

2026 Major League Baseball Rules

Below are commonly requested rule clarifications and local rules. Reader is advised to consult the Little League Rule Book for a complete description of the rules. The Rule Book is available in the App/Google Play Store under “Little League Rule Book”.

General Rules

1. No new innings after:

May 8:15 PM

June 8:30 PM

Max 6 innings per game, minimum of 4 per game

2. Local Rule:

a. May - No drop third strike

b. June - Drop third strike is in effect

3. Mandatory Playing Requirements (Reg IV.i):

Mandatory Play: Every rostered player present at the start of a game will participate in each game for a minimum of six (6) defensive outs and bat at least one (1) time. For purposes of this rule:

“Six (6) defensive outs” is defined as: A player enters the field in one of the nine defensive positions when his/her team is on defense and occupies such position while six outs are made;

“Bat at least one (1) time” is defined as: A player enters the batter’s box with no count and completes that time at bat by being retired, retired as a batter-runner or runner, scores, reaches base safely, or, after reaching base safely, the inning or game ends

Offensive Rules

1. No on deck position/batter. All on deck players must remain inside the dugout, **behind the fence**, during each inning

2. Leading Off & Stealing (Regulation 7.13): Base runners shall not leave their bases until the ball has been delivered and has reached the batter

3. Runs per Inning (Local Rule):

● Max run limit per half inning or three outs. Whichever comes first

i. First 5 Innings: Max 5 runs per half inning; mercy rule is 10 runs after 4 innings

ii. 6th Inning: Max run total for 6 is the run differential plus one at completion of 5 innings

1. For example. Completion of 5 innings; score is Visitors 1, Home 7. The most runs the visiting team can score in the top of the 6th is 7 runs (7-1=6; 6+1=7; Potential Score: Visitors 8; Home 7)

4. **Bat Rules** – Bats shall bear the USA Baseball logo signifying that the bat meets the USABat – USA Baseball’s Youth Bat Performance Standard. The bat diameter shall not exceed $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches and 33 inches in length.
5. **Local Rule:** Batting order consists of all eligible present players. (aka bat through the order)

Defensive Rules

6. Catchers

- Male players in the catcher position must wear an athletic cup
- **Pitcher to Catcher (Regulation VI.c)** - If a pitcher reaches 40 pitches while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch, and maintain their eligibility to play the position of catcher for the remainder of that day, until any one of the following conditions occurs:(1) that batter reaches base; (2) that batter is retired; (3) the third out is made to complete the half inning or the game; or (4) the pitcher is removed from the mound prior to the batter completing his/her at-bat. The pitcher would be allowed to play the catcher position provided that pitcher is moved, removed, or the game is completed before delivering a pitch to another batter. If a player delivers 41 or more pitches, and is not covered under the threshold exception, the player may not play the position of catcher for the remainder of that day.

7. Pitchers

A. Catcher to Pitcher (Regulation VI.a):

- i. Any Player who has played in the position of catcher in four (4) or more innings in a game is not eligible to pitch on that calendar day
- ii. A player who played the position of catcher for three (3) or less innings, moves to the pitcher position and delivers 21 pitches or more in the same day, may not return to the catcher position on the same calendar day

B. Pitcher is removed from the Mound (Regulation VI.b): A pitcher once removed from the mound cannot return as a pitcher

C. Pitch Counts (Regulation VI.c):

- i. The manager must remove the pitcher when said pitcher reaches the limit for his/her age group as noted below, but the pitcher may remain in the game at another position.
- ii. Under no circumstance shall a player pitch in three (3) consecutive days.
- iii. A pitcher’s pitch count for the purposes of day(s) rest threshold is determined by the first pitch thrown to a batter. The pitcher may not start a new batter once the limit imposed in Regulation VI(c) has been met.

Number of Pitches	Calendar Days Rest
66+	4
51-65	3
36-50	2
21-35	1
1-20	0

Age	Pitch Limit per Day
12	85
11	
10	75
9	
6-8	50

D. Pitchers must wear a helmet during warm-ups in between innings