

Niagara Interlock Baseball – Rules Document

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1. Mission / Vision / Values

- 1.1.** Niagara Interlock Baseball (NIB) is a membership-based committee that establishes playing rules, schedules, and championship procedures for the centres in Niagara. Membership in Niagara Interlock Baseball is not mandatory for any centre in Niagara. Each centre can independently decide if they will participate in Niagara Interlock Baseball and at which divisions.
- 1.2.** The mission and vision of Niagara Interlock Baseball is to ensure that house-league players have a meaningful and organized baseball experience in the Niagara Region. In addition, Niagara Interlock Baseball enables the gathering of Niagara baseball centres, where needed, to establish consistency and a group of centres to develop and grow the sport of baseball.

2. Rules Document

- 2.1.** Niagara Interlock Baseball has adopted several "house rules." This rule document shall govern the play of all Niagara Interlock Baseball games. When a rule is not covered in this document, Niagara Interlock Baseball will follow the official rules of baseball and Baseball Ontario's "Select" rulebook.
- 2.2.** The Rules Document may be amended from time to time with the approval of NIB.

3. Eligible Players

- 3.1.** Players will be eligible to play on a roster participating in NIB so long as they are registered as house-league players with their local association. In addition, players are still eligible if they are playing on a "House-League Select" team as defined by Baseball Ontario (playing house-league with Select as an add-on and not in a dedicated Select Loop.)
- 3.2.** Players are INELIGIBLE to play in NIB if they are rostered on a Baseball Ontario "Rep" (exception if the player is "AP'd") roster, playing on a team that is not affiliated directly with Baseball Ontario, are currently suspended by NIB or their local association or violate the overage/underage regulations in this document. Any team found using an ineligible will forfeit all games the ineligible player was involved in. The coach and the local association.
- 3.3.** Rosters must be submitted to the NIB division convenors by June 30th. Any additions must be approved by the NIB Chair and Vice-Chair and reported promptly. In addition, any players designed as "AP" players on a Baseball Ontario "REP" roster must be indicated. Rosters must have First Name, Last Name, Player Number, Head Coach First Name, Last Name, and contact information.

4. Playing Field Dimensions

- 4.1.** NIB games will follow the field dimensions as outlined by Baseball Ontario. However, each association may have slightly altered field rules due to fences, out-of-play areas, backstops etc. Associations that have altered field rules must make these aware to the NIB division-specific Convenor and during the pre-game ground rules.

4.2. Field Dimensions Chart:

DIVISON	MOUND	BASES
9U	44'0"	65'0"
11U	44'0"	65'0"
13U	50'0"	75'0"
15U	60'6"	90'0"
18U	60'6"	90'0"

4.3. The home team is responsible for placing the bases for each game.

5. Overage Players

5.1. A team may use a maximum of three (3) overage players on their roster. Overage players may only play down one (1) birth year (Example: a 16-year-old player can play down into 15U. A 17-year-old player could not play down into 15U). All overage players must be made known to the NIB Convenor of the specific division. Overage players are NOT allowed to pitch.

6. Call-ups / Underage Players

6.1. Each association should have an established call-up system to be used for NIB. This will allow coaches to get enough players from a lower division house league, so their team doesn't have to forfeit because of not having enough players. Players called up must become part of the roster for the game, and they must be played the same as everyone else during the game. Called up players moving from U13 to U15 are not eligible to pitch. A called-up player MUST follow their own division pitching rules and NOT The division they are being called up to.

6.2. If an association does not have a team in the needed lower division. In that case, they may arrange with another local association to borrow a player from the division that the player is needed in. This is the last resort if there is no lower-division available.

7. Ending Games / Postponements

7.1. Any game that ends for any reason before it has become an official game will be replayed in its entirety. For example, a six (6) inning game that ends for any reason after three (3) innings will be considered complete. Likewise, a seven (7) inning game that ends for any reason after four (4) innings will be considered complete.

7.2. The bottom half of the inning is not required to be played if the Umpire has called the game due to mercy, weather, injury, ejection or similar so long as the home team is winning after the top half of the inning and the game has reached its minimum innings required to be considered complete.

- 7.3.** All games are to be considered started at the first pitch OR ten (10) minutes after the scheduled start time, whichever happens first. Umpires are asked to call the teams for pre-game ground rules ten (10) minutes before the scheduled start time.
- 7.4.** The only time a game will be started later than ten (10) minutes after the scheduled start time will be if caused by weather, absence of umpires or if delayed by a preceding game. If a game start is delayed due to a team not having enough players, the start time will begin at ten (10) minutes after the scheduled start time.
- 7.5.** If a team that does not have enough players to begin a game, they will be given a fifteen (15) minute grace from the official start time. If they are not able to field a team of eight (8) players, they will forfeit the game, and the score will be recorded as 6-0 in a six (6) inning game and 7-0 in a seven (7) inning game. A team forfeit's due to a lack of players may be responsible for the costs of the park, lights, and umpires. Coaches are expected to use call-ups when they know they will be short players.
- 7.6.** The game will end if an ejection results in a team's roster dropping below eight (8) during a game. The offending team will forfeit the game; the score will be recorded as outlined above, and the offending team may be responsible for the costs of the park, lights, and umpires.
- 7.7.** The game will end if an injury results in a team's roster dropping below eight (8) during a game. If the injury and roster drop occur before the game can be considered a complete game, it will be replayed in its entirety. If the injury occurs after the game has become official, they may continue with less than eight (8) players.
- 7.8.** The park convener or similar of each association will make the decision to postpone a game where field conditions are unplayable and call the visiting team's coach no less than one (1) hour before the start of a game. If not, the decision has been made one (1) hour before the start; the decision should be left to coaches and/or umpires once coaches have arrived. Once the Umpire has taken the field to start a game, they are the only ones who can cancel the game. If this occurs before the game is considered official, then the game will be replayed in its entirety.
- 7.9.** Games cancelled due to weather before or during a non-complete game should be rescheduled as soon as possible. All games postponed due to weather will be replayed as soon as possible under the following guidelines:
- 7.10.** The home team must reschedule the game within fourteen (14) days of the initially scheduled date, sending a notice to both the visiting team and the score reporting email address by that time, or they shall forfeit the game. In addition, the home team will give at least two (2) weeks' notice to the visiting team for the makeup game unless the visiting team waives this time frame.
- 7.11.** All games postponed during the last two (2) weeks of the season will be declared ties unless both teams can find a mutually agreeable time to make up the game before the end of the season.

8. U9

- 8.1.** U9 is an instructional and competitive division for nine (9) years old's and under during the calendar year. Female players are allowed to be ten (10) years old and under.
- 8.2.** U9 will be played using a pitching machine and shall follow the official rules of baseball with the following alterations. The pitching machine should have a safety circle drawn around the machine, and only coaches or umpires are allowed to enter the circle during the game. If there is no safety circle, the Umpire will be required to make a judgement call when a player/fielder is too close to the machine.
- 8.3.** There will be a fielder that plays "pitcher." The "pitcher" must always wear a regulation batting helmet and stand beside the pitching machine outside the safety circle.
- 8.4.** The speed of the pitching machine is to be agreed upon before the start of the game.
- 8.5.** If there is no agreement, the Umpire will make the decision.
- 8.6.** The speed of the pitching machine cannot be changed until the end of an inning. However, if the machine becomes erratic, it can be adjusted for location/height. Anyone caught tampering with the speed of the machine will be ejected from the game.
- 8.7.** The Umpire will signal the machine operator to start each batter turn by saying "play ball" when everyone is ready.

Game Length

- 8.8.** Games will be six (6) innings. A game will be considered official after three (3) innings.
- 8.9.** Games will have a timeline of 1hour 30minutes with a "drop dead" time of 1hour 50minutes. Once the "drop dead" has been announced by the umpires, the game will end, and the final score will revert to the last completed inning unless the home team is winning when the "drop dead" is called.

Mercy

- 8.10.** The game shall end if one team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs after four (4) complete innings, or 3 ½ if the home team leads by ten (10) runs.
- 8.11.** The games will use inning mercy that is based on a "catch-up" model for innings one (1) thru four (4). Innings five (5) and six (6) shall have no run limit. If "last inning" is called, that inning will have no limit. Section 8.12 and 8.13 provide further details and examples.
- 8.12.** During innings one (1) thru four (4), teams can score a maximum of three (3) runs unless they are losing by more than three (3). If they are losing by more than three (3) runs, they may score runs until they are tied or have batted each batter twice in an inning, whichever occurs first.
- 8.13.** Example: Visiting team scores three (3) runs in the top of the first. The inning is over. The home team can now score a maximum of three (3) runs. Let's say that the home team only

scored two (2) runs. The score would now be 3-2. The visiting team can once again score three (3) runs and they do. The score is now 6-2. The home team can now score four (4) runs to tie the game. This "catchup to tie" rule applies for the first four (4) innings only and is no longer in affect during the unlimited innings or if "last inning" is called before four (4) complete innings. In the last inning, the run limit shall be unlimited.

Batter

- 8.14.** Approved bats by Baseball Ontario will only be allowed. Wooden bats will not be allowed at U9.
- 8.15.** The infield fly rule will not apply to U9.
- 8.16.** There will be a continuous batting order and unlimited defensive substitutions. Defensive substitution rules are listed further down the U9 section. Players arriving late will be placed at the bottom of the order.
- 8.17.** All batters and on-deck batters must have a properly worn batting helmet and must have a chinstrap. The only exception to wearing a chinstrap will be if a face cage or "C-Flap" prevents a chinstrap from being attached.
- 8.18.** A coach operating the pitching machine is encouraged to wear a coaching helmet; it does not require ear flaps or a chin strap.
- 8.19.** Each batter will receive a maximum of 5 hittable pitches. Each pitch must be considered hittable by the Umpire to count as a pitched ball. Swinging at any pitch and not making contact will be considered a strike. Questioning an umpire's judgment on this has the same penalty as arguing the strike zone. It is an immediate ejection from the game. If the batter's 5th pitch is hit foul, the batter will attempt again until struck out, or the ball is put in play.
- 8.20.** Bunting and walking are allowed in U9, even if hit by a pitch from the pitching machine. However, a batter ruled to have bunted will be called out, and baserunners do not advance.
- 8.21.** A batted ball that hits the pitching machine, any equipment near the machine or the pitching coach will be declared a "dead ball," and the batter will be awarded first base. Runners will only advance if forced. If the pitching coach deliberately interferes with a batted ball, the runner will be declared out, and the pitching coach may be ejected or removed from the position for the remainder of the game.
- 8.22.** If a fielder enters the safety circle while attempting to field a ball, the Umpire shall declare a "dead ball" and award the batter first base. Runners will advance if forced.
- 8.23.** If a batted ball goes through the safety circle and machine area without touching anything, it will be considered a live ball.
- 8.24.** If a fielder throws the ball and hits the pitching machine, equipment or coach, the ball will be declared "dead," and the batter will be awarded first base. All other runners will also be awarded one (1) base.

8.25. Metal cleats are not allowed.

Runners

8.26. Runners are required to wear properly fitted batting helmets while on the bases.

8.27. A runner may not lead off, attempt to steal, or steal a base. If a base runner leaves his base before the pitched ball has crossed the plate and the batter hits the ball. In that case, the runner shall return to his original base (if the batter is retired), or he must return to an unoccupied base nearest the one he left, depending on the batter's advancement. Runners may not advance on passed balls or wild pitches.

8.28. When a fielder makes a direct attempt to throw a ball to any base to make a play, the Umpire will call time after the completion of the play, whether the ball is caught or missed. Any overthrow off the first base will follow the same as above. All base runners will be placed according to where they were when time was called. They will be sent to where they were going if they are deemed to have been halfway to the next base otherwise, they will be sent back. The placement of the runners will be at the discretion of the Umpire. Questioning the Umpire's judgment on this will be cause for immediate ejection from the game.

8.29. Coaches are expected to hold their runners once the infield has possession of the ball.

8.30. Bases will not be awarded for throws that go out of play.

8.31. Players are encouraged to call time once they have the ball on the infield, however calling time will not "end" a play if there are active runners advancing.

8.32. Runners will only be considered to be "off the baseline" if their path was taken to avoid being tagged or put out by a fielder. Runners at the U9 age do not take traditional paths from base to base and unless they are doing this to gain an advantage or avoid being put out, they will not be called out.

8.33. All runners are required to slide/and or avoid contact of a defender that is making a play on them. Failure to do so will result in the runner being called out if contact is made and may result in an ejection. If the Umpire in his discretion feels that the contact was malicious, the offending player will also be ejected from the game.

8.34. The catcher, without the ball in his possession, has no right to block the pathway of the runner attempting to score. The base line belongs to the runner and the catcher should be there only when he is fielding a ball or when he already has the ball in his hand. This will result in an obstruction call, and the runner will score. If contact is made, and the Umpire in his discretion feels that the contact was malicious, the offending player will also be ejected from the game. Likewise, if a runner does not slide at home while the catcher is making a play and there is contact, the runner will be declared out.

8.35. If the catcher for the next inning is on base with two (2) outs, he may be substituted out

and replaced with the last player called out. This is in place to speed up the time between innings and getting the catchers gear on the players. It is not mandatory but is highly recommended.

Defense

- 8.36.** U9 will play with ten (10) fielders, the tenth being an extra out-fielder.
- 8.37.** Each team can have one (1) coach on the field while their team plays defence. The coach is there to help with instructions, positioning and explanations. They must position themselves, so they are not impacting the ball or the play. They are not allowed to argue or question umpires' calls.
- 8.38.** Defensive substitutions will be unlimited.
- 8.39.** No player will sit out a second time until every other player has sat out once. This rule then follows, that no player can sit out a third time until every other player has sat out a second time, etc.
- 8.40.** No player will sit out two (2) consecutive innings unless injured, for safety reasons or other extenuating circumstances.
- 8.41.** No player will play more than two (2) consecutive innings in the outfield, and not more than four (4) in the outfield in a game.

9. U11

- 9.1.** U11 is an instructional and competitive division for players aged 11 years old and under during the calendar year. Female players are allowed to be 12 years old and under.

Game Length

- 9.2.** Games will be six (6) innings. A game will be considered official after 3 innings.
- 9.3.** Games will have a timeline of 1hour 45minutes with a "drop dead" time of 2hour 10minutes. Once the "drop dead" has been announced by the umpires, the game will end and the final score will revert to the last completed inning, unless the home team is winning when the "drop dead" is called.

Mercy

- 9.4.** The game shall end if one team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs after four (4) complete innings, or 3 ½ if the home team leads by ten (10) runs.
- 9.5.** The games will use an inning mercy that is based on a "catch-up" model for innings one (1) thru four (4). Innings five (5) and six (6) shall have no run limit. If "last inning" is called, then that inning will have no limit. Section 9.6 and 9.7 provide further details and examples.
- 9.6.** During innings one (1) thru four (4), teams can score a maximum of three (3) runs, unless they are losing by more than three (3). If they are losing by more than three (3) runs, they may score

runs until they are tied or have batted each batter twice in an inning, whichever occurs first.

- 9.7.** Example: Visiting team scores three (3) runs in the top of the first. The inning is over. The home team can now score a maximum of three (3) runs. Let's say that the home team only scored two (2) runs. The score would now be 3-2. The visiting team can once again score three (3) runs and they do. The score is now 6-2. The home team can now score four (4) runs to tie the game. This "catchup to tie" rule applies for the first four (4) innings only and is no longer in affect during the unlimited innings or if "last inning" is called before four (4) complete innings. In the last inning, the run limit shall be unlimited

Batter

- 9.8.** Approved bats by Baseball Ontario will only be allowed. Wooden bats will not be allowed at U11.
- 9.9.** The infield fly rule will not apply to U11.
- 9.10.** There will be a continuous batting order and unlimited defensive substitutions. Defensive substitution rules are listed further down the U11 section. Players arriving late will be placed at the bottom of the order.
- 9.11.** All batters and on deck batters must have a properly worn batting helmet and must have a chinstrap. The only exception to wearing a chinstrap will be if a face cage or "C-Flap" prevents a chinstrap being attached.
- 9.12.** Metal cleats are not allowed.
- 9.13.** Batters cannot obtain first base on a dropped third strike.

Runners

- 9.14.** Runners are required to wear properly fitted batting helmets while on the bases.
- 9.15.** A runner may not lead off and may only leave their base once the ball crosses the play. They may attempt to steal second or third base only and may not advance home as a result of a continuous play resulting from stealing second or third base or passed ball.
- 9.16.** Each time a batter-runner reaches base, they may only attempt to steal one (1) base during their time as a runner and may not advance due to an overthrow during the attempt to put them out during the steal attempt. All base runners shall not leave their base until the pitched ball has crossed the plate. If a base runner leaves the base before the pitched ball has crossed the plate, he will receive one warning after which he will be called out.
- 9.17.** A runner may only score as a result of a HIT BALL, or WALK. The runner is not entitled to score on any stealing play.
- 9.18.** Runners will only be "off the baseline" if their path was taken to avoid being tagged or put out by a fielder. Runners at the U11 age do not take traditional paths from base to base and unless they are doing this to gain an advantage or avoid being put out, they will not be called

out.

- 9.19.** All runners are required to slide/and or avoid contact of a defender that is making a play on them. Failure to do so will result in the runner being called out if contact is made and may result in an ejection. If the Umpire in his discretion feels that the contact was malicious, the offending player will also be ejected from the game.
- 9.20.** The catcher, without the ball in his possession, has no right to block the pathway of the runner attempting to score. The base line belongs to the runner and the catcher should be there only when he is fielding a ball or when he already has the ball in his hand. This will result in an obstruction call, and the runner will score. If contact is made, and the Umpire in his discretion feels that the contact was malicious, the offending player will also be ejected from the game. Likewise, if a runner does not slide at home while the catcher is making a play and there is contact, the runner will be declared out.
- 9.21.** If the catcher for the next inning is on base with two (2) outs, he may be substituted out and replaced with the last player called out. This is in place to speed up the time between innings and getting the catchers gear on the players. It is not mandatory but is highly recommended.

Defense

- 9.22.** U11 will play with nine (9) fielders.
- 9.23.** Defensive substitutions will be unlimited.
- 9.24.** No player will sit out a second time until every other player has sat out once. This rule then follows, that no player can sit out a third time until every other player has sat out a second time, etc.
- 9.25.** No player will sit out two (2) consecutive innings unless injured, for safety reasons or other extenuating circumstances.
- 9.26.** No player will play more than two (2) consecutive innings in the outfield, and not more than four (4) in the outfield in a game.

Pitching

- 9.27.** Pitchers shall be limited to the following limitations. Any pitcher that pitches more than these limitations will result in the forfeiture of the game for the team with the offending pitcher. It should be noted that if a player is suspended for any reason, the games under suspension do not count as games not pitched under this rule.
- 9.28.** A pitcher may pitch a maximum of two (2) innings in a game and a maximum of three (3) innings over a three (3) day period. (Example: Pitcher pitches 2 innings on Monday, he can only pitch one (1) inning on Tuesday or Wednesday, not both.) Once a pitcher has had two (2) consecutive days of rest, their pitching limits reset. (Example A: Pitcher pitches 2 innings on Monday, zero innings on Tuesday and Wednesday, his limits are reset. Example B: Pitcher

pitches 2 innings on Monday and 1 inning on Tuesday, his pitching limit would reset for Friday).

- 9.29.** One (1) inning pitched will be considered when the pitcher has retired three (3) outs. If a pitcher records no outs but completes an inning due to the run mercy, they will be charged with one (1) full inning against their game and pitch limit.
- 9.30.** Pitching limit regulations may be altered for tournament or playoff play. The goal of the pitching limits is to protect players arms from fatigue and injury.
- 9.31.** Coaches must keep a record of their pitchers and innings during the season and may be audited from time to time. If a coach or team is found in violation of the pitching limit regulations, forfeitures and suspensions may be applied.
- 9.32.** Once a pitcher is removed from the game, they can not longer return in that game, regardless the number of outs they have recorded. (Example: Johnny starts a game and records 2 outs but struggles and is pulled for Timmy. Johnny is no longer eligible to return as a pitcher. Timmy records the third out, he can return for a maximum of 5 more outs which takes his total to 6 (2 innings) so long he is eligible to pitch 2 innings in that game. "Unused outs" are not carried over to future games and if a pitcher records 3 outs and starts another inning, he is considered to have been used for 2 innings in that game, regardless of if he recorded 2 innings worth of outs.)
- 9.33.** Players called up from U9 are not eligible to pitch.
- 9.34.** Balks will not be called in 11U as runners cannot leave their base until the ball crosses home plate, however the Umpire will address balks between innings or after a complete play to help the pitcher understand the rule. Pitchers may not make pickoff attempts. Catchers however can throw behind a runner who as left their respective base.
- 9.35.** A new pitcher will be allowed 6 warm-up pitches. A returning pitcher will be allowed four (4) warm-up pitches. Coaches are expected to have their pitchers warmed up in advance when possible.
- 9.36.** Any person serving as a catcher during warm-ups must wear a catcher's helmet and mask IF they are in the crouched position. If they are not in the crouched position, they are not required to wear a mask.
- 9.37.** Mound visits will be unlimited per pitcher however they shall be no longer than one (1) minute per visit. Mound visits will be limited or prohibited if the Umpire feels these visits are being abused or a deliberate attempt to delay the game, especially late in games. In the latter case, the coach is subject to time being added to the game if it negatively affects their team, and/or may be forced to remove the pitcher from the game, and/or may be subject to being ejected from the game.

10. U13

- 10.1.** U13 is an instructional and competitive division for players aged 13 years old and under during the calendar year. Female players are allowed to be 14 years old and under.

Game Length

- 10.2.** Games will be seven (7) innings. A game will be considered official after 4 innings.
- 10.3.** Games will have a timeline of 2hour 00minutes with a "drop dead" time of 2hour 15minutes. Once the "drop dead" has been announced by the umpires, the game will end and the final score will revert back to the last completed inning, unless the home team is winning when the "drop dead" is called.

Mercy

- 10.4.** The game shall end if one team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs after five (5) complete innings, or 4 ½ if the home team leads by ten (10) runs.
- 10.5.** The games will use an inning mercy that is based on a "catch-up" model for innings one (1) thru four (4). Innings five (5), six (6) and seven (7) shall have no run limit. If "last inning" is called then that inning will have no limit. Section 10.6 and 10.7 provide further details and examples.
- 10.6.** During innings one (1) thru four (4), teams can score a maximum of three (3) runs, unless they are losing by more than three (3). If they are losing by more than three (3) runs, they may score runs until they are tied or have batted each batter twice in an inning, whichever occurs first.
- 10.7.** Example: Visiting team scores three (3) runs in the top of the first. The inning is over. The home team can now score a maximum of three (3) runs. Let's say that the home team only scored two (2) runs. The score would now be 3-2. The visiting team can once again score three (3) runs and they do. The score is now 6-2. The home team can now score four (4) runs to tie the game. This "catchup to tie" rule applies for the first four (4) innings only and is no longer in affect during the unlimited innings or if "last inning" is called before four (4) complete innings. In the last inning, the run limit shall be unlimited

Batter

- 10.8.** Approved bats by Baseball Ontario will only be allowed.
- 10.9.** There will be a continuous batting order and unlimited defensive substitutions. Defensive substitution rules are listed further down the U13 section. Players arriving late will be placed at the bottom of the order
- 10.10.** All batters and on deck batters must have a properly worn batting helmet and must have a chinstrap. The only exception to wearing a chinstrap will be if a face cage or "C-Flap" prevents a chinstrap being attached.
- 10.11.** Metal cleats are not allowed.
- 10.12.** Batters cannot obtain first base on a dropped third strike.

Runners

- 10.13.** Runners are required to wear properly fitted batting helmets while on the bases.
- 10.14.** All runners are required to slide/and or avoid contact of a defender that is making a play on them. Failure to do so will result in the runner being called out if contact is made and may result in an ejection. If the Umpire in his discretion feels that the contact was malicious, the offending player will also be ejected from the game.
- 10.15.** A runner may lead off on first and second base only and attempt to steal second or third base.
- 10.16.** A runner on third base MAY NOT lead off and only leave the base once the ball has left the pitcher's hand. They may attempt to steal home A player leaving early will be given one warning; a second time leaving early will result in the player being called out.
- 10.17.** A runner may advance home as a result of a continuous play resulting from a steal attempt. (Example: Runner on first and third, the catcher makes a play on the runner stealing second, the runner on third can attempt to take home)
- 10.18.** Any defensive player making a fake tag at a bag or base without the ball will result in an automatic ejection. A fake tag play is illegal in the official rules of baseball and is a dangerous play that can cause a runner to unnecessarily slide.
- 10.19.** The catcher, WITHOUT the ball in his possession, has no right to block the pathway of the runner attempting to score. The base line belongs to the runner and the catcher should be there only when he is fielding a ball or when he already has the ball in his hand. This will result in an obstruction call, and the runner will score. If contact is made, and the Umpire in his discretion feels that the contact was malicious, the offending player will also be ejected from the game. Likewise, if a runner does not slide at home while the catcher is making a play and there is contact, the runner will be declared out.
- 10.20.** If the catcher for the next inning is on base with two (2) outs, he may be substituted out and replaced with the last player called out. This is in place to speed up the time between innings and getting the catchers gear on the players. It is not mandatory but is highly recommended.

Defense

- 10.21.** U13 will player with nine (9) fielders.
- 10.22.** Defensive substitutions will be unlimited.
- 10.23.** No player will sit out a second time until every other player has sat out once. This rule then follows, that no player can sit out a third time until every other player has sat out a second time, etc.
- 10.24.** No player will sit out two (2) consecutive innings unless injured, for safety reasons or other extenuating circumstances.
- 10.25.** No player will play more than two (2) consecutive innings in the outfield, and not more

than four (4) in the outfield in a game.

Pitching

- 10.26.** Pitchers shall be limited to the following limitations. Any pitcher that pitches more than these limitations will result in the forfeiture of the game for the team with the offending pitcher. It should be noted that if a player is suspended for any reason, the games under suspension do not count as games not pitched under this rule.
- 10.27.** A pitcher may pitch a maximum of three (3) innings in a game and a maximum of five (5) innings over a three (3) day period. A pitcher cannot pitch more than three (3) consecutive days. (Example: Pitcher pitches 3 innings on Monday, he can only pitch another two (2) innings on Tuesday or Wednesday) Once a pitcher has had two (2) consecutive days of rest, their pitching limits reset. (Example A: Pitcher pitches 3 innings on Monday, zero innings on Tuesday and Wednesday, his limits are reset for Thursday. Example B: Pitcher pitches 3 innings Monday and 1 inning on Tuesday and 1 inning on Wednesday, his pitching limit would reset for Friday)
- 10.28.** One (1) inning pitched will be considered when the pitcher has retired three (3) outs. If a pitcher records no outs but completes an inning due to the run mercy, they will be charged with one (1) full inning against their game and pitch limit.
- 10.29.** Pitching limit regulations may be altered for tournament or playoff play. The goal of the pitching limits is to protect players arms from fatigue and injury.
- 10.30.** Coaches must keep a record of their pitchers and innings during the season and may be audited from time to time. If a coach or team is found in violation of the pitching limit regulations, forfeitures and suspensions may be applied.
- 10.31.** Once a pitcher is removed from the game, they can not longer return in that game, regardless the number of outs they have recorded. (Example: Johnny starts a game and records 2 outs but struggles and is pulled for Timmy. Johnny is no longer eligible to return as a pitcher. Timmy records the third out, he can return for a maximum of 5 more outs which takes his total to 6 (2 innings) so long he is eligible to pitch 2 innings in that game. "Unused outs" are not carried over to future games and if a pitcher records 3 outs and starts another inning, he is considered to have been used for 2 innings in that game, regardless of if he recorded 2 innings worth of outs.)
- 10.32.** Players called up from U11 are eligible to pitch however they must use the U11 pitching limits and their rest days apply to their called-up game and vice-versa. (Example: If a U11 player would not have been eligible to pitch on the day he is called up, they cannot pitch at U13. Likewise, if they pitched in the U13 game it will be as if he pitched in a U11 game that date)
- 10.33.** Balks will be called in 13U starting July 1st of each season. Before July 1st a warning and explanation will take place from the Umpire. A balk with a runner on third base will not result in an automatic base unless forced by other runners as a runner on third cannot leave the base until the ball has left the pitchers hand so there would not be a pick-off attempt at third.
- 10.34.** A new pitcher will be allowed six (6) warm-up pitches. A returning pitcher will be

allowed four (4) warm-up pitches. Coaches are expected to have their pitchers warmed up in advance when possible.

- 10.35.** Any person serving as a catcher during warm-ups must wear a catcher's helmet and mask IF they are in the crouched position. If they are not in the crouched position, they are not required to wear a mask.
- 10.36.** Mound visits will be limited to two (2) per pitcher per inning. If a third visit is requested and is not due to an injury, that pitcher must be replaced. Mound visits shall be no longer than one (1) minute per visit. Mound visits will be limited or prohibited if the Umpire feels these visits are being abused or a deliberate attempt to delay the game, especially late in games. In the latter case, the coach is subject to time being added to the game if it negatively affects their team, and/or may be forced to remove the pitcher from the game, and/or may be subject to being ejected from the game.

11. U15

- 11.1.** U15 is an instructional and competitive division for players aged 15 years old and under during the calendar year. Female players are allowed to be 16 years old and under.

Game Length

- 11.2.** Games will be seven (7) innings. A game will be considered official after 4 innings.
- 11.3.** Games will have a timeline of 2hour 00minutes with a "drop dead" time of 2hour 15minutes. Once the "drop dead" has been announced by the umpires, the game will end and the final score will revert back to the last completed inning, unless the home team is winning when the "drop dead" is called.

Mercy

- 11.4.** The game shall end if one team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs after five (5) complete innings, or 4 ½ if the home team leads by ten (10) runs.
- 11.5.** The games will use an inning mercy that is based on a "catch-up" model for innings one (1) thru four (4). Innings five (5), six (6) and seven (7) shall have no run limit. If "last inning" is called then that inning will have no limit. Section 11.6 and 11.7 provide further details and examples.
- 11.6.** During innings one (1) thru four (4), teams can score a maximum of five (5) runs, unless they are losing by more than five (5). If they are losing by more than five (5) runs, they may score runs until they are tied or have batted each batter twice in an inning, whichever occurs first.
- 11.7.** Example: Visiting team scores five (5) runs in the top of the first. The inning is over. The home team can now score a maximum of five (5) runs. Let's say that the home team only scored two (2) runs. The score would now be 5-2. The visiting team can once again score five (5) runs and they do. The score is now 10-2. The home team can now score eight (8) runs to tie the game. This "catchup to tie" rule applies for the first four (4) innings only and is no longer in

affect during the unlimited innings or if “last inning” is called before four (4) complete innings. In the last inning, the run limit shall be unlimited.

- 11.8.** Lineup cards are required to be provided to the umpires and opposing team at ground rules.

Batter

- 11.9.** Approved bats in accordance with Baseball Ontario "Select" bat rule will be allowed.
- 11.10.** There will be a continuous batting order and unlimited defensive substitutions. Defensive substitution rules are listed further down the U15 section. Players arriving late will be placed at the bottom of the order.
- 11.11.** All batters and on deck batters must have a properly worn batting helmet and must have a chinstrap. The only exception to wearing a chinstrap will be if a face cage or "C-Flap" prevents a chinstrap being attached.
- 11.12.** Metal cleats are not allowed.

Runners

- 11.13.** Runners are required to wear properly fitted batting helmets while on the bases.
- 11.14.** Baserunning rules and stealing will be in accordance with the official rules of baseball.
- 11.15.** Any defensive player making a fake tag at a bag or base without the ball will result in an automatic ejection. A fake tag play is illegal in the official rules of baseball and is a dangerous play that can cause a runner to unnecessarily slide.
- 11.16.** Runners are required to slide/and or avoid contact of a defender that is making a play on them. Failure to do so will result in the runner being called out if contact is made and may result in an ejection. If the Umpire in his discretion feels that the contact was malicious, the offending player will also be ejected from the game.
- 11.17.** The catcher, WITHOUT the ball in his possession, has no right to block the pathway of the runner attempting to score. The base line belongs to the runner and the catcher should be there only when he is fielding a ball or when he already has the ball in his hand. This will result in an obstruction call, and the runner will score. If contact is made, and the Umpire in his discretion feels that the contact was malicious, the offending player will also be ejected from the game. Likewise, if a runner does not slide at home while the catcher is making a play and there is contact, the runner will be declared out.
- 11.18.** If the catcher for the next inning is on base with two (2) outs, he may be substituted out and replaced with the last player called out. This is in place to speed up the time between innings and getting the catchers gear on the players. It is not mandatory but is highly recommended.
- 11.19.** Batters may attempt to advance to first base on a drop third strike in accordance with the official rules of baseball.

Defense

- 11.20.** U15 will player with nine (9) fielders.
- 11.21.** Defensive substitutions will be unlimited.
- 11.22.** No player will sit out a second time until every other player has sat out once. This rule then follows, that no player can sit out a third time until every other player has sat out a second time, etc.
- 11.23.** No player will sit out two (2) consecutive innings unless injured or for safety reasons or for other extenuating circumstances.

Pitching

- 11.24.** Pitchers shall be limited to the following limitations. Any pitcher that pitches more than these limitations will result in the forfeiture of the game for the team with the offending pitcher. It should be noted that if a player is suspended for any reason, the games under suspension do not count as games not pitched under this rule.
- 11.25.** A pitcher may pitch a maximum of four (4) innings in a game and a maximum of seven (7) innings over a three (3) day period. A pitcher cannot pitch more than three (3) consecutive days. (Example: Pitcher pitches 4 innings on Monday, he can only pitch another 3 innings on Tuesday and/or Wednesday) Once a pitcher has had had two (2) consecutive days of rest, their pitching limits reset. (Example A: Pitcher pitches 4 innings on Monday, zero innings on Tuesday and Wednesday, his limits are reset for Thursday. Example B: Pitcher pitches 4 innings Monday and 2 innings on Tuesday and 1 inning on Wednesday, his pitching limit would reset for Friday)
- 11.26.** One (1) inning pitched will be considered when the pitcher has retired three (3) outs. If a pitcher records no outs but completes an inning due to the run mercy, they will be charged with one (1) full inning against their game and pitch limit.
- 11.27.** Pitching limit regulations may be altered for tournament or playoff play. The goal of the pitching limits is to protect players arms from fatigue and injury.
- 11.28.** Coaches must keep a record of their pitchers and innings during the season and may be audited from time to time. If a coach or team is found in violation of the pitching limit regulations, forfeitures and suspensions may be applied.
- 11.29.** Once a pitcher is removed from the game, they can not longer return in that game, regardless the number of outs they have recorded. (Example: Johnny starts a game and records 2 outs but struggles and is pulled for Timmy. Johnny is no longer eligible to return as a pitcher. Timmy records the third out, he can return for a maximum of 5 more outs which takes his total to 6 (2 innings) so long he is eligible to pitch 2 innings in that game. "Unused outs" are not carried over to future games and if a pitcher records 3 outs and starts another inning, he is considered to have been used for 2 innings in that game, regardless of if he recorded 2 innings worth of outs.)

- 11.30.** Players called up from U13 ineligible to pitch when called up to U15.
- 11.31.** Balks will be called in U15.
- 11.32.** A new pitcher will be allowed six (6) warm-up pitches. A returning pitcher will be allowed four (4) warm-up pitches. Coaches are expected to have their pitchers warmed up in advance when possible.
- 11.33.** Any person serving as a catcher during warm-ups must wear a catcher's helmet and mask IF they are in the crouched position. If they are not in the crouched position, they are not required to wear a mask.
- 11.34.** Mound visits will be limited to two (2) per pitcher per inning. If the second visit is requested and is not due to an injury, that pitcher must be replaced. Mound visits shall be no longer than one (1) minute per visit. Mound visits will be limited or prohibited if the Umpire feels these visits are being abused or a deliberate attempt to delay the game, especially late in games. In the latter case, the coach is subject to time being added to the game if it negatively affects their team, and/or may be forced to remove the pitcher from the game, and/or may be subject to being ejected from the game.

12. U18

- 12.1.** U18 is an instructional and competitive division for players aged 18 years old and under during the calendar year. Female players are allowed to be 19 years old and under.

Game Length

- 12.2.** Games will be seven (7) innings. A game will be considered official after 4 innings.
- 12.3.** Games will have a timeline of 2hour 00minutes with a "drop dead" time of 2hour 15minutes. Once the "drop dead" has been announced by the umpires, the game will end and the final score will revert back to the last completed inning, unless the home team is winning when the "drop dead" is called.

Mercy

- 12.4.** The game shall end if one team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs after five (5) complete innings, or 4 ½ if the home team leads by ten (10) runs.
- 12.5.** The games will use an inning mercy that is based on a "catch-up" model for innings one (1) thru four (4). Innings five (5), six (6) and seven (7) shall have no run limit. If "last inning" is called then that inning will have no limit. Section 12.6 and 12.7 provide further details and examples.
- 12.6.** During innings one (1) thru four (4), teams can score a maximum of five (5) runs, unless they are losing by more than five (5). If they are losing by more than five (5) runs, they may score runs until they are tied or have batted each batter twice in an inning, whichever occurs

first.

- 12.7.** Example: Visiting team scores five (5) runs in the top of the first. The inning is over. The home team can now score a maximum of five (5) runs. Let's say that the home team only scored two (2) runs. The score would now be 5-2. The visiting team can once again score five (5) runs and they do. The score is now 10-2. The home team can now score eight (8) runs to tie the game. This "catchup to tie" rule applies for the first four (4) innings only and is no longer in affect during the unlimited innings or if "last inning" is called before four (4) complete innings. In the last inning, the run limit shall be unlimited
- 12.8.** Lineup cards are required to be provided to the umpires and opposing team at ground rules.

Batter

- 12.9.** Approved bats in accordance with Baseball Ontario "Select" bat rule will be allowed. At the present time the Baseball Ontario "Select" rule stats that ONLY WOODEN BATS are to be used at U18. See Baseball Ontario rule for exact specifics on bats.
- 12.10.** Metal cleats are allowed to be worn at U18, however if an umpire determines that the cleats were used in a malicious or violent manner against another player, the offending player will be ejected immediately.
- 12.11.** There will be a continuous batting order and unlimited defensive substitutions. Defensive substitution rules are listed further down the U18 section. Players arriving late will be placed at the bottom of the order.
- 12.12.** All batters and on deck batters must have a properly worn batting helmet and must have a chinstrap. The only exception to wearing a chinstrap will be if a face cage or "C-Flap" prevents a chinstrap being attached.
- 12.13.** Batters may attempt to advance to first base on a dropped third strike.

Runners

- 12.14.** Runners are required to wear properly fitted batting helmets while on the bases.
- 12.15.** Baserunning rules and stealing will be in accordance with the official rules of baseball.
- 12.16.** Any defensive player making a fake tag at a bag or base without the ball will result in an automatic ejection. A fake tag play is illegal in the official rules of baseball and is a dangerous play that can cause a runner to unnecessarily slide.
- 12.17.** Runners are required to slide/and or avoid contact of a defender that is making a play on them. Failure to do so will result in the runner being called out if contact is made and may result in an ejection. If the Umpire in his discretion feels that the contact was malicious, the offending player will also be ejected from the game.
- 12.18.** The catcher, WITHOUT the ball in his possession, has no right to block the pathway of the runner attempting to score. The base line belongs to the runner and the catcher should be there only when he is fielding a ball or when he already has the ball in his hand. This will result

in an obstruction call, and the runner will score. If contact is made, and the Umpire in his discretion feels that the contact was malicious, the offending player will also be ejected from the game. Likewise, if a runner does not slide at home while the catcher is making a play and there is contact, the runner will be declared out.

- 12.19.** If the catcher for the next inning is on base with two (2) outs, he may be substituted out and replaced with the last player called out. This is in place to speed up the time between innings and getting the catchers gear on the players. It is not mandatory but is highly recommended.

Defense

- 12.20.** U18 will player with nine (9) fielders.
- 12.21.** Defensive substitutions will be unlimited.
- 12.22.** No player will sit out a second time until every other player has sat out once. This rule then follows, that no player can sit out a third time until every other player has sat out a second time, etc.
- 12.23.** No player will sit out two (2) consecutive innings unless injured or for safety reasons or other extenuating circumstances.

Pitching

- 12.24.** Pitchers shall be limited to the following limitations. Any pitcher that pitches more than these limitations will result in the forfeiture of the game for the team with the offending pitcher. It should be noted that if a player is suspended for any reason, the games under suspension do not count as games not pitched under this rule.
- 12.25.** A pitcher may pitch a maximum of seven (7) innings in a game and a maximum of seven (7) innings over a two-game period.
- 12.26.** One (1) inning pitched will be considered when the pitcher has retired three (3) outs. If a pitcher records no outs but completes an inning due to the run mercy, they will be charged with one (1) full inning against their game and pitch limit.
- 12.27.** Pitching limit regulations may be altered for tournament or playoff play. The goal of the pitching limits is to protect players arms from fatigue and injury.
- 12.28.** Coaches must keep a record of their pitchers and innings during the season and may be audited from time to time. If a coach or team is found in violation of the pitching limit regulations, forfeitures and suspensions may be applied.
- 12.29.** Once a pitcher is removed from the game, they can not longer return in that game, regardless the number of outs they have recorded. (Example: Johnny starts a game and records 2 outs but struggles and is pulled for Timmy. Johnny is no longer eligible to return as a pitcher. Timmy records the third out, he can return for a maximum of 5 more outs which takes his total to 6 (2 innings) so long he is eligible to pitch 2 innings in that game. "Unused outs" are not

carried over to future games and if a pitcher records 3 outs and starts another inning, he is considered to have been used for 2 innings in that game, regardless of if he recorded 2 innings worth of outs.)

- 12.30.** Players called up from U15 are eligible to pitch however they must use the U15 pitching limits and their rest days apply to their called-up game and vice-versa. (Example: If a U15 player would not have been eligible to pitch on the day he is called up, they cannot pitch at U18. Likewise, if they pitched in the U18 game it will be as if he pitched in a U15 game that date)
- 12.31.** Balks will be called in U18.
- 12.32.** A new pitcher will be allowed six (6) warm-up pitches. A returning pitcher will be allowed four (4) warm-up pitches. Coaches are expected to have their pitchers warmed up in advance when possible.
- 12.33.** Any person serving as a catcher during warm-ups must wear a catcher's helmet and mask IF they are in the crouched position. If they are not in the crouched position, they are not required to wear a mask.
- 12.34.** Mound visits will be limited to two (2) per pitcher per inning. If the second visit is requested and is not due to an injury, that pitcher must be replaced. Mound visits shall be no longer than one (1) minute per visit. Mound visits will be limited or prohibited if the Umpire feels these visits are being abused or a deliberate attempt to delay the game, especially late in games. In the latter case, the coach is subject to time being added to the game if it negatively affects their team, and/or may be forced to remove the pitcher from the game, and/or may be subject to being ejected from the game.

13. Umpires

- 13.1.** Umpires will be provided this rule document and any updates that are made to it. It is the local associations responsibility to ensure that their umpires are aware of the rules, enforce them to the letter of the document and to ensure they are up to date on game length, mercy, pitching and base stealing regulations in the document.
- 13.2.** Umpires' interpretation of this document will be final during a game.
- 13.3.** Any team wishing to file an appeal of an umpire interpretation or enforcement of this rule document must notify the Umpire at the time of an appeal, the Umpire will make note of score, where runners are, who was pitching and other important information at the time. They will then inform both coaches and scores that the game will continue under protest. The game will be completed. The coach that declared the protest must inform the division convenor as well as their association president. The Umpire must file a report post game with details of the protest and the details they recorded at the time. Protests will be dealt with by the NIB division convenor, Chair and Vice-Chair.

14. Code of Conduct

- 14.1.** All players, coaches, volunteers, team officials and parents are subject to the Baseball Ontario Code of Conduct as well as the NIB Discipline Policy as outlined in the charter.

- 14.2.** All ejections will be dealt with through the NIB Discipline Policy.
- 14.3.** Aggressive, argumentative, unsportsmanlike, abusive, and derogatory comments and actions will not be tolerated, before, during or after games.
- 14.4.** Racist, sexist, or similar remarks, gestures or signs will result in immediate ejection from the facility and will warrant discipline outlined in the NIB Discipline Policy.
- 14.5.** Violence, fighting or malicious actions before, during or after a game will not be tolerated and will result in immediate ejection from the facility and will warrant discipline outlined in the NIB Discipline Policy.
- 14.6.** The use of tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, vaping, smoking or illicit drugs will not be permitted once a player, coach, volunteer, or team official enters the facility.
- 14.7.** Any ejected person must immediately leave the field and the facility for the remainder of the game.
- 14.8.** All coaches must wear shoes with closed toes and heels.
- 14.9.** All players must be in uniform.

Approved March 23, 2022
Amended June 5, 2022