



Greater Chicagoland Baseball League (GCBL)

2026 League Rules

All Levels

League Mission Statement

The Greater Chicagoland Baseball League (GCBL) was founded by the Elk Grove Travelers Advisory Board in cooperation with the Elk Grove Park District to provide local travel baseball programs the opportunity to compete in age and skill appropriate league games and an end of season playoff tournament for ages 8U to 14U. The GCBL is committed to being managed by volunteers who share the vision of discipline and good sportsmanship while providing a fun and competitive environment for all players who are interested in a higher-level baseball experience in preparation for high school baseball. The GCBL is a not-for-profit organization.

League Overview

League Entry

1. The entry fees for the 2026 season will be as follows:
 - a. For the 8U, 9U, 10U, 11U and 13U levels the registration fee will be \$425 for the 2026 season
 - b. For the 12U and 14U levels the entry fee will be \$475 for the 2026 season
2. The league entry fee must be made payable to the Elk Grove Park District. The league entry fee covers the following league expenses:
 - a. All administrative, organizational and other fees incurred by the GCBL to run the league
 - b. All costs, including umpires and game balls for the postseason tournament
 - c. The costs of hosting the annual GCBL Kickoff Meeting and annual GCBL Scheduling Meeting
3. No later than the annual GCBL Scheduling Meeting, all teams are required to submit a Certificate of Insurance (COI) to the Elk Grove Park District for the upcoming season.
4. A final roster for all teams must be submitted via email to each level's GCBL League Director no later than March 1, 2026. Final rosters need to include all player names, jersey numbers and dates of birth.
 - a. Any changes to the submitted rosters must be approved by the GCBL League Director for that level. Approval of roster changes are 100% at the sole discretion of the GCBL League Director for that level.
 - b. Birth certificates for all players need not be submitted to the GCBL but must be carried by all managers and be available for presentation upon request of the GCBL League Director.

Eligibility

1. The following birth dates must be followed for eligibility to participate in the GCBL for the 2026 Season:
 - 8U Division - Must be 8 years old or younger, may not turn 9 before May 1, 2026
 - 9U Division - Must be 9 years old or younger, may not turn 10 before May 1, 2026

10U Division - Must be 10 years old or younger, may not turn 11 before May 1, 2026
11U Division - Must be 11 years old or younger, may not turn 12 before May 1, 2026
12U Division - Must be 12 years old or younger, may not turn 13 before May 1, 2026
13U Division - Must be 13 years old or younger, may not turn 14 before May 1, 2026
14U Division - Must be 14 years old or younger, may not turn 15 before May 1, 2026

- a. **Players may only be rostered on one GCBL team per season**
- b. **No players enrolled in high school are permitted to play in the GCBL even if their date of birth falls within the acceptable eligibility window for 14U.**
- c. **All rostered players are expected to be present and participate in all GSBL games. Any players found to have played in fewer than 75% of their teams scheduled games prior to June 1, 2026 will be considered ineligible to participate in the remainder of the regular and postseasons. The only exceptions to this rule shall be as follows:**
 - a. **Games missed due to injury or illness**
 - b. **Travel players playing up as fill ins or house players playing as fill ins are not subject to the 75% rule but their participation must be communicated to the opposing manager and GCBL League Director prior to game time.**
 - c. **Any other extenuating circumstances that prevent a player from hitting the 75% threshold should be communicated to the GCBL League Director as soon as possible. The League Director will consider the circumstances and determine if they warrant the player being eligible to play. All decisions of the League Director are final and not able to be appealed.**

Scheduling/Games

1. Teams will register for play in one of three levels within their age group. The three levels per age group are Gold/AAA, Navy/AA and White/A. League Directors will make every attempt to honor the preferred placement of each team but reserve the right to place teams in different levels than they registered for at their discretion in order to preserve competitive balance.
 - a. Teams who won their league (regular season) the previous season are expected to move up to the next level of competition the following season. Exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis with ultimate team placement being at the sole discretion of the League Director.
2. The 2026 GCBL Season will commence March 30, 2026. All league games must be concluded no later than Thursday, June 11, 2026 (12U and 14U deadline may be sooner due to the postseason tournament. An exact end date will be communicated by the League Director). The exact number of league games will be determined once registration numbers are finalized. The GCBL targets a season of 14-18 games for all levels but reserves the right to modify that figure. No team will play more than 18 regular season games.
3. Teams will schedule their league games at the 2026 GCBL Scheduling Meeting to take place in late February/early March, 2026. Exact dates, times and locations will be

communicated well in advance of the meeting. **All teams need to have an authorized representative at these meetings to ensure compatible scheduling.**

4. Teams should make every attempt not to “double book” their teams on a given day. If a team is found to have double booked their team and is unable to play in their scheduled GCBL game due to the conflict, that team shall forfeit their GCBL game. Repeated double booking violations will be grounds for removal from the league.
5. In the event of inclement weather or unplayable field conditions the home team manager should notify the visiting team as soon as is reasonably possible but ideally not less than 2 hours prior to game time. Managers should collaborate to reschedule the game with 48 hours of cancellation and report the rescheduled game day/time to the GCBL League Director once mutual agreement has been reached.
 - a. The GCBL is serious about playing all schedule games to ensure all teams experience full participation. If one manager reaches out repeatedly to reschedule and is unable to get cooperation from the opposing manager, the uncooperative manager risks forfeiture of the game in question. Documented attempts to reschedule the game shall be provided to the GCBL League Director and they will decide if the lack of cooperation warrants a forfeit. The decision of the GCBL League Director is final in these matters.
6. Home teams are required to provide and compensate at least one ISHA patched umpire for all league games.
 - a. If a patched umpire can not be secured, both managers must agree to the use of a non-patched umpire prior to the game beginning.
 - b. The GCBL shall compensate umpires for post season games.
 - c. In the event of a double header, it is recommended that each team compensate the umpire for one game. Ultimately, compensation of the umpire for a double header shall be worked out between the managers prior to the first game beginning.
 - d. If the home team is unable to secure a home field and the game is played at the home of the visiting team it is strongly recommended that the originally scheduled home team cover the cost of the umpire. Again, resolution of this issue is ultimately the responsibility of the managers.
7. The home team, or designated home team, shall provide two new game balls for use in every game. Game ball specifications must be equal to Rawlings ROLB1 or R100 for the 8U, 9U and 10U levels. 11U, 12U, 13U and 14U will play with a Rawlings ROLB or R100 or equivalent baseball.
8. Teams shall be given a 15 minute grace period in the event they do not have enough players to start the game at game time. Teams may extend the grace period by mutual agreement of both managers but neither manager is required to agree to extending the grace period. If either team is unable to provide a minimum of 8 eligible players within 15 minutes of scheduled game time that team shall forfeit.
 - a. If a team starts a game with 8 players the 9th spot in the batting order shall be designated an out when that turn to bat comes up. Any later arriving players may be inserted at the bottom of the batting order.

- b. **Any team who knows they are running late is expected to provide the opposing team the courtesy of regular communication until the team arrives.**

Field Set Up

1. Pitching Mound Distances – All distances measured from the back point of home plate to the front of the pitchers rubber
 - a. 8U – 40 Feet
 - b. 9U and 10U – 46 Feet
 - c. 11U and 12U – 50 Feet
 - d. 13U – 54 Feet
 - e. 14U – 60 Feet, 6 Inches
2. A major league sized pitching rubber should be used
3. Mounds are not required at any level but are strongly encouraged beginning no later than 12U
4. Base Distances
 - d. 8U – 60 Feet
 - e. 9U and 10U – 65 Feet
 - f. 11U and 12U – 70 Feet
 - g. 13U – 80 Feet
 - h. 14U – 90 Feet

Game Play Rules

1. All GCBL League Games, regular and post season, will be played in accordance with IHSA Rules unless specifically noted otherwise in these rules.
2. Game Length
 - a. 8U, 9U and 10U Divisions will play six inning games. The game will be considered official upon completion of 4 innings (3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead). If the game is tied at the end of regulation, California Rules* will be played to determine the winner.
 - b. 11U, 12U, 13U and 14U will play seven inning games. The game will be considered official upon completion of 5 innings (4 ½ innings if the home team is ahead). If the game is tied at the end of regulation, California Rules* will be played to determine the winner.
 - c. *California Rules
 - Each half inning begins with the last batted out of the previous inning (or appropriate courtesy runner) at second base
 - Each half inning begins with one out
 - Each batter begins with a count of one ball and one strike
 - Each inning pitched under California Rules shall count as two recorded outs per pitcher.
 - The playing of extra innings does not entitle a pitcher to record more than the previously stated maximum number of outs per game. However, as each

inning will begin with one out each extra inning shall only count as two outs towards their maximum number of outs per game.

3. Ties

- a. If a game has reached official game status, is tied at the end of an inning and is called due to weather, darkness or previously agreed upon time limits the game shall end in a tie.
- b. Games that have not reached complete game status shall be scheduled for completion at a time mutually agreed upon by both managers. Scorekeepers should confirm all game details (inning, outs, count, batter, etc.) before leaving the field.
- c. Games that have reached official game status but are stopped mid-inning shall revert back to the score at the completion of the last completed inning.

4. Cancellations/Reschedules

- a. Games that are postponed prior to starting or that need to be scheduled for completion once they have started should be rescheduled within 72 hours of the originally scheduled game. Reschedules should be communicated to the GCBL League Director once finalized.
 - i. In the event of a suspended game scheduled for completion, players who were not at the original game are eligible to play in the conclusion of the game. They are to be inserted at the bottom of the batting order at the start of the resumed game.
- b. Both managers are expected to work in good faith with each other to find a mutually agreeable time to reschedule the game
- c. As noted above, if it is determined that one team is not working in good faith to reschedule a canceled/suspended game, that team risks forfeiture of the game in question.

5. Time Restrictions

- a. Games will not have a predetermined time limit however, if field conditions necessitate it (later game scheduled on the same field, lack of lights, etc.) the time limit shall be agreed upon by both managers and the umpire prior to the game beginning. Once agreed upon the time limit can not be changed, even if circumstances change and no longer require it, unless it is agreed upon by both managers.
- b. If a time limit is not communicated prior to first pitch then the game will be played without a time limit.

6. Minimum/Maximum Temperature Restrictions

- a. The GCBL will not set minimum or maximum temperatures for game play.
- b. It is ***strongly*** recommended that managers use good judgment and common sense in determining if the game should be played based on existing weather conditions. The health and safety of the players should be the number one consideration when determining whether or not a game should be played.

- c. Both managers must agree to postpone a game due to extreme temperatures. If agreement is not reached the game should be played as scheduled in accordance with all game play rules.
7. All league games will be played with all present rostered players participating in a continuous batting order. Free defensive substitutions are allowed and encouraged throughout the game to ensure maximum participation for all players.
 - a. Any player who leaves the game early or is removed from the game for any reason shall have their spot in the batting order become an automatic out whenever their turn to bat comes up. The following are exceptions to this rule:
 1. If a player is injured and unable to bat their spot can be skipped without it being an out. However, if the player misses an at bat due to injury they may not reenter the game at a later time.
 2. If the manager communicates to the opposing manager and umpire prior to the start of the game that a player will be leaving early the batter may be removed from the batting order without penalty.
8. Each team is allowed up to four official coaches and an official scorekeeper in the dugout during game play.
9. Courtesy runners are permitted and encouraged to keep game play moving at a steady pace. Courtesy runners are allowed for the following inning's pitcher and/or catcher when there are **two outs**.
 - a. The courtesy runner shall be the last batted out. If a courtesy runner enters for an injured player the injured player is allowed to reenter the game however if they miss their next scheduled at bat due to the injury they are no longer able to return to the game.
 - b. A player is only allowed to be removed one time per game due to injury. If the player is unable to resume normal baserunning after initially receiving a courtesy runner that player should be removed from the game without penalty.
10. Runners must slide or make all attempts to avoid contact at any base where a fielder is in possession of the ball or is about to make a play on the runner. Sliding is not required if a play is not being made.
 - a. The umpire shall have the sole discretion to call interference/obstruction and award bases accordingly.
 - b. If the umpire determines contact was excessive on the part of the fielder or the runner, they shall have the sole discretion to enforce any relevant rules and administer any relevant discipline, up to and including ejection from the game.
11. The official game score shall be that of the home team's official scorer. It is strongly encouraged that the scorekeepers from both teams confirm scores with each other no less than once an inning.
12. Run Rule:
 - a. For all levels, a run rule of 12 runs after 4 innings or 10 runs after 5 or more innings shall be enforced.
 - b. For 8U, each inning, except the 6th, will end when 3 outs are recorded or when a team has hit once through the order. Note, if teams have an uneven number of

players the team with fewer players will bat as many players equal to the number of players the other team has. The conclusion of the play/at bat of the last batter shall be determined by the umpire.

13. Bunting is permitted at all levels beginning at 10U. No bunting is permitted at 8U or 9U.
 - a. If a player squares to bunt, pulls back and swings the ball shall immediately be deemed dead and all runners should return to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch. The batter shall immediately be called out and be ejected from the game. If the same batter commits this infraction more than once during the season they shall be suspended for a minimum of two games for each offense after the first one.
14. Each team shall be afforded time and space to warm up prior to the game. Managers should use good judgment and courtesy to ensure both teams have sufficient opportunity to warm up and that both teams are ready for the game to begin on time.
 - a. No team shall warm up pitchers from the pitcher's mound until the starting pitcher takes the mound in the top of the 1st inning.
15. Pitching Rules:
 - a. The following are the maximum innings per GCBL game a pitcher can throw. For all purposes an inning shall consist of three consecutive outs:
 - i. 8U, 9U, 10U – 6 consecutive outs per game*
 - ii. 11U – 9 consecutive outs per game*
 - iii. 12U and 13U – 12 consecutive outs per game*
 - iv. 14U – 15 consecutive outs per game*
 - v. *If the pitcher's final pitch results in a double or triple play that takes their number of outs recorded over the per game maximum this shall be deemed a "baseball play" and no corrective action shall be taken.
 - b. Once removed from the game a pitcher may not return to pitch later in the same game
 - c. A coach/manager may visit the mound once per inning without penalty. On the second trip to the mound in the same inning, the pitcher must be removed from the game.
 - i. Each team shall get one mound visit per pitcher per game for a balk explanation that will not count as an official trip. The balk explanation trip must be taken immediately following a balk being called before another pitch is thrown.
 - d. Warm Up Pitches:
 - i. Each pitcher will receive a maximum of 5 warm up pitches per inning every inning
 - ii. A relief pitcher coming into the game shall receive a maximum of 7 warm up pitches
 - iii. The umpire, in their sole discretion, may modify the number of warm up pitches allowed based on game time, weather conditions and other factors they deem relevant.

- e. Pitchers may not wear white wristbands, sleeves, fielding gloves, batting gloves under their fielding glove or anything else deemed by the umpire to be distracting to the batter. Sunglasses may not be worn on the face or on the hat unless they are prescription lenses. All umpire decisions on these matters are final.
- f. If a pitcher hits three batters in a game they must be removed. Unless deemed to be intentional and warranting an ejection by the umpire the pitcher may remain in the game but will no longer be permitted to pitch.
- g. Breaking Balls
 - i. Breaking balls are prohibited at 8U, 9U, 10U and 11U. If an umpire determines a breaking ball is being thrown he should administer one warning. If a subsequent breaking ball is thrown the pitcher shall be ejected from the game.
 - ii. Breaking balls will be permitted beginning at 12U. Coaches/managers should be mindful of the long term health of their pitcher's arms before determining whether or not to teach breaking balls. Remember, the number one responsibility of a coach/manager is the health and safety of their players.
- h. Balk Rules
 - i. No balks will be called at 8U or 9U
 - ii. One balk warning per pitcher will be assessed at 10U, 11U and 12U.
 - iii. No balk warnings will be issued at 13U or 14U

Baserunning and Other Miscellaneous Rules

1. Baserunning
 - a. There are no lead offs at 8U or 9U
 - i. Base stealing is allowed once the ball crosses home plate
 - ii. Stealing home is not allowed. Runs can only be scored on a batted ball or a walk/hit batter that forces in a run
 - b. There are no baserunning restrictions beginning at 10U
2. Dropped Third Strikes
 - a. There are no dropped third strikes at 8U or 9U
 - b. Full dropped third strike rules apply beginning at 10U
3. Infield Fly Rules
 - a. There is no infield fly rule at 8U or 9U
 - b. Infield fly rule is effective beginning at 10U

Equipment

1. Metal spikes are prohibited at 8U, 9U, 10U, 11U and 12U
2. All batters, baserunners, on deck hitters and players coaching bases must wear batting helmets at all times
3. All players must be properly equipped and ready for play. This includes the wearing of a protective cup by all players, protective catchers gear and all other appropriate safety equipment.

4. Any players warming up pitchers must wear a catcher's mask
5. Legal bats shall be permanently marked 1.15 BPF, USA, USSSA, BBCOR or be a wood bat.
 - a. Beginning at 13U bats may be no lighter than -8
 - b. Beginning at 14U bats must be no lighter than -5

Conduct

1. All umpire calls are final. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**
 - a. Only managers are allowed to discuss calls with umpires and those discussions are to be limited to rule explanations.
 - b. Judgement calls are final and not subject to discussion
 - c. No protests are allowed
2. Any manager, coach, player or spectator ejected by the umpire must leave the field immediately. Failure to leave the field in a timely manner may result in forfeiture of the game and further discipline from the GCBL
 - a. Any ejections should be reported by both managers to the GCBL League Director no more than 24 hours after the game
 - i. Ejections will carry the following minimum penalties:
 1. 1st offense: 2 game suspension
 2. 2nd offense: 4 game suspension and in person meeting with GCBL League Director
 3. 3rd Offense: Suspension for the remainder of the season with future reinstatement subject to the discretion of the GCBL Board of Directors
3. Managers are responsible for the conduct of all coaches, players and spectators on their side. Repeated reports of improper conduct from a team could result in discipline for the manager subject to the discretion of the GCBL League Director
4. Batters who throw their bat will be given one warning. Subsequent offenses will result in the batter being called out.
5. Acceptable conduct and good sportsmanship are pillars of the GCBL
 - a. Throwing of equipment, temper tantrums and other displays of poor conduct/sportsmanship will not be tolerated and could result in ejection without warning
 - b. Players are not allowed to sing or chant at the pitcher and must stop all singing/chanting when the pitcher enters into their motion. Failure to comply may result in batters being called out or offending parties being ejected without warning.
6. If there is a legitimate rule dispute, it should be reported to the GCBL League Director within 24 hours of the game.
 - a. The League Director will gather facts from all relevant parties and determine if further action is warranted.
 - b. The final decision of the League Director is final.

Standings/Tie Breakers

1. In a two team tie, the first tie breaker will be head to head record between the two teams in GCBL league games. In the event of those teams not having played or an even record between them, the following tie breakers will be used in the following order
 - a. Fewest runs allowed
 - b. Most runs scored
 - c. Coin flip

GCBL Playoffs

1. Separate rules will be distributed in advance of the GCBL Playoffs detailing any variations from these rules that will be used in the playoffs. Unless specifically addressed in the supplemental rules, these rules will apply.