

Fourth Grade Rules Supplement

The current [high school rules](#) are used with these exceptions:

Field Dimensions and Layout

- The distance between all bases shall be 60-65 feet.
- The distance between the "point" of the home plate and the front of the pitching slab shall be 46 feet.
- A double first base shall be used. Half the base shall be white (on the baseline) and half shall be orange (in foul territory). The white half shall be considered fair and any ball hitting it is a fair ball. If there is a play on the batter-runner, the defender must use the white half of the base and the batter-runner must run to the orange half of the base. If there is no play, the batter-runner may use either the white or orange half of the base.

General Rules

- Only the head or assistant coaches may coach the bases.
- Home team has the choice of dugouts for all regular season games.
- The on-deck batter must warm up in the on deck circle on the safe side of the batter (behind the batter at the plate). With a left-handed batter up to bat, the on-deck circle is in front of the 1st base dugout. With a right-handed batter up to bat, the on-deck circle is in front of the 3rd base dugout.

Length of Inning

A ½ inning shall be complete when one of the following have occurred:

- A number of players equal to the count of the shorter roster between the two teams has batted. For example if team one has 12 players and team two has 9, a ½ inning will consist of 9 batters.
- 3 outs are recorded by the defense.
- Eight runs are scored by the offense.

EXCEPTION: In the last inning/6th inning an unlimited number of runs may be scored by the offense.

Length of Games

- Regulation games shall be 6 innings.
- Complete games in case of rain, darkness or other causes shall be 4 innings or 1/2 inning sooner if home team leads.
- No inning may start after two hours from the start time.
- The mercy rule is in effect as follows:

- If a team is ahead by at least 20 runs after 3 innings, the game is over (2-1/2 innings if home team is ahead)
- If a team is ahead by at least 15 runs after 4 innings, the game is over (3-1/2 innings if home team is ahead)
- If a team is ahead by at least 10 runs after 5 innings, the game is over (4-1/2 innings if home team is ahead)
 - Example #1: If the visiting team goes ahead by 12 runs after the top of the 5th inning, the home team still gets their at-bat. If they fail to get within 9 runs the game would end after 5 innings.
 - Example #2: If the home team is ahead by 12 runs after the top of the 5th inning, the game would be over and the home team would not bat in the bottom of the 5th inning.
- A game shall be considered complete when one of the following conditions applies:
 - Six innings are completed (regulation game).
 - Four innings (or 3.5 innings if the home team leads) are completed and the game needs to be stopped due to darkness, rain, or other causes.
 - Less than six innings are completed, but the time limit to start new innings has been reached.
 - The mercy rule is applied.
- A game that has started but which is interrupted before reaching the criteria for being a complete game shall be treated as a suspended game and shall be resumed later from the point of suspension until it can become a complete game.
- Any game not completed will be considered a loss in regards to winning percentage and league results including playoff seedings where appropriate.

Rescheduling Games

Please contact the Director of Officiating at umpires@rybam.com. There must be a valid and approved reason to reschedule the game.

Player Participation

- To be eligible to participate in RYBA at a specific grade level, the player must be in the specific grade at registration time.
- Continuous batting rule (all players bat in order) shall be used with free defensive substitution.
- The batting order should rotate between games. That is, the place in the order in which a player bats should change between games.
NOTE: This may be done by any method the coach wishes to use. Recommendations are a rolling batting order or one based on position rotation.
- Each player shall play a minimum of 4 (complete) innings defensively. Violation of this rule shall result in a forfeiture of the game the rule violation occurred. Violations must be processed as a protest. For shortened games (Mercy rule, or Time limits) this may be adjusted but there is an expectation for effort of participation in these cases, as well.

- No player may sit a second inning until all players have sat 1 inning. No player may sit a third inning until all players have sat 2, except in case of injury, ejection, or for disciplinary reasons.
- All players must play at least one inning in a defensive infield position.
- The defensive team shall consist of 10 players. Four players are in the outfield playing left field, left center field, right center field, and right field (no short outfielder or "rover" is allowed).
- Players arriving late are added to the bottom of the batting order.
- Players that leave early, become ill, or are injured during the game, will be temporarily removed from the line-up (they are not an automatic out). Players may return with the approval of the coach.
- If a coach benches a player because of disciplinary reasons, he must report the player's name to the opposing coach prior to game time. Both coaches must enter the player's name in their scorebooks indicating disciplinary action. The coach of the disciplined player must report the player's name and reason to the commissioner within 24 hours after the game is over. Players arriving late are added to the bottom of the batting order.
- Players ejected from the game are considered an automatic out at their time of at-bat.

Player Bring-Up (Roster shortage)

- If a team has 9 or fewer players for a single game, one of the following may be done to restore their roster to 10. NOTE: If multiple call ups come to a game and push the roster over 10 players, please allow the called players to play.
 - Players may be brought up from a lower age/grade level. **NO TRAVELING PLAYERS MAY BE USED AS SUBSTITUTES!**
 - Both the opposing coach and grade level commissioner must be informed of players being used as substitutes.
 - Substitute players will wear their regular House team jersey for the game in which they are used as a substitute.
 - Substitute players should not play more innings than a regularly rostered player if possible.
 - Substitute players may not pitch.
- EARLY SEASON EXCEPTION: For games early in the season, the lower age/grade levels may not have started games yet. Please contact your grade level commissioner in advance if you know you will be short players. The recommended remedy is to reschedule the game. If necessary the team short players may play with 8.

Equipment Rules

General Equipment

- All players must wear the RYBA issued hat and sponsor shirt.
- Sponsor shirts may not be changed (e.g. tie-dyed).

- Baseball pants are required.
- Plastic spikes are required. No metal spikes are allowed.
- Protective cups are highly recommended.

Helmets

- All players must have their own regulation helmet.
- Regulation helmets must be certified by the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment. These helmets will be stamped, usually on the back, with "Meets NOCSAE Standard".

Bats

For 2020 the following bats are legal for house league.

- Any age-appropriate wooden bat.
- 2 3/4" Diameter or less with minus 11 weight differential with one of the following.
 - A USA Baseball stamp on the taper.
 - A USSSA stamp on the taper and a 1.15 BPF rating.
 - A Babe Ruth stamp on the taper and a 1.15 BPF rating.
- 2 1/4" Diameter or less with unlimited weight differential with one of the following.
 - A USA Baseball stamp on the taper.
 - A USSSA stamp on the taper and a 1.15 BPF rating.
 - A Babe Ruth stamp on the taper and a 1.15 BPF rating.

Strike Zone

The strike zone for this grade level is defined as follows:

The strike zone is that space over home plate, EXTENDED TO THE BLACK EDGE OF THE PLATE, the top of which is the batter's SHOULDERS and the bottom being the KNEES.

The goal of extending the strike zone from the high school size is to encourage swinging at close pitches.

NOTE: Umpires may extend the zone wider to the outside of the batter but must inform coaches of their intent to do so.

NOTE: Coaches should explain the strike zone to the players and that swinging is encouraged even if it leads to strike outs.

Pitching

Any team member may pitch subject to the following rules:

- As soon as a pitcher delivers one pitch to a batter, he/she shall be considered as having pitched one inning
- A pitcher can pitch a maximum of 2 innings per game and a maximum of 3 innings per week.
- A pitcher may re-enter as a pitcher once
- No intentional Walks
- No Curve Balls (or any type of 'breaking ball')

Pitchers in violation of any of the pitching rules shall be considered to be ineligible players for pitching the remainder of the game. They may continue to play other positions.

NOTE: Umpires and coaches should work together to understand whether a pitcher is intentionally throwing a breaking pitch or whether it is a result of the natural throwing motion.

Base running

NOTE: At first base, only the white portion of the base is in play when considering stealing. That is, base runners can be called out if tagged while in contact with the orange portion of the base if they are not in contact with the white portion.

Stealing is allowed with the following conditions:

- Runners may leave the base when the ball crosses the plate.
- Runners may advance at their own risk EXCEPT FOR
 - A runner on 3rd may not advance on a passed ball.
 - A runner on 3rd may not advance on an attempt to throw out a baserunner at 2nd base on a steal attempt.
 - A runner on 3rd may not attempt a straight steal of home.
- A batter is out if a dropped third strike is not caught. Runners may not advance.

Speed Up Rules

- A new pitcher is allowed 7 warm-up pitches. A player already considered the active pitcher will receive 4 warm-up pitches between innings.
- After 4 walks/hit batsmen in an inning, a pitcher should be replaced with another player.
NOTE: This is not supposed to be a punitive rule; coaches should work with young pitchers to understand the situation and ensure they get multiple chances to pitch during the season.
- When there are 2 outs and the catcher of the team at bat is a base runner, the catcher on base must be replaced with a pinch runner. The pinch runner must be the last player to have made an out.

- After 3rd out is recorded, players on the field should run into the dug out, and prepare to hit. A coach or player that has been on the bench should identify who is up, who is on deck, and who is in the hole.
- After 3rd out is recorded, players that have been at bat should grab their gloves and run out to their assigned positions. Center fielder and 1st baseman should each take a ball with them to warm up.
- A bench player should warm up the outfielder closest to their dugout.
- If the catcher has not completed gearing up, a player not in the field or a coach should grab a mask & glove and warm up the pitcher, continue until the catcher can take over the duty.

Protests and Penalties

- A team failing to field at least 9 uniformed players within 15 minutes after the scheduled starting time of the game shall forfeit the game. Forfeit will be recorded as a 6-0 loss.
- If the protest is based on the interpretation of the rules, the objecting coach must, at the time the play occurs, notify the head umpire and the opposing coach that the game is being played under protest, and submit the protest in writing to the League Commissioner within 48 hours of the completion of the game.
- Any team coach or other adult leader who withdraws a team from the playing field, under any circumstances prior to the official completion of the game, shall forfeit all rights to a protest as prescribed in this section.
- Only the head coach or acting head coach can converse with an umpire. This is a High School League Rule and will be enforced by umpires.