

OKALOOSA MEN'S BASEBALL LEAGUE RULES AND REGULATIONS

CREATED FEBRUARY 26, 2002
Last Revision posted: February 2023

The Okaloosa Men's Baseball League provides an opportunity for men over the age of 18 to play baseball in a locally competitive environment. The league is a member of the national Roy Hobbs Baseball organization and adheres to the Roy Hobbs philosophy that all willing players deserve the opportunity to play organized baseball. A founding principal is that all players should be fielded on teams so as to create the greatest possible parity amongst all teams in order to afford equal opportunity for victory at each scheduled game. A second guiding principle upon which this league is founded is sportsmanship and fair play.

INDEX

1. Uniforms, Helmets, Baseballs and Other Equipment
2. Game Length, Run Rule and Rain-outs
3. Teams, Players and Line-ups
4. Player Behavior and Team Responsibility
5. Courtesy Runners
6. Playing Time
7. Pitchers
8. Fielders
9. Ex-Pro Status and Regulations
10. General League Rules
11. Code of Conduct
12. Penalties
13. Grievances, Protests, and Appeals
14. Championship Tournament Eligibility
15. League Officers

RULES

The Okaloosa Men's Base League adheres to the MLB National League rules, except as noted in these OMBL Bylaws.

NEW MLB RULES FOR 2023

OMBL's stance on invoking the new (2023) MLB rules ([click to learn more](#)) for local play are as follows:

1. Larger Bases: This rule is dependent on the respective field managers and out of the scope or concern of these bylaws. We will gladly accept larger bases if they are implemented on any or all fields.

2. Infielder Shift rule: Infielders shifting beyond second base will be given a single warning (per team), and then enforced and penalized as per the new MLB rule. The rule states that the offensive team has the option to decline the penalty (because a ball was put in play to their advantage). Otherwise, an automatic ball will be called.

Umpires will not be asked to enforce the part of the rule that prohibits infielders from playing beyond the grass line of the outer boundary of the infield. However, at no time will infielders be allowed to place themselves in an obvious position to create a 4th outfielder.

3. Pitch Clock Rules: OMBL umpires will *loosely* enforce the pitch timer rules, as precise pitch timer clocks are not practical. Gross violations will first receive a warning (per team). Second and subsequent gross violations (per team) will be penalized in accordance with MLB rules.

The Timer Explained: The clock starts when the pitcher receives the ball back from the catcher and ends when the pitcher begins his motion to deliver the next pitch.

Pitch Time Rules Explained (Pitchers): The new MLB rule allows for a maximum of 15 seconds between pitches (bases empty) and 20 seconds (with a runner on base).

Pitch Time Rules Explained (Batters): A batter must be “alert to the pitcher” (between pitches) no later than 8 seconds remaining on the timer. An offensive team is allowed 30 seconds between batters. Each batter is allowed one timeout per plate appearance.

4. Pickoff limit rule: This rule will not be in effect for Spring 2023 OMBL league play. The board will readdress this rule at a later date.

Pickoff Limit Rule Explained: A pitcher is allowed two (2) step-offs from the rubber (as in a pickoff attempt). If, on the 3rd disengagement, an out is not recorded (i.e., successful pickoff attempt) a balk is called. The limit is reset if a runner advances.

1. UNIFORMS, HELMETS AND BASEBALLS

1.a. All teams must have full baseball **uniforms** consisting of caps, numbered jerseys, baseball pants, and sanitary socks. Each player’s uniform must be of similar design to his teammates’ uniforms. Teams having sponsorship will be allowed the sponsor’s name on their uniforms via patch or uniform shirt.

1.b. All batters and runners *must have helmets*. There is no exception to this rule. Catchers *must* wear a helmet underneath their mask. The same rule will apply for all national tournament play.

1.c. The OMBL is a wood bat league. Only wood and composite wood **bats** are allowed for all league-sponsored events. Metal bats are NOT allowed in any league play.

1.d. Metal **cleats** are permitted.

1.e. *Batters must wear a helmet that covers the ear exposed to the pitcher.*

2. GAME LENGTH, RAIN-OUTS AND 10-RUN RULE

2.a. Regular Season Games: All regular season weekend games *may* be scheduled for nine innings. Nine inning, regular season games will have a 3 hour and 15 minute **time limit**. All regular season weeknight games will be scheduled for 7 innings, with a 2 hour and 30 minute **time limit**. A game will be called for time if the “next inning” has not begun (defined as the third out made in the bottom of the current inning) and the time limit has been reached.

2.a.1. Post-season Tournament Games: All league championship tournament games will be scheduled for 9 innings (for both weekend and weeknight games).

2. b. Inclement Weather - In the event of rain, it is the responsibility of the managers of the scheduled teams to determine field condition and possible cancellation of game at least 1 hour before scheduled game time. It is the home team manager’s responsibility to notify the head umpire as soon as possible.

The umpires may suspend, or cancel a game if, in their opinion; the safety of the players is compromised due to rain or field conditions.

If a game (regular season or tournament play) is stopped having played less than 3 full innings (18 total outs) the game and all stats will be thrown out and replayed at a later date. If 18 or more outs have been recorded, and the game is considered incomplete, the game will resume from that exact point (including pitching count on the batter) at a later date.

Any incomplete games stopped early due to rain will be re-scheduled by the league and managers involved and may be made up at any time not conflicting with previously scheduled games. Both managers must agree on the time and place of the rescheduled game, and they will ensure the league is notified of the time and place of the make-up game. Make-up games should be rescheduled to be played within the next ten days following a postponement.

Regular season games that are shortened by inclement weather that have been played to 5 innings (or 4 ½ innings where the home team has the lead) will be considered complete.

League championship tournament games that are shortened due to inclement weather that have been played to 7 innings (or 6 ½ innings where the home team has the lead) will be considered complete.

2.c. Time Limit:

General Rule for shortened games (by inclement weather or time limit):

Any game that is considered complete in these bylaws, but has not completed nine innings of play, will be recorded with a score and a winner (or tie) as defined by the last complete inning of play. Any partial inning played beyond that (for example, a rain cancellation in the middle of an inning) will not be recorded.

Regular season games that are shortened by time limit that have been played to 5 innings (or 4 ½ innings where the home team has the lead) will be considered complete.

League championship tournament games: A time limit shall not be applied to any championship tournament game.

2.d. 10-Run Rule: If there is a 10-run discrepancy at the end of 7innings (or 6 ½ innings where the home team has the lead), the game will be ruled complete at this point. Seven inning games will be played to completion, subject to the time limit rule, and are exempt from the 10-run mercy rule. This rule will not pertain to championship tournament play.

2.e. **Tied Games** – This Rule Applies Only to Regular Season Play: Complete games that end in a tie will be recorded as a tie for both teams and considered complete. However, Shootout rule play may be invoked if, and only if, a time limit has not been reached and the Shootout play can begin before 10:00pm.

No new Shootout inning may begin once the game’s time limit has been reached. No new Shootout inning will commence after 10:00pm. In the case where a Shootout has begun and the game remains tied when a time limit has been reached or the game is cancelled due to inclement weather, that game will be recorded as a tie and considered complete.

OMBL Shootout Rules Play 1 complete inning at a time, with the *last 2 legal batters* from the previous inning starting the new inning at first and second base. The last batter will occupy 1st base. The second to last batter will occupy 2nd base. Each hitter comes to the plate with a 2-1 count. Each team gets 3 outs (i.e., a complete inning will be played). If the score remains tied after each team has batted, repeat the process until there is a winner, except as noted above.

Tied Games – Championship Tournament Play: Games will be played to conclusion under the normal rules of play, regardless of the time limit or whether a game is scheduled to follow.

Final league standings will be determined by won/lost percentage. Tied records will be decided by head-to-head competition first, followed by run differential, least runs allowed, most runs scored, and finally, by coin toss.

3. TEAMS, PLAYERS AND LINEUPS

3.a. A player is eligible to participate in an official league sanctioned game on the dates on or after his 18th birthday. High school students are not eligible to play in the league.

3.b. Team rosters must be submitted to the league by opening day. These include league and player fees, proof of date of birth and player waiver forms. Managers may not change rosters after the first league game. The board reserves the right to accept late arriving players at any time throughout the season. The board will have final say as to which team the player shall be allotted to.

3.c. All players, prior to participating in a game, must have signed waiver forms on file with the league.

3.d. A team **manager may bat as many players as he desires**, with a minimum of 10 (subject to the least number of players available if less than 10 on one team). Batters cannot be deleted or skipped over, regardless of their batting position or when they were added during the game. Batting lineups may not be reduced once official play has begun.

3.e. A manager may add batters to the bottom of the lineup at any time. If a batter is pinch hit or run for (except under courtesy runners as outlined in section 5), the player may not re-enter the game as a hitter but may remain in the game as a fielder or pitcher. Each team has a hitting and a defensive lineup that are independent of each other. Players may play in either lineup or both.

3.f. Offensive substitution (Shared Batting Lineup Position). An additional batter(s) may be added to a position(s) in the batting lineup, provided that player(s) has not previously appeared in the lineup. The starting (initial) batter in the lineup must be declared to the opposing manager before the start of official play. Any shared position batter that gets on base may be substituted with his shared batting position player. That shared runner **MUST** make the next plate appearance in that shared batting position in the batting order.

3.g. If a player is forced to leave a game due to injury or commitment and no reserve is present, that spot is skipped and all batters move up accordingly, with no penalty to the affected team. If a player is ejected from a game, his slot is an automatic out unless a reserve player not previously entered into the game as a hitter has filled it (in other words, a new shared batting position created in accordance with paragraph 3.f. will not cause an automatic out to be recorded). A game will not be allowed to end on an automatic out. In the case where the automatic out would have otherwise concluded the game, that position will be skipped in the lineup without penalty and the next batter will be allowed to hit.

3.h. Minimum Players on the Field

Regular season: A team must have **7 original players for an official game** and may borrow up to 2 players from the league with the opposing manager's consent. Borrowed players can only fill an outfield position in left or right field (he may not occupy center field). A team must be able to field at least 8 total players or forfeit the game. If the team's 8th or 9th player arrives after the start of the game, the borrowed player is replaced. A manager may borrow players to create a maximum of 9 total players. Additional borrowed players in the batting lineup are not allowed.

Championship tournament: A team must have **at least 8 original players for an official game** and may borrow one player from the league. Borrowed players for tournament play can only fill an outfield position in left or right field (he may not occupy center field) and may not bat. The ninth (vacant) batter position in the borrowing team's lineup will incur an automatic out in that batting position, with the single exception that a tournament game will not end on an automatic out. In the case where the automatic out would have otherwise concluded the game, that position will be skipped in the lineup without penalty and the next batter will be allowed to hit. If the borrowed player is from the opposing team, that player can bat in his original team's batting order. Furthermore, the lending manager may elect to offer a different player in order to accommodate the player's availability to hit in the batting order (of his original team).

If one team has less than the minimum required, that team will forfeit. In this case the game will be recorded as a loss for the forfeiting team with a losing score of 9-0.

If both teams have less than the minimum, it is a double forfeit, scored as a 0-0 game.

3.i. All players may be substituted for defensively, at any time, without affecting the player's offensive status in the lineup. If the pitcher is removed, he may re-enter to pitch as long as he remains in the defensive lineup. The removed pitcher may play any other position. A pitcher may re-enter as a pitcher a maximum of one time during the game.

3.j. No player may switch teams without the consent of both managers and the league Board of Directors. If this does not meet with approval, the player must sit out the remainder of the season.

3.k. Final team rosters should have no less than 12 players.

4. PLAYER BEHAVIOR AND TEAM RESPONSIBILITY

4.a. *There will be no beer or alcoholic beverages permitted at the field before, during or after the game.* The field refers to the general playing area and dugouts. No player shall be allowed to participate in any league activity in any way under the influence of alcohol.

4.b. The league has the right to suspend or expel any team member who abuses league rules or who does not exhibit a sense of sportsmanship or who plays without regard to the safety of the umpires or other players.

4.c. An umpire has sole discretion to expel any player or manager from the game.

4.d. Fighting among players or aggressive physical contact with an umpire will not be tolerated and players expelled from the game for either violation will be subject to suspension or expulsion from the league. Reinstatement can be by appeal to the Board. Anyone ejected from a game is out for the remainder of that game and the next game. Reinstatement for the 2nd game may be by appeal to the Board.

4.e. Players shall not intentionally collide with any other player. In the case of a runner intentionally colliding with a fielder, the runner will be called out and may, at the

umpires discretion, be expelled from the game. All base runners must either slide or give up their right to a base (avoid a collision by stopping or leaving a base path) if the defensive player (e.g., Catcher) has possession of the ball, is in the act of receiving the ball, or is about to immediately receive the ball and will be able to make an apparent play on the base runner. If a defensive player is not in possession of the ball, is not in the act of receiving the ball, or is not about to immediately receive the ball so that he is able to record an out (apparent play at any base), he cannot block the base (e.g., Home Plate) or be in the base path so as to impede (obstruct) the base runner's right to that base. Under such circumstances, the defensive player shall be responsible to avoid any collision. If a collision does occur under these circumstances, the runner will always be considered safe and the obstruction rule shall be enforced. The defensive player may be ejected from the game (if the act is intentional, he must be ejected), and will be suspended from league play if the obstruction is judged to be flagrant.

4.f. Failure to abide by age regulations: The managers must all recognize their responsibility to the league and the perpetuity of it as to not cross the line where winning is more important than playing. An opposing manager at anytime has the right to question a player's age. If a manager wants to lodge a protest, proof of age and residence must be submitted to the league president or to the board for review by the following week. If an under age player is detected, penalties whether to the individual or team will be decided by the League President and Board of Directors.

5. COURTESY RUNNERS

Speed up rule for the Pitcher is *optional* and for the Catcher is *mandatory*. When there are two outs, the speed-up rule is in effect. The courtesy runner will be the last batter/runner that is not on base.

An injury runner may be invoked using the shared batting position rule (see paragraph 3f.). If no batter is available to occupy a shared batting position with the injured batter, the courtesy runner will be the last batter/runner that was made out.

6. PLAYING TIME

All Team Members present at the beginning of game play must meet the minimum playing time requirements. **Each player must play at least 3 events per game.** An event is defined as turn at bat or an inning played in the field (3 outs). At least one of the three events must be an at bat and at least one of the events must be an inning in the field. The third event can be either. A team member that arrives late or must depart early due to circumstance or injury is not subject to the minimum playing time rule.

7. PITCHERS

7.a. No player while pitching may wear white or gray sleeves past the elbow, nor may a Pitcher wear a batting glove or wrist band while pitching.

7.b. Intentional walks are allowed. Pitches do not need to be thrown.

7.c. If a pitcher hits 3 batters in any one game, the pitcher must be removed on the 3rd hit batsman.

7.d. A pitcher can pitch a maximum of 6 innings/18 outs (in a 9 inning game) or 4 innings/12 outs (in a 7 inning game). There is no regulation as to how many innings a pitcher may pitch in a single week.

7.e. A minimum of 6 outs in each game must be pitched, or 10 complete batters must be pitched to (whichever occurs first) by a 30-over pitcher from the team roster where they are available and reasonably physically able to do so. If, due to injury or circumstance, a team is unable to fulfill any part of this requirement, the team manager must immediately notify the opposing team manager. The opposing team is thereafter only obligated to match an equal number of outs pitched with his 30-over pitcher. Managers must take into account all circumstances and make every effort to oblige this rule, but not at the expense of the pitchers' well being. Willful violation of this rule is grounds for forfeiture of the game and possible disciplinary action by the board.

8. FIELDERS

8.a. Infielders are not allowed to decoy a tag. If a decoy tag is detected, all runners shall be allowed to advance one base beyond the base held after all play stops. If the same fielder decoys twice in the same game, the fielder shall be expelled from the game. Decoying is referred to as a false tag done in an attempt to get the player to slide unnecessarily, where no strategic value is gained.

9. EX-PRO STATUS AND REGULATIONS

9.a. A player must be out of pro-ball for 2 complete seasons (major league) and 1 season (minor league) before becoming eligible to participate in the League. Pro-ball refers to major and minor leagues.

10. GENERAL LEAGUE RULES

All protests should be lodged to the League Board within 24 hours after the game for which the protest is made. All protests shall be decided by the League Board of Directors.

11. CODE OF CONDUCT

PROHIBITIONS

Managers and players shall conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times. *No manager or player shall commit the following:*

11.a. Lay a hand upon, shove or strike, or threaten an official. Players and managers guilty of such conduct shall be immediately suspended from further participation in the game and shall remain suspended until the conduct is reviewed by the

Board of Directors. Players and managers guilty of such conduct shall be subject to suspension for the remainder of the season or expulsion from the League for life.

11.b. Refuse to abide by an official's decision. Players guilty of such conduct shall be immediately suspended from further participation in the game and shall remain suspended until the conduct is reviewed by the Board of Directors. Players guilty of such conduct shall be subject to probation or suspension for the remainder of the season.

11.c. Be guilty of objectionable demonstrations of dissent at an official's decision. Players and managers guilty of such conduct shall be subject to suspension from further participation in the game and the next scheduled game.

11.d. Discuss with an official or officials the decision reached by such official or officials, except for the manager or his designee who are authorized to participate in such discussions. Players guilty of such conduct shall be subject to suspension from further participation in the game.

11.e. Use unnecessarily rough tactics in the play of the game against the body or person of an opposing player. Players guilty of such conduct shall be immediately suspended from further participation in the game and shall be subject to probation or suspension for the remainder of the season.

11.f. Be guilty of physical attack as an aggressor upon any player, manager, official, or spectator, before, during, or after a game. Players guilty of such conduct shall be immediately suspended from further participation in the game and shall remain suspended until their conduct is reviewed by the Board of Directors. Players guilty of such conduct shall be subject to suspension for the remainder of the season or expulsion from the League for life.

11.g. Be guilty of verbal abusive attack upon any player, manager, official, or spectator, before, during, or after a game. Players guilty of such conduct shall be immediately suspended from further participation in the game and shall remain suspended until their conduct is reviewed by the Board of Directors. Players guilty of such conduct shall be subject to suspension for the remainder of the season.

11.h. Consume alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs during the game or be upon the field of play at any time in an intoxicated condition. Players guilty of such conduct shall be immediately suspended from further participation in the game and shall be subject to probation or suspension for the remainder of the season.

11.i. Smoking on the field of play or in the dugout before, during or after games. Players guilty of such conduct shall be immediately suspended from further participation in the game.

12. PENALTIES

12.a. The Board of Directors may, by vote of the majority of the Directors, suspend any player or manager for such a period and upon such terms as it may propose, for the conduct which in its opinion is prejudicial to the welfare, interest, reputation, or charter of the League.

12.b. Any player found in further violation of any provisions delineated in the codes of conduct, after being suspended from participation in a game shall be suspended for the remainder of the season.

13. GRIEVANCES, PROTESTS, AND APPEALS

13.a. Grievances may be filed by an individual player or by the manager of a team provided that a grievance is formally submitted to the appropriate Board. The Commissioner shall adjudicate all such grievances and shall report any action taken to the Board of Directors.

13.b. An appeal of any action or ruling may be filed with the Board of Directors by an individual player or by the manager of a team provided that the appeal is formally submitted. However, all decisions by the Board of Directors are final and not subject to appeal.

13.c. All grievances, protests and appeals must occur within 24 hours of the action or occurrence in question.

14. CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT ELIGIBILITY

14a. In order for a player to qualify and participate in his team's championship tournament games as a pitcher, he must participate in a minimum of 3 regular season games. Players added after opening day must participate in a minimum of 3 games, or 55% of his team's regular season games from the point he joined the team, whichever is less. If such a player fails to meet the requirements due to injury, a letter should be submitted to the League President explaining non-compliance and requesting an exemption to the rule. A player must play in at least 1 regular season game to qualify for any other position.

15. LEAGUE OFFICERS

15.a. League officers schedule, arrange and direct the rules and actions detailed in this document that are required to run the Okaloosa Men's Baseball League. Officers shall consist of a President, Secretary, Treasurer, and a Board of Directors. The Board shall consist of a minimum of four individuals, including the President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

15.b. The President, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be selected by the Board from among its members.