

NIAGARA INTERLOCK BASEBALL RULES

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Contents

1. Mission / Vision / Values.....	3
2. Rules Document	3
3. Eligible Players	3
4. Playing Field Dimensions	4
5. Overage Players.....	4
6. Call-ups / Underage Players.....	4
7. Ending Games / Postponements	5
8. 9U	6
9. 11U.....	10
10. 13U.....	14
11. 15U.....	17
12. 18U.....	21
13. Umpires.....	24
14. Code of Conduct.....	25

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. The rules found at www.NiagaraBaseball.com will be the authority. These rules are applicable to the regular season and playoffs, unless the Niagara Interlock Baseball committee amends or alters them during a meeting.

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 player will forfeit all games the ineligible player was involved in. The coach and the local association will be subject to review by the Discipline Panel.
- 3.3.** Rosters must be submitted to the NIB division conveners 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 Convener and during the pre-game ground rules.

- 4.2.** Field Dimensions Chart:

DIVISION	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 NIB through the overage player request form and approved by the Chair/Vice-Chair. Overage players are NOT allowed to pitch but ARE ALLOWED to catch.

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 are NOT allowed to pitch except for a 15U player being called up to 18U.
- 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 other than time limit expiration, before it has become an official game will be replayed in its entirety from the beginning. An official game shall be considered official when 3 innings of a 6-inning game is completed, or when 4 innings of a 7-inning game are completed.
- 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, time limit expiration 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 official scheduled start time. Umpires are asked to call the teams for pre-game ground rules ten (10) minutes before the scheduled start time. Games will start at the scheduled start time, regardless of if warm-ups have taken place.
- 7.4.** The only time a game will be started later than the scheduled start time is if the delay is caused by weather, absence of umpires or if delayed by a preceding game.
- 7.5.** Teams must field at least eight (8) players by the scheduled start time. A fifteen (15) minute grace period will be allowed, but if a team is still unable to field eight players, they will forfeit the game. Forfeited games will be recorded as 6–0 for six-inning games and 7–0 for seven-inning games. The forfeiting team will also be responsible for any costs related to the park, lights, and umpires. Coaches are expected to plan - ahead and use call-ups when short on players. The fifteen-minute grace period does not extend the overall time limit of the game or delay the official start time.
Any game cancelled with less than 24 hours' notice for non-weather reasons will not be rescheduled and will be recorded as a forfeit against the team that cancels. If there are extreme circumstances, the coach can inform the Chair and Vice-Chair after the cancellation in the hopes to being allowed to reschedule.
- 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. The injured player does not become an automatic out and they are simply removed from the batting order. If the injured player pitched during the game, their innings are counted towards their daily/weekly pitch counts.

- 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, the decision has not 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.** If a game is cancelled, it must be rescheduled within 72 hours and replayed no later than three (3) days before the end of the regular season. Rescheduled games cannot result in any team playing a fourth game in the same week. If necessary, teams must work together promptly to find a suitable date that meets these conditions.
- 7.11.** Any postponed or cancelled game in the last two (2) weeks of the season, must be rescheduled within 48 hours and replayed no later than two (2) days before the end of the regular season. Rescheduled games cannot cause either team to play a fourth game in the same week. If the game is not played by the deadline, no points will be awarded to either team.

8. 9U

- 8.1.** 9U is an instructional and competitive division for nine (9) years old and under during the calendar year. Female players are allowed to be ten (10) years old and under.
- 8.2.** 9U 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.** The machine speed is 35mph to 40mph. If an agreement on speed cannot be reached, the umpire shall make the final decision. The pitching machine should be placed approximately 44ft from the center of home plate.
- 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.** A game will be considered official after three (3) innings have been completed or once 60 minutes has elapsed from the scheduled start time of the game.

8.9. No new inning may begin after 1 hour 30 minutes of play, based on the official game start time. Umpires are responsible for tracking time and will not declare a "last inning" at any point. If the current inning is still in progress at the 1 hour 30-minute mark, it will be completed under normal rules, including any applicable mercy rules for that inning. No new inning will start once 1 hour 30 minutes has passed. The umpires will announce at the 1 hour 30 mark that there will be no new inning.

Mercy

- 8.10.** The game shall end if one team is ahead by twelve (12) or more runs after four (4) complete innings. However, in the spirit of development at the 9U and 11U levels, the team that is trailing by twelve (12) or more runs will still be permitted to complete their final at-bat. If the home team is leading by twelve (12) or more runs after the visiting team's at-bat, the game will end, and the home team will not bat. If the home team goes up by twelve (12) runs in the bottom of the 4th inning or later, the game will end as the 12th run is scored.

- 8.11.** There shall be a four (4) run maximum per inning.

Batter

- 8.12.** Approved bats by Baseball Ontario will only be allowed. Wooden bats will not be allowed at 9U.

- 8.13.** The infield fly rule will not apply to 9U.

- 8.14.** There will be a continuous batting order and unlimited defensive substitutions. Players arriving late will be placed at the bottom of the order. Any player that is removed from the game due to injury or leaving the game early shall be skipped in the order and not be considered an out.

Any player removed from the game due to an ejection will have their space in the order skipped so long as the team still has a minimum of nine (9) active batters in the lineup. If the team only has eight (8) active batters after an ejection, each time the ejected players spot in the order occurs, the team will be assessed an out. If a team falls below eight (8) players due to an ejection, they will forfeit the game, regardless of the time elapsed, score or innings played.

- 8.15.** 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" is present. If a player does not have a chinstrap, time will be called, and they will be sent to the dugout to get a chinstrap or helmet with a chinstrap. They will then resume their position. Chinstraps from 15U to 18U are optional.

- 8.16.** A coach operating the pitching machine is encouraged to wear a coaching helmet.
- 8.17.** 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. If the batter's 5th pitch is hit foul, the batter will attempt again until struck out, or the ball is put in play. If the batter's 5th pitch is a foul tip caught by the catcher, the batter will be out. A foul tip is a ball that is tipped sharply and directly towards the catcher and is caught.
- 8.18.** Bunting and walking are NOT allowed in 9U, even if a batter is hit by a pitch from the pitching machine. A batter ruled to have bunted will be called out, and baserunners do not advance. Umpires are asked to be certain that a player purposefully bunted before declaring the batter out.
- 8.19.** 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.
- 8.20.** 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.
- 8.21.** If a batted ball goes through the safety circle and machine area without touching anything, it will be considered a live ball.
- 8.22.** 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.
- 8.23.** Metal cleats are not allowed.

Runners

- 8.24.** Runners are required to wear properly fitted batting helmets while on the bases.
- 8.25.** 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.
- 8.26.** Infielders 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. Time will be granted at the umpire's discretion when they believe the natural flow of play has completed. Once granted, the umpire may place/return runners to the bases they believe they would have obtained when time was granted. An infielder does not have to have possession of the ball for the umpire to deem the play has been finished.

- 8.28.** Bases will NOT be awarded for throws that GO OUT OF PLAY (not overthrows) or that hit extended fences in foul territory. Runners will not advance on overthrows of first base.
- 8.30.** 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 9U 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.
- 8.31.** 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.
- 8.32.** 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 they are fielding a ball or when they already have the ball in their possession. A catcher without possession of the ball that impedes a runner 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. If the contact is deemed malicious the runner should be ejected.
- 8.33.** 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

- 8.34.** 9U will play with ten (10) fielders, the tenth being an extra out-fielder.
- 8.35.** Each team can have one (1) coach on the field while their team plays defense. 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, engage or question umpires' calls.
- 8.36.** Defensive substitutions will be unlimited.
- 8.37.** 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.

8.38. No player will sit out two (2) consecutive innings unless injured, for safety reasons or other extenuating circumstances.

8.39. 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. 11U

9.1. 11U 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. A game will be considered official after three (3) innings have been completed or once 60 minutes has elapsed from the scheduled start time of the game.

9.3. No new inning may begin after 1 hour 30 minutes of play, based on the official game start time. Umpires are responsible for tracking time and will not declare a "last inning" at any point. If the current inning is still in progress at the 1 hour 30-minute mark, it will be completed under normal rules, including any applicable mercy rules for that inning. No new inning will start once 1 hour 30 minutes has passed. The umpires will announce at the 1 hour 30 mark that there will be no new inning.

Mercy

9.4. The game shall end if one team is ahead by twelve (12) or more runs after four (4) complete innings. However, in the spirit of development at the 9U and 11U levels, the team that is trailing by twelve (12) or more runs will still be permitted to complete their final at-bat. If the home team is leading by twelve (12) or more runs after the visiting team's at-bat, the game will end, and the home team will not bat. If the home team goes up by twelve (12) runs in the bottom of the 4th inning or later, the game will end as the 12th run is scored.

9.5. There shall be a four (4) run maximum per inning.

Batter

9.6. Approved bats by Baseball Ontario will only be allowed. Wooden bats will not be allowed at 11U.

9.7. The infield fly rule will not apply to 11U.

9.8. There will be a continuous batting order and unlimited defensive substitutions. Players arriving

late will be placed at the bottom of the order. Any player that is removed from the game due to injury or leaving the game early shall be skipped in the order and not be considered an out.

Any player removed from the game due to an ejection will have their space in the order skipped so long as the team still has a minimum of nine (9) active batters in the lineup. If the team only has eight (8) active batters after an ejection, each time the ejected players spot in the order occurs, the team will be assessed an out. If a team falls below eight (8) players due to an ejection, they will forfeit the game, regardless of the time elapsed, score or innings played.

9.9. 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" is present. If a player does not have a chinstrap, time will be called, and they will be sent to the dugout to get a chinstrap or helmet with a chinstrap. They will then resume their position. Chinstraps from 15U to 18U are optional.

9.10. Metal cleats are not allowed.

9.11. Batters cannot obtain first based on a dropped third strike.

Runners

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

9.13. 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 because of a continuous play resulting from stealing second or third base or passed ball.

9.14. 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.

9.15. A runner may only score because of a HIT BALL, WALK or AWARDED BASE DUE TO A BALL OUT OF PLAY. The runner is not entitled to score on ANY stealing play.

9.16. 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 11U 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.

9.17. 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.

9.18. 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 they are fielding a ball or when they already have the ball in their possession. A catcher without possession of the ball that impedes a runner 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. If the contact is deemed malicious the runner should be ejected.

- 9.19.** 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

- 9.20.** 11U will player with nine (9) fielders.
- 9.21.** Defensive substitutions will be unlimited.
- 9.22.** 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.
- 9.23.** No player will sit out two (2) consecutive innings unless injured, for safety reasons or other extenuating circumstances.
- 9.24.** 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

- 9.25.** 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.
- 9.26.** A pitcher may pitch a maximum of two (2) innings per game and a maximum of three (3) innings over any three (3) consecutive calendar days.
- Example: If a pitcher throws 2 innings on Monday, they may only pitch 1 inning total on Tuesday or Wednesday — not 1 inning on both days.
 - Once a pitcher has had two (2) consecutive days without pitching, their pitching limits reset.
Example A: Pitcher throws 2 innings on Monday, then does not pitch on Tuesday and Wednesday — limits reset on Thursday.
Example B: Pitcher throws 2 innings on Monday and 1 inning on Tuesday — limits would reset on Friday (after Wednesday and Thursday as rest days).
- 9.27.** 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.

- 9.28.** Pitching limit regulations may be altered for tournament or playoff play. The goal of the pitching limits is to protect player's arms from fatigue and injury.
- 9.29.** 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.
- 9.30.** Once a pitcher is removed from the game or replaced by another pitcher, they can no 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.)
- 9.31.** 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 has left their respective base.
- 9.32.** 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.
- 9.33.** 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.
- 9.34.** 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.
- 9.35** In house league play, players are permitted to both pitch and catch in the same game. However, coaches must prioritize player safety and arm care. Coaches are strongly encouraged to monitor pitch counts and throwing workloads closely, and to limit the total number of innings a player spends pitching and catching in a single game.

It is recommended that players who pitch more than one inning in a game should not also catch for more than two innings in that same game. Player development and long-term arm health must always be the priority.

10. 13U

10.1. 13U 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. A game will be considered official after three (3) innings have been completed or once 60 minutes has elapsed from the scheduled start time of the game.

10.3. No new inning may begin after 1 hour 30 minutes of play, based on the official game start time. Umpires are responsible for tracking time and will not declare a "last inning" at any point. If the current inning is still in progress at the 1 hour 30-minute mark, it will be completed under normal rules, including any applicable mercy rules for that inning. No new inning will start once 1 hour 30 minutes has passed. The umpires will announce at the 1 hour 30 mark that there will be no new inning.

Mercy

10.4. The game shall end if one team is ahead by fifteen (15) or more runs after four (4) complete innings. However, in the spirit of development the team that is trailing by fifteen (15) or more runs will still be permitted to complete their final at-bat. If the home team is leading by fifteen (15) or more runs after the visiting team's at-bat, the game will end, and the home team will not bat. If the home team goes up by fifteen (15) runs in the bottom of the 4th inning or later, the game will end as the 15th run is scored.

10.5. There shall be a five (5) run maximum per inning.

Batter

10.6. Approved bats by Baseball Ontario will only be allowed.

10.7. There will be a continuous batting order and unlimited defensive substitutions. Players arriving late will be placed at the bottom of the order. Any player that is removed from the game due to injury or leaving the game early shall be skipped in the order and not be considered an out.

Any player removed from the game due to an ejection will have their space in the order skipped so long as the team still has a minimum of nine (9) active batters in the lineup. If the team only has eight (8) active batters after an ejection, each time the ejected players spot in the order occurs, the team will be assessed an out. If a team falls below eight (8) players due to an ejection, they will forfeit the game, regardless of the time elapsed, score or innings played.

10.8. 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" is present. If a player does not have a chinstrap, time will be called, and they will be sent to the dugout to get a chinstrap or helmet with a chinstrap. They will then resume their

position. Chinstraps from 15U to 18U are optional.

10.9. Metal cleats are not allowed.

10.10. Batters cannot obtain first based on a dropped third strike.

Runners

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

10.12. 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.

10.13. A runner may lead off on first and second base only and attempt to steal second or third base.

10.14. 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.

10.15. A runner may advance home because 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)

10.16. 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.

10.17. 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 they are fielding a ball or when they already have the ball in their possession. A catcher without possession of the ball that impedes a runner 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. If the contact is deemed malicious the runner should be ejected.

10.18. 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.

Defense

10.19. 13U will be played with nine (9) fielders.

10.20. Defensive substitutions will be unlimited.

10.21. 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.

10.22. No player will sit out two (2) consecutive innings unless injured, for safety reasons or other extenuating circumstances.

10.23. No player will play more than three (3) consecutive innings in the outfield, and not more than four (4) in the outfield in a game.

Pitching

10.24. 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.

10.25. A pitcher may pitch a maximum of three (3) innings per game and a maximum of five (5) innings over any three (3) consecutive calendar days.

- A pitcher may not pitch on more than three (3) consecutive days.
Example: If a pitcher throws 3 innings on Monday, they may only pitch a total of 2 more innings between Tuesday and Wednesday.
- Once a pitcher has had two (2) consecutive days without pitching, their pitching limits reset.
Example A: Pitcher throws 3 innings on Monday, does not pitch on Tuesday and Wednesday — limits reset for Thursday.
Example B: Pitcher throws 3 innings on Monday, 1 inning on Tuesday, and 1 inning on Wednesday — limits reset for Friday (after rest days on Thursday and Friday).

10.26. 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.

10.27. Pitching limit regulations may be altered for tournament or playoff play. The goal of the pitching limits is to protect player's arms from fatigue and injury.

10.28. 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.

10.29. Once a pitcher is removed from the game or replaced by another pitcher, they cannot 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.)

- 10.30.** 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.
- 10.31.** 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.
- 10.32.** 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.
- 10.33.** 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.
- 10.34.** In house league play, players are permitted to both pitch and catch in the same game. However, coaches must prioritize player safety and arm care. Coaches are strongly encouraged to monitor pitch counts and throwing workloads closely, and to limit the total number of innings a player spends pitching and catching in a single game.
- It is recommended that players who pitch more than one inning in a game should not also catch for more than two innings in that same game. Player development and long-term arm health must always be the priority.

11. 15U

11.1. 15U 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.** A game will be considered official after three (3) innings have been completed or once 60 minutes has elapsed from the scheduled start time of the game.
- 11.3.** No new inning may begin after 1 hour 40 minutes of play, based on the official game start time agreed upon at the plate meeting. Umpires are responsible for tracking time and will not declare a "last inning" at any point. If the current inning is still in progress at the 1 hour 40-minute mark, it will be completed under normal rules, including any applicable mercy rules for

that inning. No new inning will start once 1 hour 40 minutes has passed. The umpires will announce at the 1 hour 40 mark that there will be no new inning.

Mercy

11.4. The game shall end if one team is ahead by fifteen (15) or more runs after four (4) complete innings. However, in the spirit of development the team that is trailing by fifteen (15) or more runs will still be permitted to complete their final at-bat. If the home team is leading by fifteen (15) or more runs after the visiting team's at-bat, the game will end, and the home team will not bat. If the home team goes up by fifteen (15) runs in the bottom of the 4th inning or later, the game will end as the 15th run is scored.

11.5. There shall be a five (5) run maximum per inning.

11.6. Lineup cards are required to be provided to the umpires and opposing team at ground rules. Teams will lineup to shake hands prior to the games and will not be permitted to lineup to shake hands after the game.

Batter

11.7. Approved bats in accordance with Baseball Ontario "Select" bat rule will be allowed.

11.8. There will be a continuous batting order and unlimited defensive substitutions. Players arriving late will be placed at the bottom of the order. Any player that is removed from the game due to injury or leaving the game early shall be skipped in the order and not be considered an out.

Any player removed from the game due to an ejection will have their space in the order skipped so long as the team still has a minimum of nine (9) active batters in the lineup. If the team only has eight (8) active batters after an ejection, each time the ejected players spot in the order occurs, the team will be assessed an out. If a team falls below eight (8) players due to an ejection, they will forfeit the game, regardless of the time elapsed, score or innings played.

11.9. All batters and on deck batters must have a properly worn batting helmet. Chinstraps are not required in 15U.

11.10. Metal cleats are not allowed.

Runners

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

11.12. Base running rules and stealing will be in accordance with the official rules of baseball.

11.13. 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.

- 11.14.** 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.
- 11.15.** 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. A catcher without possession of the ball that impedes a runner 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.
- 11.16.** 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.
- 11.17.** Batters may attempt to advance to first based on a drop third strike in accordance with the official rules of baseball.

Defense

- 11.18.** 15U will play with nine (9) fielders.
- 11.19.** Defensive substitutions will be unlimited.
- 11.20.** 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.
- 11.21.** No player will sit out three (3) consecutive innings unless injured or for safety reasons or for other extenuating circumstances.

Pitching

- 11.22.** 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.
- 11.23.** A pitcher may pitch a maximum of four (4) innings per game and a maximum of seven (7) innings over any three (3) consecutive calendar days.
- A pitcher may not pitch on more than three (3) consecutive days.
Example: If a pitcher throws 4 innings on Monday, they may only pitch a total of 3 more innings between Tuesday and Wednesday.
 - Once a pitcher has had two (2) consecutive days without pitching, their pitching limits reset.
Example A: Pitcher throws 4 innings on Monday and does not pitch on Tuesday or

Wednesday — limits reset for Thursday.

Example B: Pitcher throws 4 innings on Monday, 2 innings on Tuesday, and 1 inning on Wednesday — limits reset for Friday (after rest days on Thursday and Friday).

- 11.24.** 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.
- 11.25.** Pitching limit regulations may be altered for tournament or playoff play. The goal of the pitching limits is to protect player's arms from fatigue and injury.
- 11.26.** 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.
- 11.27.** Once a pitcher is removed from the game or replaced by another pitcher, they cannot 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.)
- 11.28.** Balks will be called in 15U.
- 11.29.** 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.
- 11.30.** 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.
- 11.31.** 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.
- 11.32.** In house league play, players are permitted to both pitch and catch in the same game.

However, coaches must prioritize player safety and arm care. Coaches are strongly encouraged to monitor pitch counts and throwing workloads closely, and to limit the total number of innings a player spends pitching and catching in a single game.

It is recommended that players who pitch more than one inning in a game should not also catch for more than two innings in that same game. Player development and long-term arm health must always be the priority.

12. 18U

12.1. 18U 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. A game will be considered official after three (3) innings have been completed or once 60 minutes has elapsed from the scheduled start time of the game.

12.3. No new inning may begin after 1 hour 40 minutes of play, based on the official game start time agreed upon at the plate meeting. Umpires are responsible for tracking time and will not declare a "last inning" at any point. If the current inning is still in progress at the 1 hour 40-minute mark, it will be completed under normal rules, including any applicable mercy rules for that inning. No new inning will start once 1 hour 40 minutes has passed. The umpires will announce at the 1 hour 40 mark that there will be no new inning.

Mercy

12.4. The game shall end if one team is ahead by fifteen (15) or more runs after four (4) complete innings. However, in the spirit of development the team that is trailing by fifteen (15) or more runs will still be permitted to complete their final at-bat. If the home team is leading by fifteen (15) or more runs after the visiting team's at-bat, the game will end, and the home team will not bat. If the home team goes up by fifteen (15) runs in the bottom of the 4th inning or later, the game will end as the 15th run is scored.

12.5. There shall be a five (5) run maximum per inning.

12.7. Lineup cards are required to be provided to the umpires and opposing team at ground rules. Teams will lineup to shake hands prior to the games and will not be permitted to lineup to shake hands after the game.

Batter

12.8. Approved bats in accordance with Baseball Ontario "Select" bat rule will be allowed. At the present time the Baseball Ontario "Select" rule states that ONLY WOODEN BATS are to be

used at 18U. See Baseball Ontario rule for exact specifics on bats.

12.9. Metal cleats are allowed to be worn at 18U, 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.

12.10. There will be a continuous batting order and unlimited defensive substitutions. Players arriving late will be placed at the bottom of the order. Any player that is removed from the game due to injury or leaving the game early shall be skipped in the order and not be considered an out.

Any player removed from the game due to an ejection will have their space in the order skipped so long as the team still has a minimum of nine (9) active batters in the lineup. If the team only has eight (8) active batters after an ejection, each time the ejected players spot in the order occurs, the team will be assessed an out. If a team falls below eight (8) players due to an ejection, they will forfeit the game, regardless of the time elapsed, score or innings played.

12.11. All batters and on deck batters must have a properly worn batting helmet. Chinstraps are not required at 18U.

12.12. Batters may attempt to advance to first based on a dropped third strike.

Runners

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

12.14. Base running rules and stealing will be in accordance with the official rules of baseball.

12.15. 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.

12.16. 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.

12.17. 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.

12.18. 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.

Defense

- 12.19.** 18U will player with nine (9) fielders.
- 12.20.** Defensive substitutions will be unlimited.
- 12.21.** 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.

Pitching

- 12.22.** 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.
- 12.23.** A pitcher may pitch a maximum of seven (7) innings in a single game and a maximum of seven (7) innings over any two (2) consecutive games. A pitcher cannot exceed seven innings total between two games combined, even if they do not pitch the maximum in the first game.
Example: If a pitcher throws 5 innings in Game 1, they may only pitch 2 innings in Game 2.
- 12.24.** 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.
- 12.25.** Pitching limit regulations may be altered for tournament or playoff play. The goal of the pitching limits is to protect player's arms from fatigue and injury.
- 12.26.** 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.
- 12.27.** Once a pitcher is removed from the game or replaced by another pitcher, they cannot 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.)
- 12.28.** Players called up from 15U are eligible to pitch however they must use the 15U pitching limits and their rest days apply to their called-up game and vice-versa. (Example: If a 15U player would not have been eligible to pitch on the day he is called up, they cannot pitch at 18U. Likewise, if they pitched in the 18U game it will be as if he pitched in a 15U game that date)
- 12.29.** Balks will be called in 18U.

- 12.30.** 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.
- 12.31.** 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.
- 12.32.** 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.
- 12.33.** In house league play, players are permitted to both pitch and catch in the same game. However, coaches must prioritize player safety and arm care. Coaches are strongly encouraged to monitor pitch counts and throwing workloads closely, and to limit the total number of innings a player spends pitching and catching in a single game.

It is recommended that players who pitch more than one inning in a game should not also catch for more than two innings in that same game. Player development and long-term arm health must always be the priority.

13. Umpires

- 13.1.** Umpires will be provided this rule document and any updates that are made to it. It is the local association's 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 convener 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 convener, Chair and Vice-Chair. All appeals and incidents must be reported through the incident reporting system found at www.NiagaraBaseball.com
- 13.4** When a discrepancy arises on which rules are official, the rules listed at www.NiagaraBaseball.com are the authority.

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. All ejections must be reported through the incident reporting system found at www.NiagaraBaseball.com. Any person ejected from a game will serve a minimum automatic 1 game suspension which is to be served at their next regularly scheduled game.
- 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. Any player or coach ejected for violence, violent threats or fighting will serve an automatic 2 games suspension and will warrant discipline outlined in the NIB Discipline Policy which may result in additional game suspensions.
- 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.

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