

# **Minor League Cache Area Youth Baseball Bylaws 2026**

Current year National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) rules will be followed with the following exemptions:

1. **No sunflower seeds allowed on the fields or dugouts at any time.**
2. Divisions will draft/create teams in a way that creates balance of skill between teams as much as possible.
3. **League age determined by 2025-2026 school year (3rd & 4th Grade). No playing down players.**
4. Home team will be determined by the schedule.
5. Each team is to provide a new or good conditioned baseball to the umpire at each game. Balls will be returned to the teams at the conclusion of the game.
6. **Length of games** will be 6 innings or 80 minutes; no new inning after 75 min. [the Home team may take the field (bottom of the inning) even after the time has expired for a visiting team at bat (top of the inning) regardless of the score]. In the event of inclement weather or other prohibitive playing conditions, a game is considered a complete game after 40 min of play **ending in a complete inning**. Incomplete games will be rescheduled and will resume from the point where the game left off with pitchers returning to the mound to pitch at least one batter. Play to complete the game.
7. Games will only be rescheduled for weather or other conditions determined by League Reps. Games will not be rescheduled for convenience or due to teams missing players (See Bylaw 19).
8. Game time shall be announced to both coaches by the umpire. Game time begins when announced by the Umpire.
9. Each inning will consist of 3 outs or 5 runs per inning whichever comes first. Exception: If a team exceeds 5 runs as a result of the batter hitting an over the fence home run, then the additional run(s) will count.
10. **GAMES CAN END IN A TIE.** Once the time limit has expired, or the 6th inning has been completed, the game is over, even if the score is tied. Exception: during tournament play, tiebreakers will be decided by using the international tiebreaker rule. The offensive team will start with a runner on second base for each half of the inning. The runner placed at second base will be the person in the batting order directly before the lead-off batter of the current inning (Ex. If the number five batter in the batting order is the first batter of the inning, the number four batter will be placed on second base). This rule will remain in effect until the tie is broken at the completion of the inning.
11. **Pitchers** may throw a maximum of 2 innings/day and 4 innings/week; Any pitch thrown in an inning constitutes an inning, regardless of the number of outs. Once a pitcher is taken off the mound they can not return to pitch in that game. A pitcher must have a minimum of one day's rest (at least 18 hours) before they are eligible to pitch again. In the case of double headers: a pitcher may pitch a total of 3 innings a day but no more than 2 innings in a game and no more than 4 innings in a week.
12. Each team's starting pitcher must be a 9-year-old or younger player based on the player's age on the first game of the season. If the player is 9 years old or younger as of the first game of the season even if they turn 10 years old during the season they qualify as a 1<sup>st</sup> inning pitcher. A pitching change can be made in the first inning as long as the new pitcher is still 9 years old or younger.
13. A pitcher cannot pitch in the same game once he is removed from the mound.
14. If a pitcher hits 3 batters in a game, the pitcher must be removed. That pitcher cannot pitch anymore for that game.
15. A violation of any pitching rule may cause forfeiture of a game if protested to the league coordinators.
16. 2 minutes or 5 warm-up pitches will be allowed between each inning.
17. Since there is no leading off, balks will only be called when blatant or intentional and may be called as a ball at the discretion of the umpire.
18. **Scorekeeping:** Each team will keep a scorebook with the HOME team being the official book. The official scorekeeper will be identified prior to the start of the game and will record game start time.
19. Before each game, both teams will provide their opponent with a copy of their batting line-up. All players in attendance will be included in the batting lineup, and the line-up must include their last name and uniform #.
20. Players must be registered in the league and on the team roster to be eligible to play. When necessary, replacement players can come from the 8U (coach pitch/Rookie) league. Only registered players from the same city on an 8U league team may be used. Once a player from the younger league is used on a team, that player is only allowed to play up with that team (in other words, a single 8U (Coach Pitch/Rookie) player cannot play for more than 1 Minor League Team). **A registered player must play a minimum of 4 of the 8 season games to be an eligible player in the tournament (not including a play up player when needed). Exception: is if a player is injured or under other approved circumstances by the city's coordinator. If any ineligible player plays in a game that game will be forfeited (including tournament games).**

21. For teams that have less than 7 players at the scheduled game time: an out will be taken at the missing spot(s) in the batting order until 7 or more players arrive at the game.
22. Players arriving late to the game after the first scheduled at-bat will be added to the bottom of the batting line-up.
23. Free defensive substitutions. Each player must play at least 1 inning or 3 outs per game on defense.
24. **Equipment:** Maximum diameter of the barrel is 2 ¾" inches. This also applies to wood bats. If a non-compliant bat is discovered during the game the umpire will remove the bat from play and the opposing team may protest the game result to the league coordinators after the game is complete.
25. Batting helmets are required for batters, on-deck batters, base runners and youth base coaches (under 18). Base coaches will also observe sportsmanship rules and not make comments to opponents.
26. NO METAL CLEATS.
27. **Sliding:** We enforce a mandatory slide rule at home plate. If there is a play at home plate the base runner must slide or they will be called out. Base runners heading to 1st, 2nd, or 3rd base must either slide OR avoid intentional/flagrant contact. Coaches, we are concerned about player safety and sportsmanship. Catchers/fielders **should not block the plate or the path to the plate (allow a path to the plate) when in possession of the ball.** Runners should avoid collisions and using a slide is helpful to avoiding improper contact or the appearance of improper contact. **Players may only steal once base per pitch.**
28. **Stealing** 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base is allowed when the pitched ball reaches the plate. Stealing home is NOT allowed. If a player leaves early, then the umpire will give both teams a warning on the first occurrence and send the baserunner back to the prior base. Each occurrence thereafter, the offending player will be called out.
29. Only 1 advanced base per overthrow/pitch to 2nd or 3rd base. **On a walk ball players may only advance to 1st base.** **Players MAY NOT advance to home on an overthrow or passed ball.** If a player is stealing 2nd and the catcher makes a throw and the throw goes into the outfield, the runner MAY NOT advance to third base. The runner received their base on the steal attempt. (1 base per pitch). **The intent of this rule is that players score on a hit ball or walk only.**
30. When the ball has returned to the infield and is in control by the Pitcher, there will be no advancement from the offense and the play is dead. Baserunners cannot advance on an overthrow from the catcher to the pitcher.
31. **The dropped third strike rule** does NOT apply to this league. A batter is ruled out on a called third strike.
32. **Lightning:** In the event that lightning is seen and/or thunder heard, the Umpire and Coaches will stop the game and clock to check the (FREE) **Weather Bug Phone App** to determine the proximity of lightning. If lightning is detected within 6 miles, players and spectators will be asked to take cover in vehicles. The Umpire will confirm that the scorebooks are up to date and match. The game will resume after 20 min if there is no lightning within 6 miles of the ballpark. Bylaw 5 reference to inclement weather applies to lightning.
33. **Game protests** must be placed within 24 hours after the end of the game. The protest will be settled by the league coordinators. Decisions will be made within 72 hours of the protest.
34. No protest will be permitted on judgment decisions by the umpire.
35. **Sportsmanship:** All coaches and fans are expected to behave with good sportsmanship and positive support for the players and umpires. Failure to do so could result in game forfeiture and suspension from the league. **Arguing balls and strikes is not allowed,** umpires may eject coaches or players from the game. Coaches are responsible for parent's actions and behavior. Spectator behavior could result in game termination. Players and/or coaches ejected from a game must immediately leave the park and miss the next game.
36. **Sportsmanship continued:** Each year we hear of some unsportsmanlike conduct by an adult in front of kids. We have a goal of zero tolerance. We want this clean and fun.
37. Although available playing field dimensions may vary, cities will strive to maintain safe playing conditions and appreciate coaches reporting items that need attention.
38. **Win/Loss/Tie Reporting:** Winning coaches shall report a win immediately following the game. Text the date and name of the winning team to the League Representative. If no score is reported within 48 hours, both teams will receive a loss for that game. See published game schedule for instructions. Overall team records will be used for end of season tournament seeding.

