

**North Suburban**

**Baseball League**

**NSBL Official Rules**

(Last Amended April 29, 2010)

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# I. INFORMATION PROFILE

## A. Name

North Suburban Baseball League, commonly referred to as NSBL.

## B. Area Served

Students living and/or attending school in Mounds View, New Brighton, St. Anthony, Fridley, Columbia Heights, Mahtomedi, and White Bear Lake schools.

## C. Team and Level Structure

Grades 3 & 4	Maximum age as of Sept. 1st: 11 years
Grades 5 & 6	Maximum age as of Sept. 1st: 13 years
Grade 7	Maximum age as of Sept. 1st: 14 years
Grades 8 & 9	Maximum age as of Sept. 1st: 16 years

Players should not exceed the maximum age as of September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current season. Any player who exceeds the maximum age for his/her grade at any time up to September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current season is ineligible to play at that grade level for the entire season and must play up. Any exceptions must be approved prior to the time the player participates in a game by a majority vote of the NSBL board. (See "Player Eligibility" for rules pertaining to playing down a level.)

# II. PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

A. Amateur sports exists for one person: **THE PLAYER!** It does not exist for the coach, the parents, the community, the school or the baseball organization. NSBL's first commitment to amateur baseball is not winning, nor is it a commitment to produce professional players. NSBL's commitment is to teach players good basics, good sportsmanship and a lifelong enjoyment of baseball.

B. In keeping with this philosophy, it is the goal of the NSBL:

1. To teach players the value of good sportsmanship, fair play, and the ability to accept victory or defeat graciously.
2. To develop each participant to the best of his/her ability.
3. To develop individual and team skills, knowledge of the game and an attitude of team participation, loyalty and responsibility.

### III. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

Generally, see “Areas Served” and “Team and Level Structure”, page 2.

#### A. Playing down

Players are encouraged to play at their appropriate grade level. Any city wishing to place a player on a team below their appropriate grade level must receive approval of the placement by a majority of the NSBL board. The Board will give primary consideration to safety and fairness in making its decision. No player approved to play down may pitch or catch.

B. No player who plays on a traveling team is eligible to play in the NSBL in-house league. If the player has been selected to play on a traveling team but quits that team prior to commencement of the NSBL in-house season, the player may be added to an in-house team with the permission of that city’s governing board and approval by a majority of the NSBL board. (This rule does not apply to high school season play.) This rule applies to both regular and fill-in players. Each city can enforce it’s own additional rules regarding players selected for traveling teams as long as those rules are more restrictive than the NSBL rule.

C. Fill-in players (regular season only) will be allowed only if a team is unable to field nine players. Only players who are registered to play in the NSBL in-house program, are at or below the grade level of the team, and are not scheduled to play with their own team at the same time are eligible to fill in. The fill-in players cannot pitch or catch for that team. If nine regular team players are available, the fill-in players are not eligible to play unless one of the regular team members becomes unavailable due to illness, injury or departure. The opposing coach must be notified of the names and ages of fill-in players prior to commencement of the game.

D. No player is eligible to play in the in-house playoff tournament unless he/she is on the NSBL in-house team roster for that team as of June 1<sup>st</sup> of the current season. **Coaches cannot add players from other in-house teams or from a team outside the NSBL for playoffs.** Each city can enforce it’s own additional rules regarding addition of players as long as those rules are more restrictive than the NSBL rule.

### IV. EQUIPMENT

**No metal spikes** are allowed at any grade level. Protective cups are strongly recommended. All players on the field for a defensive inning must wear hats.

Batting helmets are required for all offensive players in the field of play, including batters, runners, players coaching base and batters warming up in an “in play”

area. 'Goalie' style catchers' masks are recommended, but not required, for Grades 7, 8, and 9.

The designated "home team" is responsible for field set up.

## **V. COACHES**

The coach is expected to be the leader by exhibiting good sportsmanship before, during and after practices and games. The coach is also responsible for controlling the behavior of his/her players, assistants and spectators.

Although the rules require that all players be in the game for a minimum of 3 defensive innings, coaches are strongly encouraged to provide players with equal playing time as much as possible.

**Use of illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages or tobacco products by players, coaches or spectators is absolutely prohibited on or near the field of play.**

There shall be no abusive language, swearing or gestures of any kind used by coaches, players, or spectators. No heckling of opposing team players or coaches is to be allowed by coaches. **Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their own players and spectators.** If a coach, player or spectator is found by the umpire to be using abusive language or acting inappropriately, the following rule will be applied:

The umpire will call time and call both coaches to the plate. The umpire can call the assistant coach if the head coach is the offender. The umpire will set out the following:

**First offense** - verbal warning

**Second offense** – removal from the game or forfeiture of the game by the offending side if the situation warrants.

**The non-offending coach should make sure the umpire safely leaves the game area at the conclusion of the game if the umpire is not an adult. Failure to comply with these actions will result in a suspension for the remainder of the season including all post season games.**

The coach may question the umpire's call only for a clarification of a rule - never for a judgment call. An umpire may discuss a rule for clarification before making his final call, but that call shall then be final. All such discussions should be held with a coach from each team present.

### **Game Scorebook Guidelines**

Completion of each team's scorebook is required for keeping track of individual game results that comprise the team standings within each division of the league. Completed team scorebooks for each team will also be used to determine the end of the season playoff matchups.

If a team's scorebook does not list a game, absent agreement between the coaches who played the game, that team will incur a LOSS. The game will count toward league standings and will also be taken into consideration for the determination of the end of the season playoff pairings.

**A representative for each team must bring a completed scorebook to the coaches' pre-playoff meeting, which is generally held on the last Thursday evening of the regular season. Coaches will be notified of the exact date, time and location of the meeting.**

## **VI. AWARDS**

Trophies or medals will be awarded to each player and coach on a team in each in-house league level as follows:

1. League Champion all ages (in the event of a tie, awards will be given to both teams)
2. Playoff Champion all ages
3. Play-off Runner-up all ages

## **VII. UMPIRES**

It is important that players not be encouraged to blame the umpire calls for mistakes or losses. Coaches are allowed to dispute rule interpretation calls by umpires (see last paragraph under 'Coaches' above) but when the call becomes final, coaches should refrain from continuing to dispute or complain about the call to or in front of his/her players. Judgment calls, whether the coach agrees with the call or not, are part of the game. Without rules and officials to enforce them, the game could not be played.

Each city is responsible for providing umpires for its home games. Each city should designate its own umpire coordinator to handle questions or complaints regarding umpires. In the event an umpire fails to appear at a game, both coaches should agree on an adult umpire selected from among the adults present. Such failure by umpire to appear is to be reported immediately to the umpire coordinator for that city.

The home team is responsible for paying umpire(s). Any adult who is recruited to umpire due to failure of the scheduled umpire(s) to appear shall be paid.

### **Protests**

A coach who feels an umpire incorrectly interpreted a rule may file an official protest by following these steps:

1. Inform the umpire in charge at the time of the play that a protest will be filed. ( The umpire needs to contact the umpire coordinator about the protest)

2. Turn in a written statement and description of the protest to their NSBL representative within 24 hours. **(No telephone calls on protests are allowed.)**
3. A fee of **\$50.00** must accompany the written protest, but the fee will be returned if the protest is upheld.
4. The NSBL board shall act on all protests within seven (7) days of receipt of the written protest. The decision of the board will be final.

**NOTE: Umpire judgment calls are not subject to protests!**

## VIII. IN-HOUSE LEAGUE REGULATIONS

All in-house teams will play under official Minnesota High School rules for all league and playoff games with the exception of changes noted in this section.

### A. Player/Game Roster

1. All levels will have roster batting, with all team members batting in order, regardless of whether they are in the field defensively at the time.
2. ***All players must play at least three full defensive innings per game, unless a game is called early.*** Coaches should strive to rotate players so that all players play **close to equal time**. Coaches may reduce playing time or bench a player for disciplinary reasons or illness but should notify the opposing coach.
3. A minimum of 8 players on each team are needed to start a game. At 5 minutes past the scheduled start time of the game, a team without at least 8 players present shall forfeit the game – no exceptions.
4. If neither team has enough players, it shall be a double forfeit, with both teams sustaining a loss unless both coaches agree to reschedule the game or play the game with the reduced number of players. *The umpire must be present when the coaches reach any agreement regarding playing with less than 8 players and should make a written note of the agreement and sign the note in each team's scorebook.*
5. Coaches must exchange full rosters with batting orders before the game. Players arriving after the game has started will be added at the end of the batting order.

### B. Team rosters:

Each team must submit a final team roster to its' NSBL representative no later than June 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year. The roster shall list team and coach name and each player by jersey number, name, birth date, city of residence and school name and grade in the last completed school year.

Rosters will be compiled by the NSBL board for each age level and available to each NSBL representative. Coaches may request a copy of team rosters for all teams at their grade level by contacting their NSBL representative.

## C. Game Regulations

### 1. Game rescheduling requests:

- i. All requests to reschedule games are to be handled between the coaches. Coaches are strongly encouraged to cooperate with game rescheduling requests, assuming the request is made with sufficient advance notice (i.e.: at least a couple of days). A request made within 2 hours of game time is not reasonable and the failure by the requesting coach to appear with enough players will result in a forfeit.
- ii. The coach requesting the rescheduling is responsible for reserving a field for the new date and contacting the appropriate umpire coordinator to cancel and reschedule the umpire. The game should be rescheduled to in the same "home" city as the cancelled game.
- iii. In the event a coach feels that a reasonable rescheduling request was not accommodated by the opposing coach, the requesting coach should immediately contact his/her NSBL representative and the matter will be decided first, between the representatives of the cities involved, and second (if necessary), by a majority vote of the NSBL board.

**This rule does not apply to rainout situations. In those situations, absent agreement between the coaches, the home coach has final say as to whether the game will be cancelled due to weather or field conditions and the home coach is responsible for rescheduling the game and notifying the umpire officials.**

### 2. Warm-ups/Games:

- i. Each team shall have the infield for 15 minutes of pregame practice prior to the start time of the game. This is done on a "first come" basis. The umpire shall be at the game field at least 5 minutes before game time to go over field rules and conditions with the respective coaches. The umpire is in charge of timekeeping for the "2 hour" rule and should designate a timekeeper prior to the start of the game.
- ii. All games must start within 5 minutes of the scheduled starting time, after which a forfeit may be called against a team without at least eight players or otherwise not prepared to start.
- iii. **The 10-run rule will take effect after 4-1/2 innings if the home team is ahead, or after five innings if the visiting team is ahead. Note: there is NO 15 run rule enforced.**

**Regular season:** No new inning is to be started after the game has been underway for 2 hours. In addition, on non-lighted fields, no new inning is to be started after 8:30 p.m. in any case. If a game is called due to lighting, weather or

field conditions, the game is considered completed if at least 3 1/2 innings with the home team leading (otherwise 4 innings) have been played. If a game is stopped, the game score reverts to the last completed inning and the game is considered completed if it complies with the above rule. If the game is not completed, it should be rescheduled to resume at the last completed inning.

**Playoffs/Championship Games:** The 2 hour time limit is waived but no new inning is to be started after 8 :30 p.m. on a non-lighted field unless the umpire deems it safe to continue. Playoff games and the championship game should be played the full number of innings set out in the grade group rules (or ½ inning less with the home team winning) unless the coaches agree otherwise. If a game is called due to weather or lighting conditions, the NSBL board must be immediately notified. The game will be completed at the earliest possible time unless the board votes by majority that rescheduling will result in too great a disruption of the playoff schedule. If the game is not completed due to board vote, the score will revert to the last completed inning.

## **D. Rain Delays/Rainouts**

**A game is to be stopped immediately and the field cleared if any lightning is sighted.**

Once a game has started, only the umpire in charge can stop play. After stopping play, the umpire must wait at least 30 minutes before ruling to postpone the game or call it as completed. The 30 minute time can be waived by agreement between both coaches.

The home team coach shall contact the visiting team as soon as possible after any postponed game and arrange a time and place for completion of the game. This should be done within ten (10) days of the postponement, and **must** be done prior to the conclusion of the regular schedule. The NSBL Board will rule on any rescheduling problems.

## **E. Grade Level In-house Rules:**

### **1. Grades 3 & 4:**

#### **Maximum Runs Per Inning**

An inning is over when 3 outs are made or when the batting team has scored a maximum of 6 runs, whichever occurs first.

#### **Game Length**

Games will end after 6 innings or 2 hours, whichever is first. Extra innnigs in the case of ties will not be played.

#### **Bat Size**

Bats must be approved for Little League play. Barrel limited to **2 ¼ inches**. No length or weight restrictions, if Little League approved.

## **Baserunning / advancing**

Base runners may advance only on hit balls & walks – no passed balls, no wild pitches, no balks. Additionally:

- The infield fly rule is waived,
- Dropped 3rd strike by the catcher - the batter may not attempt to advance to 1st base. No other runners on base may advance.
- Ball out of play - On any ball that goes out of play, ALL runners on base are entitled to advance one base, including home. A ball out of play is defined by the umpire and out of play lines should be announced by the umpire prior to the start of play.
- Base Stealing - **is not permitted at 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade level.**
- Bunting is permitted, although swinging away is highly encouraged to develop players and keep high levels of interest in the game.

## **Runner interference**

***At all levels a runner must slide or avoid a fielder fielding a ball in play. This includes plays being made on or near the baseline and at any base or home plate. The umpire shall rule the runner out if he felt that the runner interfered with the fielder.***

## **Base distance, innings in a game and pitching limits**

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Base Distance</u>	<u>Home to 2nd Base</u>	<u>Home to Mound</u>	<u>Innings in a Game</u>	<u>Pitch Innings game / wk</u>
3 and 4	60 feet	85 feet	42 feet	6	<b>2 / 6</b>

## **Pitching Rules**

In NSBL 9-10 year old leagues, a pitcher may pitch a maximum of **two** innings per game and a maximum of six innings per calendar week (Sunday-Saturday).

**Note:** One pitch constitutes an inning pitched.

The purpose of the pitching limitations are to encourage coaches to develop at least three, and preferably more pitchers as the season progresses. When a pitcher is removed, he may only return after three batters have taken their turn at bat for the opponent.

**Violations of the pitching limits rules will result in the violating team forfeiting the game in which the violation occurred**

## **2. Grades 5 & 6:**

### **Maximum Runs Per Inning**

An inning is over when three outs are made or when the batting team has scored a maximum of six runs, whichever occurs first.

## Bat Size

Bats must be approved for Little League play. Barrel limited to **2 ¼ inches**. No length or weight restrictions, if Little League approved.

## Game Length

Games will end after 6 innings or 2 hours, whichever is first. Extra innnigs in the case of ties will not be played.

## Base Stealing

Base stealing is permitted. The base runner **cannot lead off**, but is free to steal any number of bases (including home) once **the ball crosses home plate on a pitch and** as long as the ball is in play.

When the umpire calls time out (ball within imaginary 6 foot circle around mound) or has indicated batter up, the runners must return to their respective bases until the ball crosses home plate on a pitch.

**Infield fly rule** The infield fly rule is waived.

## Dropped third strike

On a dropped third strike by the catcher (with less than two outs), and providing that first base is unoccupied (no runner at pitch), the batter may attempt to advance to first base and the catcher may retrieve the ball and attempt to throw the batter out at first base. Any other base runners may also advance while the ball is in play. With two outs, the unoccupied base rule does not apply.

## Ball out of play

On any ball that goes out of play, ALL runners on base are entitled to advance one base, including home. A ball out of play is defined by the presiding umpire.

## Runner Interference:

***At all levels a runner must slide or avoid a fielder fielding a ball in play. This includes plays being made on or near the baseline and at any base or home plate. The umpire shall rule the runner out if he felt that the runner interfered with the fielder.***

## Base distance, innings in a game and pitching limits

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Base Distance</u>	<u>Home to 2nd Base</u>	<u>Home to Mound</u>	<u>Innings in a Game</u>	<u>Pitch Innings game / wk</u>
5 / 6	60 feet*	99 feet	46 feet*	6	<b>2</b> / <b>6</b>

**\* Where fields can accommodate these distances.**

## Pitching Rules

In NSBL 11-12 year old leagues, a pitcher may pitch a maximum of **two innings per game** and a maximum of six innings per calendar week (Sunday-Saturday).

**Note:** One pitch constitutes an inning pitched.

The purpose of the pitching limitations are to encourage coaches to develop at least three, preferably more pitchers as the season progresses. When a pitcher is removed, he may only return after three batters have taken their turn at bat for the opponent. Each such appearance in the same inning will count as an inning toward a pitcher's game or total innings pitched.

**Violations of the pitching limits rules will result in the violating team forfeiting the game in which the violation occurred.**

### 3. Grade 7:

#### Base Stealing

This level may lead off and steal according to Minnesota High School rules.

#### Bat Size

Weight to length differential must be between -9.0 to zero

#### Runner Interference

***At all levels a runner must slide or avoid a fielder fielding a ball in play. This includes plays being made on or near the baseline and at any base or home plate. The umpire shall rule the runner out if he felt that the runner interfered with the fielder.***

#### Base distance, innings in a game and pitching limits

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Base Distance</u>	<u>Home to 2nd Base</u>	<u>Home to Mound</u>	<u>Innings in a Game</u>	<u>Pitch Innings Game/wk</u>
7	75 feet	106 feet	52 feet	7	<b>3 / 7</b>

## Pitching Rules

In the NSBL 13 year old league, a pitcher may not pitch more than **three innings per game** and seven innings per calendar week (Sunday-Saturday). **Note:** One pitch constitutes an inning pitched.

The purpose of the pitching limitations are to encourage coaches to develop at least three, preferably more pitchers as the season progresses. When a pitcher is removed, he may only return after three batters have taken their turn at bat for the opponent. Each such appearance in the same inning will count as a full inning toward a pitcher's game or total innings pitched.

Violations of the pitching limits rules will result in the violating team forfeiting the game in which the violation occurred.

## Balks

This is an instructional level so a pitcher will be given 3 warnings before a balk is called. Upon the 1<sup>st</sup> warning (and thereafter as necessary) the umpire will call time and go out to the mound to instruct the pitcher on correcting his/her motion. Runners who are picked off by a pitcher on a throw that is called a balk warning are not out but do not advance on a warning.

## 4. Grade 8 & 9

### Base Stealing

This level may lead off and steal according to Minnesota High School rules.

### Bat Size

Weight to length differential minus 5 to zero.

### Runner Interference

***At all levels a runner must slide or avoid a fielder fielding a ball in play. This includes plays being made on or near the baseline and at any base or home plate. The umpire shall rule the runner out if he felt that the runner interfered with the fielder.***

### Base distance, innings in a game and pitching limits

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Base Distance</u>	<u>Home to 2nd Base</u>	<u>Home to Mound</u>	<u>Innings in a Game</u>	<u>Pitch Innings game/week</u>
8 and 9	90 feet	127 feet	60ft 6in	7	<b>4 / 10</b>

The **4 innings per game** limitation can be waived by mutual agreement of the coaches. The inning limitation per week cannot be waived.

Violations of the pitching limits rules will result in the violating team forfeiting the game in which the violation occurred

### Pitching Rules

In the NSBL 14-15 year old leagues, a pitcher may pitch a maximum of 10 innings within **a one-week period**. This restriction applies for all NSBL regular and post-season games. **Note:** One pitch constitutes an inning pitched.

The purpose of the pitching limitations are to encourage coaches to develop at least three, preferably more pitchers as the season progresses. When a pitcher is removed, he may only return after three batters have taken their turn at bat for

the opponent. Each such appearance in the same inning will count as a full inning toward a pitcher's game or total innings pitched. **Violations of the pitching limits rules will result in the violating team forfeiting the game in which the violation occurred.**

## **Balks**

Pitchers will be given 1 warning before a balk is called. The umpire will call time and go out to the mound to instruct the pitcher on his/her improper motion. Runners picked off on a throw that is called a balk warning are not out but do not advance on a warning.

## **IX. Playoffs**

Teams will be seeded for playoffs according to their record. A tie counts as ½ point for record purposes. In the event of a tie, a team's respective playoff position will be determined by the following system:

1. The result of head-to-head competition.
2. If still tied, the best total runs in head-to-head competition.
3. If still tied, a coin toss by a neutral NSBL board member.

### **Playoffs - Rules and Rain Delays**

1. The decision on whether a playoff games(s) will be played due to bad weather or field conditions shall be made by both coaches with the designated home coach making the final decision.
2. All attempts should be made to play the game, safety and weather permitting, since any one cancelled game will affect the entire playoff schedule.
3. In the event of wet grounds, both coaches should appear early and make every effort to groom a field so that game can be played or resumed.
4. If a game cannot be started within one hour of its' scheduled time due to weather or field conditions, the NSBL playoff coordinator must be notified as soon as possible so that he/she can reschedule the game at the earliest possible time.
5. Once a playoff game has started, only the umpire in charge can stop play, and, after stopping play, the umpire must wait at least 30 minutes before ruling to postpone the game or call the game as completed. The 30 minute time can be waived by agreement between both coaches.
6. All other Game Regulations (see p. 7) apply to playoffs.