. AGE QUALIFICATION

- a. 18/u - 15 – 18 years: A player turning 19 years of age before January 1 of current year is ineligible.
- b. 14/u - 12, 13 & 14 years: A player turning 15 years of age before January 1 of current year must move up to the 18 & under league.
- c. 11/u – 9, 10 & 11 years: A player turning 12 years of age before January 1 of current year must move up to the 14 & under league.
- d. 8/u - 7 & 8 years: A player turning 9 years of age before January 1 of current year must move up to the 11 & under league.
- f. 5 & 6 years: A player turning 7 years of age before January 1 of current year must move up to the 8 & under league.
- g. 4 years: A player turning 5 years of age before January 1 of current year must move up to the 6 & under league. A player must be 4 before December 1 of current year to be eligible to play. If a parent coaches, then a younger child will be considered.

2. Official USSSA rules will be used along with the following local rules. The official local rules will be the most current as listed at www.swlaussa.com.

3. REGISTRATION AND ELIGIBILITY

- a. All team players must be registered with Southwest Louisiana USSSA Baseball. A player may compete with only one team.
- b. The player fee is \$65.00 per player and must be submitted by the date established yearly. Fee of \$75 may be accepted after the deadline. Make checks payable to “SWLA USSSA Baseball.”
- c. Players are allowed to play in tournaments with other teams.
- d. Any team found playing an ineligible player in any of the above situations will forfeit all games already played whether or not the ineligible player participated in

the game, and the entire coaching staff will be suspended from the league and the team placed on probation.

- e. Sponsor fee shall be \$350 per team.

4. GAME SCHEDULES

- a. The schedule will be made and distributed to each head coach in time for the first league game.
- b. Games can only be postponed for rain. If possible, games may be made up in openings during the week and on Saturdays if necessary.

5. FINAL STANDINGS

In ages 8/u and higher a playoff comprised of all teams will be used to determine the league champion. In the event that the playoffs are not completed, league standings will decide championship. If teams are tied during regular season play, a tie breaker system will be used until a champion is determined:

- Head to head competition
- Run differential in head to head competition
- Overall run differential
- Total runs scored
- Run differential vs. next team in standings
- In the event the tie has still not been broken, co-champions shall be declared

6. GENERAL GAME RULES

- a. You must bat every team member present.
BATTING ORDER: In all leagues, every player present must be listed on line-up card given to the official scorer prior to game and must bat in that order.
(Example: 13 players present, 13 listed on line-up card, all 13 players will bat before starting over at top of lineup.) Late players will be added to the bottom of the line-up. Any 9 (10) of the 13 may play defense at any time.
- b. One minute will be allowed between innings.
- c. **No player will sit out on defense more than one inning until all players present have sat out at least one inning. No player may sit out on defense more than one inning in a row. Exception in 11U-18U, if the starting pitcher or starting catcher is still in their respective positions when all other players have sat out, then his sit-out inning will come if and when he is removed from the pitching position. All teams must submit a line-up to the umpires before the game. The umpire will mark players on the bench until all players have sat out.**

- d. Nine (ten in 11U and below) players must be used in the field if they are available at game time. Nine players constitute a legal team; ten in 11U and below. Teams may and must start if 8 players are available at game time. In case of injury, ejection, etc., a coach may continue with eight players. No league can play with less than 7 players. A spot occupied by a player that leaves the game for any reason will be declared an out when that spot comes up in the batting order.
- e. PROTECTIVE HEADGEAR: In all ages, protective headgear shall be worn while at bat and while base running during practice and all games. Such headgear must cover the top of the head and have extended ear flaps which cover both ears and properly fit the player wearing it. In addition, all bat boys/girls must wear a helmet while out of the dugout. PENALTY: if a player refuses to wear headgear, he shall be removed from the game.
- f. SHOES: Shoes with metal cleats or spikes are not permitted by any player, coach, or manager.
- g. TIE GAME: Games tied after 6/7 complete innings, or the expiration of time, will remain tied.

(4U – 6U DIVISION ONLY)

- a. 4U games will consist of two (2) innings. **No score will be kept.**
6U games will consist of three (3) innings. **Score will be kept.**
- b. All players will bat per a team's at-bat.
- c. All players present will play on defense. The infield will be set as normal and the remainder of the team will play outfield.
- d. Score will not be kept.
- e. **4/u ONLY - Outs will not be recorded, players may continue to run the bases**
- f. **6U, if a player is out, he/she must return to team bench. 3 outs rule does not apply, all players on lineup will bat each inning.**
- g. A player may only play in the pitching position for one inning per game.
- h. Three coaches may be on the field while on defense: one behind second base, one in foul territory beyond first base, and one in foul territory beyond third base.
- i. 6U only – runners can advance up to 2 bases but cannot advance once the ball is in the infield;
4U only – runners can only advance one base at a time.

(8U COACH PITCH DIVISION ONLY)

a. THE PLAYING FIELD:

- i. Bases shall be placed at a distance of sixty (60) feet apart.
- ii. Fair Ball Arc: There shall be a ten (10) foot arc drawn from first base line to third base line in front of home plate. A batted ball must go past this line to be a fair ball. If this line is not visible or is not present, the umpire shall make any and all determinations as it pertains to a fair or foul ball. The umpire's decision shall be a judgment call and is final.
- iii. Safety Arc: There shall be a thirty (30) foot arc drawn from first base line to third base line in front of home plate. Infielders must stay behind this line until the ball is hit. If this line is not visible or is not present, the umpire shall make any and all determinations regarding the above. The umpire's decision shall be a judgment call and is final.
- iv. Pitching Circle: There shall be a ten (10) foot diameter circle with the front edge set at forty-two (42) feet from the rear point of home plate. If this line is not visible or not present, the umpire shall make any and all determinations regarding the above. The umpire's decision shall be a judgment call and is final.
- v. Pitcher's Line: There shall be a line drawn from the pitcher's circle to the fair ball arc. If this line is not visible or is not present, the umpire shall make any and all determinations regarding the above. The umpire's decision shall be a judgment call and is final.

b. THE PITCHING COACH:

- i. The pitching coach shall keep one foot on or straddle the pitcher's line. If this line is not visible or is not present, the umpire shall make any and all determinations regarding the above. The umpire's decision shall be a judgment call and is final.
- ii. The pitching coach shall not verbally or physically coach while in the pitching position.
- iii. The pitching coach shall position himself so as not to be an obstruction to the defensive team on any possible play once the ball has been hit.
PENALTY: if a coach violates this rule after the ball is pitched, obstruction will be called.
ADDITIONAL PENALTY: if a coach violates this rule before the ball is pitched,
first offense: warning;

second offense: removal of coach as the pitcher for remainder of the game.

c. GENERAL PLAYING RULES:

- i. The catcher shall receive the pitch in the catcher's box in a normal baseball manner. If in the umpire's judgment the catcher is not receiving the ball in a normal baseball manner, there will be a warning issued. If the act continues after the warning, the catcher will be moved to another position on the field for the remainder of the game.
- ii. Ten defensive players shall play in the field with four outfielders. The fourth outfielder shall not assume an infield position. All outfielders shall stay behind the baselines.
- iii. The defensive player listed as pitcher shall not leave the pitching circle until the ball is hit. If this line is not visible or is not present, the umpire shall make any and all determinations regarding the above. The umpire's decision shall be a judgment call and is final. If there is a penalty, the play continues. After the play has ended, the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or no-pitch. Additional penalties are treated as follows:
first offense: warning;
second offense: removal of player from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.
- iv. Two defensive coaches are allowed on the field of play as long as they are behind the first and third base coaches respectively and in foul territory. Any other coaches shall coach from the dugout.
- v. The infield fly rule shall not be in effect at any time.
- vi. The batting order shall constitute all present players on the team roster at the beginning of the game. Late arrivals shall be inserted at the bottom of the batting order. All players on the roster shall bat before returning to the top of the batting order.
- vii. Teams may start a game with eight players. The ninth and tenth positions in the batting order will be declared an out each turn at bat.
- viii. Approved ruling: a ninth and tenth player and all subsequent players may be added to the bottom of the batting line-up as soon as they become available.
- ix. Teams may use free substitution on defense but the batting order shall remain the same.

- x. Bunting shall not be allowed.
- xi. **Prior to the start of the game, coaches must declare to the umpire whether they will utilize a 6th pitch or use the tee for one swing after the 5th pitch. This cannot be changed during the game and the decision is a teamwide decision and not only for individual batters.** Batters will be thrown a maximum of five pitches from the coach. The player may swing at all pitches until the five pitch limit is exhausted or one is put in play. If the player does not hit a fair ball, the player will have one chance to hit from a tee **or if declared prior to the game, receive a 6th pitch.** Utilizing a tee shall not be used as a strategy, but rather an aid.
- xii. A player may only be intentionally walked once per game by announcement from the defensive team.
- xiii. Runners shall not lead off or steal bases. A runner is out for leaving the base before the ball is hit or reaches home plate.
- xiv. A courtesy runner for catcher of record only the previous inning may be used. The courtesy runner shall be the player that made the previous out. If no outs have been recorded in the game, the courtesy runner shall be the previous batter not on base.
- xv. A team may score a maximum of five runs per inning, including the last inning or record three outs.
- xvi. Umpires shall call “time” after every play and declare the ball dead. “Time” shall be called as soon as the lead runner is attempting to advance. “Time” does not have to be called by the defense for the purpose of this rule.
Comment: when a runner stands off a base and “jukes” or “feints” back and forth, this is to be interpreted as “not attempting to advance” and “time” shall be called.
- xvii. When a batted ball hits the pitching coach, the following shall apply:
If, in the umpire’s judgment, the coach did not make a legitimate attempt to avoid contact, the batter is declared out and no runners shall advance.
If, in the umpire’s judgment, the coach did make a legitimate attempt to avoid contact, the ball becomes dead and a no-pitch is declared.

(11U DIVISION ONLY)

- a. Batters **MAY** advance on dropped/past-ball 3rd strike.
- b. There will be a seven run limit in effect for the first two innings.

- c. **Runners may advance as many bases as they wish on steal attempts but may not steal home in the same period that they stole 3rd base in.**
Situation: Runner A1 is stealing 3rd base, Catcher B2 attempts to throw the runner out at 3rd. The ball goes into the outfield.
Ruling: Since the runner stole 3rd base, he/she must remain at 3rd base. Runner is not permitted to go home until the next pitch begins.)

7. TIME LIMITS

- a. 4U – 6U: by innings.
- b. 8U: one hour, fifteen minutes. **If in a partial inning and the home team is behind, the score at the end of the previous inning will be the final. Anyone thought to be attempting to use this rule to their advantage will forfeit the game and face suspension.**
- c. 11U: one hour, thirty minutes. **Umpire shall announce the starting time of the game and play continues for 90 minutes. Time shall not be extended for any reason (exception in playoffs if game is tied).** If in a partial inning and the home team is behind, the score at the end of the previous inning will be the final. Anyone thought to be attempting to use this rule to their advantage will forfeit the game and face suspension.
- d. 14U: one hour, forty-five minutes. **Umpire shall announce the starting time of the game and play continues for 105 minutes. Time shall not be extended for any reason (exception in playoffs if game is tied).** If in a partial inning and the home team is behind, the score at the end of the previous inning will be the final. Anyone thought to be attempting to use this rule to their advantage will forfeit the game and face suspension.
- e. The PLATE UMPIRE shall be the OFFICIAL TIME KEEPER and shall notify each coach and score keeper for the time(s). Prior to the start of the first game, each team shall be allowed a 5 minute warm-up. **No warm up time allowed between games.** The Park Director may shorten or eliminate in-field warm-up if unusual circumstances warrant. The time limit is still in effect for a game started before the regular scheduled starting time. A game officially begins when the pitcher takes his first warm-up pitch. The Umpire-in-Chief has the authority to stop the clock during a game for any of the following three reasons: lights which are too defective to continue to play; lightning, rain; serious injury in which the injured player can no longer play in the game.

8. PROTESTING GAMES

No protest shall ever be permitted on judgment decisions by the umpire. For a protest to be legal, it must be made at the point the protest occurred. Coach must report protest to umpire and scorekeeper, who will then record protest in score book. Both coaches and umpires must sign the score book. The coach will then have forty-eight (48) hours after the scheduled time of the game to submit protest in writing along with a \$25 protest fee to the league director. If protest is upheld, the fee will be refunded. If protest is not allowed, the fee will be forfeited.

9. PITCHING LIMITATIONS

Column A represents the most innings a player can pitch and still be eligible in the same week.

Column B represents the most innings a player can pitch in a game.

Column C represents the most innings a player can pitch in a week.

Ages	A	B	C
11U	4	6	10
14U	4	7	11
18U	4	7	12

Games in which an ineligible pitcher has been used shall be declared forfeited as per the USSSA by-laws.

Each team when on offense may be granted not more than one charged conference per inning to permit the coach to confer with base runner and for the batter. The umpire shall deny any subsequent offensive team request for charged conferences.

A coach may instruct the umpire to issue a batter an intentional walk.

Balks: In ages **14/u and below**, pitchers will be allowed some leniency in regards to balks. **Umpires will issue 1 warning per pitcher prior to enforcing the violation.** Pitchers will be called for major violations and warned for minor violations that do not affect the outcome of the game.

10. MANAGERS AND COACHES CERTIFICATION: Beginning the 2006 season, all managers and coaches will be required to be certified by a program recognized by the league. This means anyone who expects to be on the field or in the dugout during games will fall under this requirement.

11. GENERAL CONDUCT GUIDELINES - SPORTSMANSHIP AND EJECTIONS

- a. All players, coaches, managers, sponsors, and spectators are expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times.
- b. Any player, coach, manager, sponsor, or spectator whose conduct is unbecoming or abusive shall at a minimum be reprimanded with a warning. If warranted, the offending party shall be ejected from the game at the discretion of the umpires and/or the league director.
- c. Any player, coach, manager, sponsor, or spectator leaving their position or base, in the field, on the bench, in the dugout area, or grandstands to participate in a fight, brawl, or altercation shall be immediately ejected from the game and may be barred/suspended pursuant to USSSA Rule 13.00.
- d. Any coach, manager, sponsor, or spectator ejected from a game shall immediately remove himself from the vicinity of the playing field and/or grandstands for the remainder of the game. Additional penalties may be assessed at the discretion of the league director.
- e. Any player ejected from a game shall either immediately remove himself from the vicinity of the playing field for the remainder of the game or be confined to the dugout area for the remainder of the game at the discretion of the league director.
- f. All persons ejected may be asked to leave the park and/or venue at the discretion of the league director.
- g. Abusive language or cursing shall not be tolerated under any circumstances and shall result in an automatic ejection.
- h. Throwing of equipment shall result in an automatic ejection.
- i. If necessary, a team may be forced to forfeit a game and/or be removed from the league.
- j. As these rules indicate, the matter of disorderly conduct shall be taken seriously. Because of this, please remind all players, coaches, managers, sponsors, and spectators to be extra aware of good sportsmanship.
- k. No player or coach shall ride, abuse, heckle, intimidate, or make unsportsmanlike remarks whatsoever to any opposing player, team, or official. Any individual violating this rule shall be ejected immediately from the game by the umpire.
- l. Fighting is not allowed. Fighting is any attempt by an individual to strike/hit another individual with any body part. Result will be immediate ejection for that game and possibly from the league.

- m. Smoking is only allowed in the parking lot during games and practices.
 - n. Use of any tobacco products is not allowed on the playing field, dugout area, and around the dugout area. This is during practice and games.
 - o. The team manager is responsible for the conduct of his fans.
 - p. Heckling the umpires will result in ejection from the facility.
 - q. Anyone ejected will be required to sit out the next played games. Anyone ejected a second time will be out for the remainder of the season and maybe more for the following season.
 - r. All players and coaches shall shake hands after each game. Failure to do so will result in a sportsmanship hearing.
 - s. **Home team is the official score keeper of the game and must provide their own scorebook. It is recommended that the visiting team also keep a book and confirm score at every half inning to alleviate any discrepancies.**
 - t. In age groups 6/u and higher, umpire shall sign score book at conclusion of each game.
 - u. In age groups 11/u and above, official scorebook must include # of innings pitched by pitcher. When coaches report scores to league website it must include pitching information by player name, number and number of innings pitched.
 - v. Home team is responsible for keeping the official scorebook in each game and for entering score on league website in a timely manner, preferably within 24 hours of conclusion of contest.
12. The current rules posted on the website at www.swlausssa.com are the current rules.
13. All rules are subject to change and interpretation by the Board of Directors and the President.

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