



## **South Orange Maplewood Baseball**

### **Local Rules for Minors, Majors 60, Majors 70, and Babe Ruth Leagues**

*Updated 4/2024*

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*SOM Baseball Local Rules for Minors, Majors 60, Majors 70, and Babe Ruth Leagues*

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## **1. Mission Statement**

The South Orange Maplewood Baseball (SOM Baseball) program uses regulation baseball rules that have been adapted for youth players by Babe Ruth League. Through this ruleset along with our Local Rules, it is our goal to teach competitive baseball and thereby foster: (a) the development of skills both physical and mental, (b) a respect for the rules of the game, and (c) ideals of teamwork, sportsmanship, and fair play. As a recreational league, we are committed to providing all children, regardless of skill level and previous experience, with the opportunity to play baseball. As a competitive league, we are committed to providing a fair and uniformly applied set of rules that will allow children to learn the realities of competition which includes the ability to win and lose with grace and dignity.

## **2. General Comments on Local Rules**

**2.1 Rules Committee Authority:** The Rules Committee's authority is limited to baseball gameplay. The Rules Committee has no authority over general league issues such as player registration, draft procedures, sponsorships, field reservations, etc.

**2.2 Official Rule Book and Local League Rules:** Each team is given a Babe Ruth League Official Rule Book (referred to hereinafter as the "Official Rules") containing the rules by which all games and league play will be governed. In addition, these Local SOM Baseball League Rules (referred to hereinafter as the "Local Rules") apply in the SOM Baseball League. To the extent of any conflict between the Official Rules and the Local Rules, the Local Rules apply. All coaches must familiarize themselves with both rulesets, and have a copy of both the Rule Book and these Local Rules, either electronically or physically, on hand at all games.

**2.3 Applicability and Purpose of Local Rules:** These Local Rules do not apply in the T-Ball and Rookie Leagues, which are non-competitive developmental leagues. These Local Rules apply to the Minor League (Minors), Majors 60 League (M60), Majors 70 League (M70), and Babe Ruth League (Babe Ruth). Our Local Rules are designed to advance our players towards playing pursuant to standard regulation baseball rules as soon as is developmentally appropriate for as many players as possible.

**2.3.1 Modification of Rules:** Coaches may not modify any Rules for individual games, even if there is agreement by all coaches and the umpire.

**2.4 Enforcement of Rules:** In order to ensure fair competition, all rules will be strictly enforced. The Rules Committee along with other league officials will not bend, adapt, or make exceptions to rules once the season is underway. Rules will be applied strictly as written, in order to make sure that rules are uniform and predictable. Issues that arise with the rules during the season will be addressed by the Rules Committee when considering rules changes during the off-season.

**2.5 References to Rules:** In this document, all references to rules in the Official Rules will be designated as “Rule X.X” and all references to rules in these Local Rules will be designated as “Local Rule X.X.”

### **3. League Commissioners and Rules Disputes**

**3.1 Appointment of League Commissioners:** One commissioner shall be appointed by the Rules Chair for each of the Minors, M60, M70, and Babe Ruth leagues. The commissioner for each league may not be coaching in that league or have a child playing in that league during the season they are serving as commissioner. League Commissioners shall also serve on the general Rules Committee.

**3.1.1 Current League Commissioners:** League Commissioners for the 2024 season are:

Babe Ruth	Bran Noonan	<a href="mailto:bran@ogeezbrands.com">bran@ogeezbrands.com</a>	917-886-0468
M70	Mark Calveric	<a href="mailto:mcalveric@gmail.com">mcalveric@gmail.com</a>	917-887-3177
M60	Dan Goodman	<a href="mailto:thegoodman@gmail.com">thegoodman@gmail.com</a>	917-885-3048
Minors	Jason Rando	<a href="mailto:randomania@yahoo.com">randomania@yahoo.com</a>	917-930-6346

**3.2 Game Protests and Rules Issues:** All game protests and rules issues must be raised to the appropriate league’s commissioner in accordance with Rule 4.18. No protest will be entertained by a commissioner unless the rule issue was raised to the umpire at the time of the occurrence and the umpire was advised that the game is being played under protest. Except as provided in [Local Rule 8.7](#), game protests and other rules issues must be submitted in writing via email to the appropriate commissioner within 24 hours after the end of a game, except for protests regarding violations of pitch count and playing time rules. Protests regarding violations of pitch count and playing time rules may be made at any time up to 48 hours after the playing time and pitch count information related to the protest becomes available. Any rule protest regarding playing time or pitch count violations must specify when the information necessary to make the protest became available.

**3.3 Decision-Making by Commissioners:** The League Commissioner is to hear any game protests or rules disputes that arise during the season and issue a ruling based on the Official Rules as modified by these Local Rules. Commissioners shall thoroughly review any rules issue and shall issue a decision that cites the specific rules that relate to the decision. The commissioners have sole authority and responsibility to make rulings for their leagues. At their discretion, commissioners may consult with any other persons as they see fit. League Commissioners need not consult with other members of the Rules Committee before issuing a decision, but are encouraged to do so if in doubt as to the correct ruling. Rulings from League

Commissioners shall be in writing, by email, with copies to all members of the Rules Committee, including the Rules Chair, as well as the League President and Vice President.

**3.4 Appeals:** Decisions of League Commissioners are appealable solely to the Rules Committee as a group. Such appeals must be submitted by email to the Rules Chair within 24 hours of the decision by the League Commissioner. Decisions of League Commissioners shall only be overturned in cases of clear error. Members of the Rules Committee who are coaching in, or have a child playing in, the league out of which the appeal arises may not participate in deciding any such appeals.

**3.4.1 Appealing to the League President:** Decisions of the Rules Committee may be overturned by the League President in accordance with the the league bylaws.

**League President**

Matt Gray

South Orange Director of Recreation & Cultural Affairs

[mgray@southorange.org](mailto:mgray@southorange.org)

**3.5 Advisory Opinions:** Coaches are encouraged to speak with members of the Rules Committee to seek guidance on rules issues they anticipate before they become issues in games. Coaches may seek informal or formal advisory opinions.

**3.5.1 Informal Advisory Opinions:** An informal advisory opinion may be sought from any member of the Rules Committee in any manner convenient. If the issue on which advice was sought becomes an actual dispute in a game, the normal procedures outlined above for resolution of the dispute shall be followed. Any advice given through an informal advisory opinion shall not be binding upon the League Commissioner or the Rules Committee.

**3.5.2 Formal Advisory Opinions:** A coach may seek a formal advisory only by submitting the request in writing to the commissioner for the applicable league. If the issue does not fall under an Official or Local Rule, the League Commissioner shall bring the issue to the full Rules Committee for decision. A formal advisory opinion given on behalf of the full Rules Committee shall be binding in any later dispute that arises regarding the specific issue that was addressed by the formal advisory opinion. Coaches seeking formal advisory opinions are urged to seek them well in advance of the anticipated issue arising. The Rules Committee makes no guarantee that any formal advisory opinion can be rendered in any particular time frame.

#### **4. Coaches Interaction with Umpires**

**4.1 Expectations:** All SOM Baseball coaches, managers, and players are expected to treat our league's youth umpires with respect. Abusive, aggressive, harassing, and bullying behavior will not be tolerated. We expect our coaches to be more than just about winning games. They are role models and should take that responsibility seriously. Sportsmanship and mutual respect for all individuals involved in each game are not just encouraged, they are expected.

**4.1.1 Disagreement with Umpire Judgement Calls:** Coaches may not argue a judgment call (i.e. ball, strike, safe, out, fair, foul, etc.). This includes angry comments not directed toward the umpire(s) but audible to them.

**4.1.2 Disagreement with Umpire Rulings:** If a coach disagrees with a ruling, the coach can request time to approach the umpire(s) and discuss the issue. The opposing coach must be present for the conversation and it is the obligation of the disagreeing coach to invite the opposing coach to the discussion. If the disagreeing coach fails to do so, the umpire(s) will not entertain any discussion.

**4.1.3 Coach Conduct:** Coaches should address any disagreement calmly. If the disagreement involves an interpretation of a particular rule, coaches are encouraged to refer to the rules and present them to the umpire during this discussion.

**4.1.4 Umpire Empowerment:** The umpire is empowered to end a discussion at any time and confirm or reverse the specific call being discussed. Once the umpire ends the conversation, coaches should return to their dugouts immediately without further comment.

**4.1.5 Recourse:** If a coach still disagrees with a non-judgement call that was made and believes that such a call had a material impact on the game, they may calmly inform the umpire that they are playing the game under protest as per [Local Rule 3.2](#).

**4.2 Implications:** The following penalties will be implicated if a coach violates any of [Local Rule 4.1](#).

**4.2.1 First Offense:** Offending coaches will be issued a warning by the umpire. Warnings will be reported to the Umpire Coordinator.

**4.2.2 Second Offense in a Single Game:** Should a coach receive a second warning in the same game, the coach will be automatically ejected from the game, suspended from coaching the next game, and must meet with the Sportsmanship Chair before returning to coach.

**4.2.3 Ejections:** If a coach is ejected, they must vacate the premises. Refusal to do so or

to return within view of the field after leaving, even after the last out is made, will result in a forfeit for their team.

**4.2.5 Multiple Warnings Across Games:** If a coach receives a second warning during a season, they will be required to meet with the Sportsmanship Chair before coaching their next game. Any subsequent warnings will result in a one-game suspension and a meeting with the Sportsmanship Chair before returning to coach.

**4.2.6 Multiple Suspensions:** If a coach is suspended twice, they will be banned from further coaching in the SOM Baseball league. Additionally, they will be banned for 1 year from coaching in any other South Orange Recreation Department sponsored sport (ex. flag football).

**4.2.7 Retroactive Actions:** Warnings can be given retroactively by the Rules Chair, Sportsmanship Chair, League President, or League Vice President. Action can be taken by any of the prior named persons, or the Executive Baseball Committee as a whole, even if the umpires don't warn or eject.

## **5. Ground Rules**

**5.1 Balls Out of Play:** Any ball that leaves the field of play shall be declared a dead ball. On all fields, a ball shall be considered out of play if it crosses the plane defined by the fence separating the playing field from the spectators' area. [Local Rule 12.9](#) applies if the ball leaves play on a throw. Rules 6.09 (d)-(h) applies if a fair batted ball leaves the field of play.

**5.1.1 Holes in the Fence and Balls Lodged in the Backstop Pads or Fence:** Balls that pass through a hole in a fence or become lodged in the backstop pads or the fence and don't immediately fall out shall be ruled dead. If a thrown ball goes through a hole or becomes lodged, dead ball rules apply pursuant to Rules 7.05 (g) and (h). If a fair batted ball goes through a hole or becomes lodged, Rules 6.09 (d)-(h) apply. If a foul batted ball goes through a hole or becomes lodged, it shall be ruled a foul ball.

**5.1.2 M3 Boundaries:** On M3, the area behind an invisible line drawn from the end of the dugout fence to the spray-painted pole on the fence separating the playing field from the spectators' area is out of play.

**5.1.3 Cameron Field Boundaries:** On Cameron Field, the area behind an invisible line drawn from the front of the backstop fence to the spray-painted pole on the fence separating the playing field from the spectators' area is out of play.

**5.2 M4 Ground Rule:** If a batted ball strikes any portion of the tree (including leaves, branches, etc.) hanging over right field at M4 in fair territory, it shall be ruled a ground rule double. If the ball strikes any portion of the tree in foul territory, it shall be ruled a foul ball. Once the ball

strikes the tree, regardless of whether it was in fair or foul territory, the play is immediately dead and may not result in an out, even if the ball is caught by a fielder.

**5.3 M1 Ground Rule:** If a batted ball strikes any portion of the tree (including leaves, branches, etc.) hanging over the backstop and nearby areas of M1, it shall be ruled a foul ball. Once the ball strikes the tree, the play is immediately dead and may not result in an out, even if the ball is caught by a fielder.

## **6. Gameplay**

**6.1 Regulation Number of Innings:** Regulation game length for all leagues is 6 innings unless extended because of a tie score or shortened because (1) the home team is in the lead entering the final half-inning, (2) the home team takes the lead during the final half-inning, or (3) the umpire calls the game.

**6.1.1 Tie Scores:** If a score is tied after the regulation number of innings has been played, play shall continue until (1) the visiting team has scored more total runs than the home team at the end of a complete inning, (2) the home team scores the winning run in an incomplete inning, or (3) the game is called for reasons specified in [Local Rules 6.2-6.7](#).

**6.1.2 Extra Innings:** Beginning with the 7th inning, the last batted out from the previous inning shall be placed at second base to start the inning. This rule will be in effect for all subsequent innings.

**6.1.3 Official Games During League Play:** During league play, a game is considered official and shall not be suspended or rescheduled once the first pitch is thrown. Called games shall follow [Local Rule 6.4](#).

**6.1.4 Official Games During Playoffs:** During the playoffs, a game is considered official and shall not be suspended if (1) four innings have been completed or (2) the home team has scored more runs in three or three and a fraction half-innings than the visiting team has scored in four completed half-innings. Playoff games that are called prior to becoming an official game shall be suspended.

**6.2 Time Limits:** No new inning shall begin after 1 hour and 50 minutes have passed from the official start time. The official start time shall be announced by the umpire immediately at the conclusion of the pregame conference. Coaches should enter the pregame conference ready to begin play as the clock will start immediately at its conclusion. The umpire is the official and sole timekeeper.

**6.2.1 Hard Stops:** There shall be no hard stoppage of play. Games shall be allowed to finish the current inning before being called for time. Following games may be forced to start later in order to allow prior games to finish the final inning. Official start times will



reflect any delays.

**6.2.2 Time Limits During Playoffs:** There shall be no time limit during playoff games.

**6.3 Calling Games for Darkness:** The umpire may call a game at any time if there is insufficient light to play safely. The determination of sufficient light is in the sole discretion and judgment of the umpire, and is not appealable.

**6.4 Score of Called Games:** During league play, the final score shall be the score at the end of the last completed full inning. The only exception shall be when the score was tied or the home team was trailing at the end of the last completed inning and has either tied the score or gone ahead during the inning in progress. In this case, the final score shall be the score at the time the game is halted.

**6.4.1 Ties During League Play:** During league play, a game that is called and results in a tie shall be recorded in the standings as a tie.

**6.4.2 Ties During the Playoffs:** During the playoffs, any game that is tied when called shall be suspended.

**6.4.3 Surrendering Outs:** A visiting team that has come from behind in the top of an inning may elect to give up its right to three outs and agree to take the field to allow the home team to have its final at-bat. The purpose of this rule is to discourage a visiting team from deliberately making outs or a home team from purposefully extending their time in the field in an effort to revert the score back to that of the prior complete inning.

**6.5 Suspended Games:** A suspended game will be resumed from the point of the suspension at a later date to be set by the league. Both coaches and the umpires must record the status of the game at the point of the suspension. Pitchers will be subject to all limitations on their pitching that were in effect as a result of pitching in the game that was suspended and all limitations imposed due to their pitching schedule leading up to the resumption of the suspended game. Every effort will be made to schedule the same umpires for the continuation, but this is not a guarantee.

**6.6 Weather:** In the event of thunder or lightning, coaches must have their teams vacate both the playing field and dugouts (regardless of whether or not they are covered), and move to a safe place. Play may not resume until 30 minutes have elapsed from the last observed instance of thunder or lightning as determined by the umpires. In the event of rain without thunder or lightning, as well as any other hazardous weather condition, the game may be called in the sole discretion of the umpires if the field becomes unplayable or hazardous.

**6.6.1 Air Horn Alerts:** Air horns will be placed in the field boxes at all fields. Umpires are instructed to blow the air horn each time thunder or lightning is observed. When an

air horn blows, all surrounding games must vacate the fields regardless of whether or not thunder or lightning was observed from their field.

**6.6.2 Games Canceled by the League:** If a game is canceled due to a message on the [South Orange Rec Twitter page \(@SOrangeRec\)](#), the fields are considered to be closed for all purposes and the game may not be played regardless of field conditions at the actual scheduled start time.

**6.7 Mercy Rule:** The mercy rule shall take effect as soon as a team is leading by 10 runs or more and the losing team has completed a minimum of 4 innings at bat. The mercy rule is in effect for all leagues during league play and playoffs. Games are considered official and completed as soon as the mercy rule takes effect.

**6.7.1 Run Limit in Minors:** In a Minors game, no more than 5 runs may be scored in any half inning by the offensive team except in the final inning and in any extra innings. In innings prior to the final inning, the inning shall end immediately upon the scoring of the fifth run, regardless of the number of outs. If runs beyond 5 are scored on a single play (ex. a grand slam is hit after 4 runs have already been scored in that inning), only the 5th run shall be recorded. The final inning must be announced by the umpire to both teams prior to the first pitch of that inning.

**6.7.2 Continuing Play After the Mercy Rule Occurs:** If a game is called under the mercy rule and the field is still available for use, the coaches may agree to continue to play in a scrimmage mode. The umpires are not required to stay for the scrimmage, but may choose to do so. Scrimmages are equivalent to practices and will not affect official game records. Sportsmanship rules, however, always apply.

**6.8 Rescheduling and Forfeits:** Use of the Reserve Call-Ups System under [Local Rule 9](#) is mandatory in order to avoid the need for rescheduling games. Rescheduling requests may be made only if the coach believes that they will not be able to field at least seven of their own roster players for a game.

**6.8.1 Rescheduling due to Coach Conflicts:** Games may not be rescheduled due to conflicts with a coach's schedule. In such cases, the coach is responsible for ensuring that other Rutgers-certified coaches can cover the game.

**6.8.2 Notifying Opposing Coaches:** If a reschedule is requested due to an inability to field at least seven roster players, coaches must notify opposing coaches, the league president, and the umpire coordinator by email at least 48 hours prior to a scheduled game time. Such games will be rescheduled, if possible, and no forfeit will be declared. If a coach fails to notify the above persons at least 48 hours prior to game time, the game shall be declared a forfeit. The coaches may agree to play a scrimmage during the

designated field time if they confirm with the league president that the field is still available for use. If coaches choose to scrimmage, umpires will be scheduled dependent upon availability and are not guaranteed.

**6.8.3 Agreeing Not to Play Games:** Coaches may not agree not to play a game. Violation of this rule is to be considered a sportsmanship violation and will be referred to the Sportsmanship Chair. If a violation occurs that affects playoff standings, the League Commissioner shall have the option to reseed teams for the playoffs.

**6.8.4 Rescheduling Playoff Games:** Rescheduling playoff games is not permitted unless done so by the league due to weather or any other unavoidable circumstance. The playoff schedule will be released as early as possible to allow players to make sure they will be available. The call-up system may not be used during the playoffs as per [Local Rule 9.9](#) and loaning players is not permitted in the playoffs as per [Local Rule 6.9.6](#).

**6.9 Playing With Fewer Than 9 Players:** If 7 or fewer players are available to play 15 minutes after the scheduled game time, the team with 7 or fewer players must forfeit. If neither team can field 8 players, the game will be recorded as a forfeit and a loss for both teams, with no runs scored for either team, for the purposes of determining league standings.

**6.9.1 Playing With 8 Players:** If 8 players are available, the game may be played. When the #9 spot comes up in the batting order for the team with 8 players, it will be recorded as an out. If a 9th player arrives for that team, the automatic out shall not be awarded moving forward.

**6.9.2 Playing With 9 Players in Minors:** Minors teams with only 9 players will receive a loaner defensive player from the opposing team as per [Local Rule 6.9.4](#). No automatic out will be recorded for the missing 10th player.

**6.9.3 Losing Players During the Course of the Game:** If at any time a sufficient number of players leave so that only 8 players are available, an out shall be recorded when the batting spot of the last player to depart occurs. If at any time a team is reduced to 7 players, that team shall forfeit.

**6.9.4 Loaning Players During League Play:** During league play, opposing coaches shall “loan” a player to a team with less than 9 fielders (10 in Minors) in order to give that team a full defensive field. The loaned player shall play the outfield and shall be the player in the lineup before the leadoff hitter for the upcoming at-bat (i.e. if the 7th hitter is leading off, the 6th hitter is the loaner player). If the loaned player is on deck, they shall be switched with the most recent batter that is on the bench.

**6.9.5 Playing With Fewer Than 10 Players in Minors:** In Minors, teams with less than

10 players shall receive loaner players as per [Local Rule 6.9.4](#). Minors teams with 8 players shall receive two loaner players in order to have 10 players on the field. While no automatic out is applied when playing with 9 players (see [Local Rule 6.9.2](#)), an automatic out will occur when the #9 spot if playing with 8 players.

**6.9.6 Loaning Players During Playoffs:** Loaning players is not permitted during the playoffs. Teams playing with less than 9 players (10 in Minors) will play without a full outfield.

**6.10 Ineligible Players:** No coach shall play on the field in any position. No player shall play on the field in any position unless they are a member of the team, have been assigned as a call-up player by the League Commissioner or the Rules Chair, or are a loaned player from the opposing team.

**6.11 Pre-Game Warm-ups:** If the field is clear at least 30 minutes prior to a game, the home team may practice on the infield from 30 minutes prior to game time to 15 minutes prior to game time. The visiting team may practice on the infield for the remaining time up until game time. Infield practice is not allowed for either team if there is not sufficient time for both teams to have 15 minutes on the field. One coach from each team is expected to be ready for the pregame conference 5 minutes prior to game time.

**6.12 Playing Without an Umpire:** In the event an umpire is not at the field 5 minutes prior to game time, coaches should contact the umpire coordinator. If no umpire is available for a game, the game shall nevertheless be played. Umpiring shall be done by both teams, with a coach of the defensive team umpiring each inning from behind the pitcher's mound. Alternatively, the head coaches may agree upon any other solution, such as using a neutral third party. In no event may any umpire without proper umpire's protective equipment umpire from behind home plate.

## **7. Pitching**

**7.1 Tracking Pitches:** All pitches thrown in a game, whether or not the game becomes an official game, count towards rest requirements. This includes pitches thrown for intentional walks. Pitches thrown in warm-ups and practices do not count towards pitch counts. Coaches must count pitches for both teams and reconcile counts at the conclusion of each half-inning. In the event of irreconcilable discrepancies, the pitching team's count governs.

**7.2 Substitutions:** Rule 0.06 #5 does not apply. Pitchers who have thrown one or more pitches and are removed from the pitching position may not return to that game as a pitcher.

**7.3 Intentional Walks:** Pitches do not have to be thrown for intentional walks. Whether intentional walk pitches are thrown or not, they count towards pitch counts. Intentional walks do not count towards [Local Rule 7.4](#).

**7.4 Minor League Walk Rule:** In Minors, after the 4th walk in an inning by the same pitcher, each subsequent batter who faces that pitcher shall begin their at-bat with an 0-1 count. For this rule, walks are considered bases on balls (not intentional, see [Local Rule 7.3](#)) only and not hit batters. Once the pitcher is removed or the inning ends, this rule resets. This rule is in effect in Minors only and shall not be used in other leagues.

**7.5 Players on Multiple Teams:** Players on school teams, private teams, or teams in any other leagues who wish to pitch in the SOM Baseball program must submit a signed agreement to the League President, in the form designated by SOM Baseball, stating that the player and the player's parents agree that the player's total pitch counts for all teams shall not exceed the limitations set forth in these Local Rules. This form shall be distributed with registration materials, and must be received by the league prior to the draft.

**7.5.1 Ineligible Pitchers:** Any violation of [Local Rule 7.5](#) renders the player who violated that rule an ineligible pitcher, and [Local Rule 7.6](#) applies. Coaches who suspect the other team to be using an ineligible pitcher should follow the protest procedure outlined in [Local Rule 3.2](#). Any violation of this rule results in a forfeit for the team that has violated the rule.

**7.6 Required Rest Days:** Players must observe the number of rest days set forth in the table below, based on the number of pitches they have pitched in a day, before pitching again:

<b>Pitch Count in a Single Day</b>	<b>Required Number of Rest Days</b>
61 or more	3
41-60	2
21-40	1
1-20	0

**7.6.1 Definition of Rest Day:** A Rest Day means a full calendar day with no pitching. For example, if a player pitches in a Monday game, triggering 2 calendar days of rest, the pitcher must rest Tuesday and Wednesday and is eligible to pitch again on Thursday.

**7.7 Doubleheaders:** In the event of a doubleheader, pitchers will be allowed to pitch in both games. However, they may only pitch in the second game if they do not reach the first rest day threshold of 21 pitches. Pitch counts for the second game shall pick up where the count left off in the first game (i.e. if a pitcher throws 9 pitches in game one and 23 pitches in game 2, they will have thrown a combined total of 32 pitches and will be required to rest two days). [Local Rule 7.12](#) applies for Minors pitchers.

**7.8 Pitch Count Limitations:** Consistent with [Local Rule 7.5](#), all pitchers must abide by pitch count limitations, regardless of which team they are pitching for, in order to be eligible to pitch in SOM Baseball.

**7.8.1 Pitch Count Limitations in Minors, M60, and M70:** Pitchers in Minors, M60, and M70 are limited to a maximum of 60 pitches per game (45 pitches per game through April 30th).

**7.8.2 Pitch Count Limitations in Babe Ruth:** Pitchers in Babe Ruth are limited to a maximum of 75 pitches per game (60 pitches per game through April 30th).

**7.8.3 Pitcher Rest Day Thresholds:** In the event that the maximum pitch count is reached during the middle of an at-bat, the pitcher will be allowed to complete the at-bat, but must be removed prior to the next batter. Pitchers may complete an at-bat at any of the Pitching Rest Thresholds in [Local Rule 7.6](#) without triggering an extra day of rest. In these situations, pitch counts shall be reported at the threshold, not the actual number of pitches thrown.

**7.9 Penalties for Pitch Count Violations:** Rule 0.06 #4 applies. Any violation of the pitch count rules results in a forfeit for the team that has violated the rule. Rules 0.06 #5 and #6 do not apply.

**7.10 Hit Batters in M60 and Minors:** Any M60 or Minors pitcher that hits 2 batters with a pitch in the same inning, or three batters in the same game, must be removed from the position of pitcher at the request of the opposing coach to the umpires.

**7.10.1 Umpire's Discretion:** The umpires may remove any pitcher in any league that hits 2 batters with a pitch in the same inning, or three batters in the same game, if the umpires believe the safety of the opposing team's batters is in jeopardy. The umpires' decision in all such cases is a non-appealable judgment call.

**7.11 Trips to the Mound:** Rule 8.06 applies in all leagues. A team is entitled to one mound visit per pitcher, per inning.

**7.11.1 Trips to the Mound in Minors:** In Minors, during the month of April, a second trip to the mound in a single inning is permitted. A third trip to the mound shall automatically result in the removal of the pitcher from the game as a pitcher only.

**7.12 Innings Pitched:** Rules 0.06 #1, #2, and #3 do not apply. There are no innings pitched limitations of any kind in Babe Ruth, M70, or M60. Minors pitchers may pitch a maximum of 3 innings in any game or over both games of a doubleheader.

**7.13 Balks:** Balks are in effect for M70 and Babe Ruth. Umpires will attempt to be instructional by informing pitchers and/or coaches of possible balks before they occur if they are able to do so.

**7.13.1 Balk Warnings:** Each pitcher will be allowed one balk warning. Once a warning is given, any balk committed by that same pitcher for the remainder of the game will be enforced. Pitchers are not given a warning for each “type” of balk. After one warning, any balk can be enforced. Runners stealing during balk warnings will be allowed to advance to that base.

**7.13.2 Informal Balk Warnings:** Umpires may, at their discretion, give informal balk warnings to pitchers. Informal warnings are usually given when a pitcher is committing a minor balk that is easily fixed. These warnings are given in the spirit of instruction and are not counted as the official warning for that pitcher.

**7.14 Hidden Ball Trick:** The hidden ball trick is not permitted in M60 or Minors. When attempted in M70 and Babe Ruth, balks shall be strictly enforced (i.e. [Local Rules 7.13.1-2](#) do not apply, no warnings will be given).

## **8. Playing Time and Player Eligibility**

**8.1 Batting Order and Defensive Alignment:** The batting lineup shall consist of all players who appear for the game and may be changed at the coach’s discretion prior to each game, in accordance with standard baseball rules. Late players shall be added to the end of the batting order. A player who arrives at the field after the scheduled start time for the game is a late player. Free substitutions in the field are allowed between innings. All players must field and bat during the game. No player may be designated as only batting or only fielding, regardless of medical or other issues.

**8.2 Courtesy Runners:** Coaches may use a courtesy runner for the pitcher or catcher at any time regardless of outs. After 2 outs are recorded, a coach must use a courtesy runner for the catcher. The courtesy runner shall be the player who made the last batted out.

**8.2.1 Last Batted Out:** The “last batted out” refers to the player who made the last out during an at-bat (i.e. strike-out, ground-out, fly-out). If the last batted out is unavailable (i.e. already on the bases or at-bat) or is the pitcher or catcher, the courtesy runner shall be the prior last batted out.

**8.2.2 No Last Batted Out Available:** If there is no last batted out available (i.e. using a courtesy runner in the 1st inning before an out has been recorded), the courtesy runner shall be taken from the bottom of the batting order.

**8.2.3 Purpose of Courtesy Runners:** The purpose of the courtesy runner system is to ensure pitchers and catchers are ready to take the field immediately at the start of the next inning. Catchers are expected to have their shin guards and chest protector on by the time the inning ends, unless they are at-bat. Catchers who are on deck with two outs should

leave their shin guards on until they come up to bat. If a catcher ends the inning at-bat and, therefore, is not available immediately, a coach or player must begin to warm up the pitcher as per [Local Rule 12.12.1](#). Players or anyone under the age of 18 (i.e. siblings) must wear a catcher’s mask when doing so.

**8.2.4 Courtesy Runners for Injured Players:** If a player is injured and not able to run, the player who made the last batted out may be used as a courtesy runner.

**8.3 Injured Players:** If a player is injured on the offensive team, the player who made the last batted out may be substituted in as a courtesy runner as per [Local Rule 8.2.4](#). If a player is injured on the defensive team, a substitute may be freely entered into the game, consistent with [Local Rule 8.1](#). An injured player may re-enter the game provided that, consistent with [Local Rule 8.1](#), the player is able to bat and play the field. The re-entering player shall resume their original spot in the batting order. [Local Rule 6.9](#) applies if injuries result in a team having fewer than nine players.

**8.4 Playing Time in M60, M70, and Babe Ruth:** No player may sit out more than 2 innings in a game. If 11 or more players are present at a game, all players must sit at least 1 full inning. Whoever is on the bench for the first inning of a game must start the following game and play at least 2 consecutive, complete innings in the field. The chart below sets out playing time requirements:

# Players at Game	# Players sitting 1 inning	# Players sitting 2 innings
13	2	11
12	6	6
11	10	1
10	6	0
9	0	0
8	0	0
7	Forfeit	

**8.5 Playing Time in Minors:** There shall be 4 outfielders. Coaches may play a spread outfield or a short fielder, but in either case all 4 outfielders must be positioned on the grass section of the outfield. No player may sit out more than 2 innings in a game. If 12 or more players are present at a game, all players must sit at least 1 full inning. Whoever is on the bench for the first inning of a game must start the following game and play at least 2 consecutive, complete innings in the



field. The chart below sets out playing time requirements:

# Players at Game	# Players sitting 1 inning	# Players sitting 2 innings
13	8	5
12	12	0
11	6	0
10	0	0
9	0	0
8	0	0
7	Forfeit	

**8.6 Consequences:** During league play, a first violation by a team of the Playing Time Rules shall receive a warning from the Rules Committee and the Head Coach may be required to meet with the Sportsmanship Chair. Any subsequent violations of the Playing Time Rules, or any violation of the Playing Time Rules during the playoffs, shall result in the violating team automatically forfeiting the game. Coaches who suspect the other team to be in violation of Playing Time Rules should follow the protest procedure outlined in [Local Rule 3.2](#).

**8.7 Line-Up Cards:** Rule 4.01 shall not apply. Teams shall exchange batting orders prior to the game, but need not provide batting orders to the umpires.

**8.8 Defensive Substitutions:** All players who start an inning in the field must remain in the field for the entirety of that inning. Players are not permitted to be substituted from the bench during an inning. This includes pitchers. An exception may be made for a player who is injured while playing on the field as per [Local Rule 8.3](#).

**8.8.1 Position Changes:** Coaches may freely move players to different positions in the field during an inning without penalty provided all players who start the inning in the field remain in the field.

**8.9 General Playing Time Rules:** Teams may not play an inning with less than 9 players in the field to comply with the Playing Time rules if they have 9 or more players present who are able to play. Playing Time rules apply during the Regulation Number of Innings per [Local Rule 6.1](#). There are no Playing Time Rules applicable during extra innings.

**8.10 Playoff Eligibility:** In order to be eligible for the playoffs, players must appear in at least

half of their team's league play games. If an opposing coach feels that a team has violated this rule, they must inform the head coach and umpires of their protest prior to the first pitch of the game. They should then follow the game protest procedures outlined in [Local Rule 3.2](#). If the player in question is removed from the lineup prior to the first pitch, there will be no penalty imposed. If a team is found to have violated this rule, the game will be recorded as a forfeit and that team will be eliminated from the playoffs. Exceptions due to injury, illness, or other extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Rules Chair and League President.

## **9. Reserve Call-Ups**

**9.1 Objectives of Reserve Call-Ups System:** The main goal of the Reserve Call-Ups System is to avoid rescheduling or forfeiture of games due to not having enough players to fill a roster. A secondary goal is to give players an opportunity to experience a higher level of baseball. Coaches in M60, M70, and Babe Ruth who do not have enough players shall request players to be called up from a pool of players managed by their league's commissioner in order to augment the number of players on the team so the game can be played.

**9.2. Selection of Players for the Call-Up Pools:** All eligible players will be offered the opportunity to participate in the Call-Up Pool. The commissioner for each league will contact families with an opportunity to indicate interest and availability to serve as call-up players. Minors players will comprise the Call-Up Pool for use in M60, M60 players will comprise the Call-Up Pool for use in M70, and M70 players will comprise the Call-Up Pool for use in Babe Ruth. There is no Call-Up Pool for use in Minors. Players who are "playing up" to a league above the league designated for their age are not eligible to be in the Call-Up Pool.

**9.3 Call-Up List:** Each league's commissioner shall maintain a call-up list. This list shall be made up of eligible players that have opted into being available for call-up use. The League Commissioner shall provide equitable opportunities to participate to these call-up players. The League Commissioner will assign players to a team based on a coach's request for players and will not entertain requests for specific players.

**9.4 Number of Call-Ups That Can Be Used:** The requesting team must have at least 7 of its own players at the game. A coach who believes they will have eight players may request one call-up player. A coach who believes they will have seven players may request two call-up players. No more than 2 call-up players may be used for any game.

**9.5 Contacting Call-Up Players:** Coaches must request call-up players directly from their league's commissioner. The likelihood of the request being satisfied is reduced as game time approaches. Coaches may not use any call-up player in a game who was not assigned to their game by their league's commissioner.

**9.6 Use of Call-Up Players:** Call-up players must be used consistent with the rules of the league they are playing in with respect to batting and innings played in the field, subject to the modifications below.

**9.6.1 Pitching and Catching:** In M60 and M70, no call-up player may pitch or catch. In Babe Ruth, call-up players may catch for up to three innings with call-up players being permitted to start at catcher even if the team has more than 9 players. Using a call-up player as a catcher cannot result in a team player sitting more than 2 innings.

**9.6.2 Conflicts:** A call-up player may not be used if it will interfere with their availability to play in their own team's game.

**9.6.3 Uniforms:** Call-up players shall play in their own team's uniform.

**9.6.4 Using Call-Up Players with 9 or More Regular Team Players:** If a call-up player has already been assigned and a team ends up with 9 or more of their own players, the call-up player will still be allowed to play. However, no call-up player may start the game in lieu of a regular team member unless they are starting at catcher (see [Local Rule 9.6.1](#)). The call-up player may play no more than two innings in the field unless [Local Rule 9.6.5](#) takes effect.

**9.6.5 Call-Up Players Playing in Place of Regular Team Players:** If a team that has at least 9 of their own players is using a call-up player and a regular team player requests to sit due to fatigue or injury, the call-up player may play the field for more than 2 innings.

**9.6.6 Batting Order:** Call-up players must bat at the end of the batting order unless a regular team member arrives after the start of the game. Those players arriving late will bat after any call-up players.

**9.7 Failure to Use Call-Up System:** If a team does not request substitute players and appears for a game with less than eight players, [Local Rule 6.9](#) shall apply.

**9.8 Delay of Game:** The game may not be delayed for a call-up player in violation of [Local Rule 6.9](#). However, a call-up player can be added to a team after the start of the game to complete a 9-player team.

**9.9 Playoffs:** Call-up players may not be used for any playoff games.

**9.10 Abuses:** Any coach found to be avoiding playing his own team members in favor of requesting playing call-up players or otherwise attempting to use the system for competitive advantages, rather than to simply avoid reschedules and forfeits, will be reported to the Sportsmanship Chair.

## **10. Uniforms and Equipment**

**10.1 Uniforms:** All players are encouraged to come to games in full uniform. SOM Baseball provides players with a team hat, team shirt, team socks, and gray baseball pants. Hats should be worn while on the field. Shirts must be tucked in. Sneakers or cleats must be worn. Jewelry is prohibited except for medical alert bracelets and similar medically necessary jewelry. Umpires will not prohibit any player from participating in a game due to uniform concerns unless their clothing is deemed unsafe for play.

**10.1.1 Metal Spikes:** Metal spikes are prohibited in Minors and M60.

**10.2 Bats:** See Rule 1.10 for bat specifications. In short, non-wood bats must have a “USA Baseball” or “BBCOR .50” stamp to be used in Babe Ruth and must have a “USA Baseball” stamp to be used in Minors, M60, and M70. All non-wood bats are limited to a diameter of 2 5/8 inches.

**10.2.1 Illegal Bats:** If a bat is discovered to be illegal, it shall immediately be removed from play. If it is removed before a complete at-bat, the batter shall continue the at-bat with a legal bat and the count shall remain as it was prior to discovery of the illegal bat. Any hit by a batter using an illegal bat shall be recorded as an out, all runners shall return to their original bases, and any outs during the play shall stand. As this is an appeal play, the at-bat will be considered legal once a pitch is thrown to the next batter and can no longer be appealed.

**10.3 Protective Equipment for Catchers:** Catchers are required to wear appropriate protective equipment such as a catchers glove, shin guards, chest protector, helmet with mask, and protective cup.

## **11. Official Standings**

**11.1 Point System:** Standings will be kept on a point system of 2 points for a win, 1 point for a tie, and 0 points for a loss. Tie games will not be continued except during the playoffs. Forfeits will be recorded as 6-0 scores, unless the forfeit is due to neither team being able to field a sufficient number of players, in which case the forfeit and loss for each team shall be recorded with no runs scored for either team pursuant to [Local Rule 6.9](#).

**11.2 Reporting:** Coaches must keep written or electronic score cards for every game, for both teams, in order to resolve any discrepancies or protests. Images or downloads of these completed score cards, with player names included, must be sent by email from both coaches to their league’s commissioner within 24 hours of the conclusion of each game. Additionally, both coaches must report pitch counts to their league’s electronic form within 24 hours of the conclusion of each game. For reporting pitch counts at the Pitching Rest Thresholds, see [Local](#)

[Rule 7.8.3](#). Winning coaches must report final scores to TeamSnap within 24 hours of the conclusion of each game.

**11.3 Tie-Breakers:** Tie-breakers are determined by the following (in this specific order):

1. Percentage determined by total points divided by possible points
2. Result of head-to-head matchups
3. Total runs allowed
4. Coin flip by the League Commissioner

## **12. Miscellaneous Rules**

**12.1 Plays at the Plate:** Rules 7.06 and 7.08 apply to all plays at the plate.

**12.1.1 Obstruction by the Catcher:** Catchers may not block the plate unless in possession of the ball, or in the act of fielding the ball, as determined in the sole judgment of the umpire. Pursuant to Rule 7.06, if the catcher improperly blocks the plate, the baserunner shall be called safe by the umpire.

**12.1.2 No Crashing the Catcher:** A base runner attempting to score must slide into home plate or otherwise avoid collision with the catcher. Pursuant to Rule 7.08, if a baserunner fails to slide or avoid and in the umpire's sole judgment, a dangerous situation was created, the baserunner shall be called out. The umpire shall be the sole judge as to the actual or potential danger created. The baserunner's innocent intent, lack of knowledge of the rules, or lack of ability to slide shall not be considered by the umpire in making this decision. In the event of a conflict between [Local Rules 12.1.1](#) and [12.1.2](#), [Local Rule 12.1.2](#) shall take precedence.

**12.1.3 Ejection of Players:** The umpire may eject a runner or catcher if the umpire believes the runner's failure to slide or avoid, or the catcher's improper blocking of the plate, was done with malicious intent, or if regardless of the player's intent, the player has created multiple dangerous situations.

**12.2 Head-First Slides in Minors and M60:** In Minors and M60, baserunners may not slide head-first into any base, except when returning to the base. Players who do so shall be called out by the umpire.

**12.3 Head-First Slides in M70 and Babe Ruth:** In M70 and Babe Ruth, baserunners may slide head-first into any base except for home plate. Players who slide head-first into home plate shall be called out by the umpire.

**12.4 Rounding First Base:** Baserunners may overrun first base in accordance with standard baseball rules and are not required to overrun in foul territory. However, baserunners who, in the

umpire's judgment, make a move towards second base, are subject to being put out by the defense.

**12.5 Infield Fly Rule:** The Infield Fly Rule is in effect for all divisions. Please review the definition of an Infield Fly in Rule 2.0, and Rule 6.05 (e).

**12.6 Steals and Leads:** In simple terms, leads and steals are allowed in M70 and Babe Ruth; steals of second and third one base at a time, but not leads, are allowed in M60; and steals of third base only, with no leads, are allowed in the Minors.

**12.6.1 Baserunning in Minors and M60:** The “Cal Ripken Major 60 Ft. Baseball Division Special Base Running Rule” as noted in the Official Rules applies. Even if a player is illegally running to a base (ex. attempting to steal second in Minors), they are subject to be put out and shall only be returned to their original base without liability to be put out if they reach the illegal base safely and the play has been ruled dead.

**12.6.2 Batters Who Walk:** In M60 and Minors batters who walk may not continue to second base.

**12.7 Coaches Positioning:** Rule 4.05 applies. Coaches must stay off the playing field. Coaches of the batting team may have one coach in each of the first and third base coaching boxes. Teams may use players as first and/or third base coaches, provided such players wear batting helmets. Fielding team coaches must be at or behind the sideline fences. A coach who enters fair territory triggers the visits to the mound rule under Rule 8.06. Coaches who enter fair territory while the ball is live are subject to penalty pursuant to Rule 4.05.

**12.8 Live and Dead Balls:** Returning the ball to the pitcher does not end play. In Minors and M60, play is declared dead when the pitcher is in contact with the pitcher's plate and in possession of the ball and the catcher is in the catcher's box ready to receive delivery of the ball as per the “Cal Ripken Major 60 Ft. Baseball Division Special Base Running Rule” in the Official Rules.

**12.9 Overthrows:** Rule 7.05(g) applies but is often misinterpreted. The following is offered as guidance: Two bases are awarded on an overthrow by a fielder. A pitcher is considered a fielder once they disengage from the pitcher's plate. When the overthrow is the first play from the infield, the award of two bases is calculated from the last base occupied by the runners at the time the ball was released by the pitcher; in all other cases, the award is calculated from the last base occupied by the runners at the time the ball was released by the fielder who committed the overthrow.

**12.9.1 Overthrows by a Pitcher:** As mentioned above, the pitcher becomes a fielder once they disengage from the pitcher's plate. If a pitcher throws the ball out of play (i.e.

on a pitch or on a pickoff move in which they didn't disengage from the pitcher's plate), one base is awarded to each baserunner.

**12.10 Thrown Bats and Equipment:** Rule 6.05 applies. The umpires may eject any player immediately and declare that player out if the player throws any equipment or takes any other action with the intent to cause injury to another player, coach, umpire, etc. The umpires may also immediately call a player out for intentionally throwing any equipment in a dangerous fashion, even if there is no intent to cause injury.

**12.10.1 Accidental Thrown Bats:** If a player throws their bat accidentally (i.e. loses control and throws on follow-through), the umpire shall first give the player a warning. A second offense, regardless of intent, shall be called an out. Each individual player is entitled to receive a warning before being called out, unless the equipment was thrown intentionally. A warning to an individual player does not result in an automatic out for similar action by any other player on either team. It is the umpire's sole, non-appealable, discretion whether there was intent to cause injury and whether or not equipment was thrown intentionally.

**12.11 Dropped Third Strikes:** Rule 6.09(b) does not apply in Minors or M60. The batter is out when a third strike is called by the umpire regardless of whether or not it is caught by the catcher. Rule 6.09(b) does apply in M70 and Babe Ruth Leagues.

**12.12 Time between Innings:** New pitchers shall receive no more than 8 warm-up pitches and returning pitchers shall receive no more than 5 warm-up pitches. Warm-up time between innings shall not exceed two minutes and the umpire shall call "balls in" if they do. Warm-ups must stop after balls are called in, regardless of whether the catcher or other players are ready to play. The umpire shall be the sole judge of when two minutes have elapsed.

**12.12.1 Warming Up the Pitcher:** If the catcher is not prepared to warm up the pitcher, a coach or player should warm up the pitcher until the catcher is ready. Players must wear a catcher's mask when warming up the pitcher. These warm-up pitches are counted towards the limit of 8 or 5 pitches. Warm-ups thrown by the pitcher while off the rubber are counted towards the limit of 8 or 5 pitches.

**12.13 Playoffs:** All Local Rules apply equally during the Playoffs except as specifically noted herein. For clarity, the mercy rule in [Local Rule 6.7](#) applies in the playoffs and any game halted before it is an official game ([Local Rule 6.1.4](#)) shall be a suspended game and shall be completed as soon as scheduled.

**12.14 Dugouts:** The home team is assigned the first base bench and the visiting team is assigned the third base bench.

### **13. Appeals**

**13.1 Umpire's Judgment Calls:** Umpire's judgment calls (i.e. ball, strike, safe, out, fair, foul) are not subject to appeal. Coaches may ask for clarification of any call, including judgment calls, in a respectful manner as per [Local Rule 4.1.1-3](#) but all judgment calls by the umpires are final.

**13.2 Incorrect Rule Applications:** If an umpire incorrectly applies a rule that does not require a judgment call (ex. called out on 2 strikes, infield fly called with no force at third or with 2 outs, incorrect application of overthrow rule, etc.), the coaches may discuss the issue calmly with the umpires. The opposing coach is required to be present during any such discussion as per [Local Rule 4.1.2](#). A request can be made to modify an on-field call in order to comply with the Official Rules and Local Rules. Coaches initiating such a discussion must cite the specific applicable Official Rules and Local Rules as per [Local Rule 4.1.3](#). After discussion, the umpires' ruling is final. If a coach still believes the on-field ruling was incorrect, the only remedy is to play the game under protest per Rule 4.19 and [Local Rule 3.2](#).

**13.3 Appeal Plays:** On-field appeal plays must be made in accordance with the Official Rules. For examples, see Rules 6.07 and 7.10.



### 14. Local Rules Changes for the 2024 Season

Rule Changes for the 2024 SOM Baseball season are outlined in the table below:

<b>Rule #</b>	<b>Change</b>
<a href="#">4.2.5</a>	Coaches will be penalized for multiple warnings across games. A second warning in a season will require a meeting with the sportsmanship chair, any subsequent warnings will result in a one-game suspension.
<a href="#">4.2.7</a>	The Rules Chair, Sportsmanship Chair, League President, and League Vice President have the authority to give retroactive warnings to coaches.
<a href="#">6.7</a>	The mercy rule in Minors is changed to 10 runs after 4 innings, matching the other leagues.
<a href="#">6.7.2</a>	Pitches thrown in scrimmages will no longer count towards official pitch count totals.
<a href="#">6.8.4</a>	Rescheduling playoff games will not be permitted unless done so by the league due to weather or any other unavoidable circumstance.
<a href="#">6.9.6</a>	Loaning players will not be permitted during the playoffs.
<a href="#">7.7</a>	Pitchers will be allowed to pitch in both games of a doubleheader as long as their pitch count in the first game doesn't surpass the first rest day threshold. Pitch counts in the second game will pick up where the count left off in the first game.
<a href="#">7.12</a>	Innings pitched limitations are removed for M60 and M70. The limitation on Minors pitchers is raised to 3 innings.
<a href="#">8.4</a>	The playing time requirements for Babe Ruth are changed to match those of M60 and M70.
<a href="#">8.10</a>	Players will be required to appear in at least half of their team's league play games in order to be eligible for the playoffs.

These rule changes were proposed and voted on by the SOM Baseball Rules Committee in February 2024.

Re-numberings and re-wordings are not included in the above chart.

Any inquiries about these changes should be directed to the Rules Chair.