

Sacred Heart CYO

Baseball

Majors Rules

SUMMARY:

- Rule F: Baserunners take leads and pitchers may make pickoff attempts. For the first half of the season, baserunners can advance on a pitch that gets past the catcher, but can't do a straight steal and must stay put if the catcher keeps the ball in front of him. After the date above, it's "game on" for stealing bases.
- Rule G: No dropped third strike rule in effect at any point.
- Rule J: 11 year old pitchers must be used for at least one scoreboard inning per game. Players can pitch a max of 2 (consecutive) innings per game subject to a pitch limit of 60 per player per game. Regular season pitching rules also apply for playoffs.
- Rule J: Balks may be called, but typically are not called unless it's a recurring issue. Instead, the umpire and coaches will work with the player to note what needs to be done. In playoffs, umpires may call this a bit stricter than in regular season (1 warning, etc.)
- Rule D: Weeknights: no new inning starts after 2 hour mark. Saturdays: no new inning starts after 1:45 mark. Started inning plays to completion unless darkness absolutely makes that impossible.
- Rule D: Mercy rule: In regular season - 6 run max per inning, with game ending on 12 run lead after 4 innings. For playoffs – no limit on runs per inning, with game ending on 10 run lead after 4 innings.

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A. Official Rules

With the exception of rules noted below, Majors games are played under Official Baseball Rules as amended by Babe Ruth Cal Ripken League rules. Sacred Heart will be using the traditional “50/70” Ripken Baseball game during the in-house recreational season, which features a few unique items.

The “50/70” option utilizes a 50-foot pitching distance (rather than the previously used 46-foot distance) and 70 feet between bases (rather than the traditional 60 foot distance). The “50/70” option is intended to more easily transition players to the larger infield diamonds typically used for 13 year old play, promoting continued participation for players beyond the Majors Division.

Rules that differentiate “50/70” play from typical “46/60” play include:

- Baserunners can take leads and need not wait to advance until pitches pass home plate (note: this will be phased-in, see baserunning / taking leads rules below)
- Pitchers will be expected to pitch from the stretch with runners on first or second, and balks may be called as appropriate
- Batters attempt to advance to first on a dropped third strike (at this time, Sacred Heart is not implementing the dropped third strike aspect for recreational league play)

Also, the Babe Ruth Organization does not permit the use of any bat that has a diameter exceeding 2-1/4 inches for players younger than age 13. As such, “Big Barrel” bats of 2-5/8” or 2-3/4 diameter cannot be used (even if used for other programs such as middle school or club teams). If you’re not sure if you can use a bat, check to see that your bat is stamped with “Babe Ruth Baseball” or “Little League Approved”, and you should be ok.

B. Use of Players / Substitutions

1. Each player must play a minimum of four (4) innings in the field during a six-inning game. No player shall sit for a second inning before all players have sat for one inning. Unlimited defensive substitutions are to be used and are critical to compliance with the minimum play provision. Failure to comply will result in forfeit of the game. For games in which teams do not complete six innings in the field, coaches should still make every effort to have each player play three innings in the field.
2. Players are to be rotated through all positions giving all players the opportunity to play all positions if they would like. All players should play at least 2 innings in the infield. If the coach feels that a player is at a safety risk while playing in the infield, it is the responsibility of the coach to bring this to the attention of the division coordinator and discuss it with the parents. A decision can then be made as to which positions this player is safe to play.
3. A continuous batting order is to be used, whereby all team players bat consistent with the lineups exchanged immediately before each game. Any player that arrives late for a game shall be placed at the end of the batting order. In instances where a player is either injured or too ill to continue playing during the game, that player’s turn can be skipped without penalty. Consensus should be reached for these circumstances, between both teams’ coaches and the umpire, before the inning begins. The continuous batting order does not change throughout the game and is therefore independent of the defensive changes made.

4. In order to keep the game moving along and minimize delays between innings, a pinch runner may be used (only when there are two outs) for a player who will be catching the next inning. This “courtesy runner” must be the player on the bench who was placed out for the second out of the inning. These rule need not be used, however, it can be used if both coaches agree. This is the only instance where a pinch runner may be used, absent player injury, illness, or other extreme circumstances.

C. Positions in the Field

Teams will have 9 players in the field: Pitcher, Catcher, 4 Infielders, and 3 Outfielders. Outfielders must play a reasonable distance beyond the perimeter of the infield and an extra infielder is not permitted.

D. Game Completion and Mercy Rule

A regular game consists of six (6) innings (unless a tie score forces extra innings), with the game becoming official after completion of four (4) innings. (3-1/2 innings if the home team is ahead after the top of the fourth inning). If the score is tied after six innings the game should continue into extra innings, but regular season games will still be subject to the normal time limits in place.

When weather (rain, lightning, darkness) prevents the completion of at least six innings, games shall generally revert back to the last completed inning for determination of final score. At that point, tie games (during the regular season only) that have completed four innings of play should officially be declared a tie and not resumed.

Additionally, no new inning (top half) shall begin for any regular season game (including extra-inning games) after the game has reached the 2 hour mark (subject to adequate daylight). Exception: For all Saturday games (including the final game of the day), the no new inning cutoff will be at the 1 hour, 45 minute mark. At that point, the current inning (top and bottom) is to be completed and the game declared official (even with a tie score). In the event that inning still cannot be completed due to darkness or weather, the entire partial inning is declared void and the game reverts back to the last completed inning for the purposes of determining final score. Any attempts to artificially delay the progress of a game, for the possible purpose of having a game called without playing to its natural completion, will result in forfeit.

A game that does not match the definition of an official game as outlined above may also be declared official upon mutual agreement of the head coaches, without becoming a suspended game to be resumed at a later date. *As an example, this could come into play for a lopsided game that completes just three innings, or in early season games where darkness may limit the potential to complete a game of even four innings.*

Suspended games that are agreed to be resumed shall be resumed from the point of suspension, under the viewpoint that no break in action had occurred. This holds true relative to batting order, pitching records, as well as completion of the game. *(Note: for the purposes of completing that game, the pitcher in place at the point of suspension can continue pitching through her three-inning stint, however, other pitchers used in the original game as pitcher will not be eligible to pitch, even though time has passed since the game was originally played. At the same time, for the purposes of rules relating to innings pitched, determination is made based*

on when the innings are physically pitched).

The preferred date for resumption of a suspended game is immediately before the next scheduled game between the two teams (finishing the suspended game before playing the new game). The boys' program coordinator has final say in determining when, and if, suspended games are to be resumed.

Mercy rules: In this Division, a team can score no more than six (6) runs in any inning. Once a team scores 6 runs in an inning (or has seen three outs made) that turn at bat is completed. Exception: if the 6th run is scored as a result of a home run hit over the fence, all runs shall count on that play.

Games shall be called when either team leads by twelve (12) or more runs at the conclusion of the fourth or fifth inning, or earlier upon the agreement of both head coaches. At that point, if time permits, play can continue for developmental purposes upon mutual agreement by the coaches, however, the game's official outcome (and final score) will have already been determined.

During the playoffs: a) the 6 runs max per inning rule is NOT in place, to provide teams an opportunity to come back in a game even if down by a wide margin early, and b) the mercy rule after 4 innings will be 10 runs (12 is used during the regular season since teams can score 6 runs in an inning). Typically, though, in playoffs there are few 10 run rule games.

E. Not Enough Players

A team can begin a game with as few as 7 players present. If additional players arrive after the start of the game, they should be entered at the **end of the batting order**. A team with less than 9 players may "borrow" 1 (and only 1) player in each inning to play a defensive outfield position. That player will be determined by the "lending" team's coach, however, the player should be instructed to play the field to the best of his abilities. "Borrowed" players are for defensive purposes only and are not eligible to bat for the other team.

For the regular season, the games are to be played and scored no matter how many players end up showing up for the team that doesn't have enough players. Since we don't keep standings there is no reason to have a team forfeit. For the playoffs, if the team does not have its own 8th player show up by the end of the second inning, the game can be declared a forfeit but still played through to a reasonable end for the players' developmental purposes.

F. Leading Off Base / Stolen Bases and Runner Advancement on Wild Pitches & Passed Balls

As noted above, Sacred Heart is utilizing the "50/70" Ripken rules for Majors, which allow runners to take leads.

Through the first half of the season, a few special rules apply in regard to taking leads and stealing, with the primary intent of developing fundamental defensive play. These special rules are as follows:

Baserunners will not be permitted to advance on balls not put into play unless the pitch passes behind the catcher. (That means no straight steals – even if waiting until after the

pitch passes home plate, no delayed steals, and no advancing on balls the catcher blocks but keeps in front of him, including balls that may bounce up the baselines. This rule also applies in the common situation of having runners on first and third, so that the “free pass” to second base is no longer available.)

A baserunner who has a play made on him at his original base will have no option but to attempt to return safely to the base he was at when the play began. The intention of this is to provide no incentive for a baserunner to “bait” the defense into making a play, which results in easy advancement to the next base. For example: A pitcher makes a throw to first base in an attempt to pick off the runner already at first. The runner is not permitted to advance to second base (either by making an immediate dash to second or even as a result of a rundown) and can only try to get back to first safely. If the first baseman, or any other defensive player, tags the runner before his return to the base, the runner is out. If the pickoff throw is wild or escapes the first baseman, neither the runner on first or any other runner on base can advance on the play unless the ball goes over the fence (out of play), resulting in each runner advancing one base.

There is one exception to this: if the pickoff attempt is by the catcher (and not the pitcher), the runner will be permitted to try to advance on an errant pickoff throw that gets behind the fielder, provided the runner retags his original base before attempting to advance to the next base. However, if the ball thrown by the catcher does not get beyond the fielder, the runner still cannot try to advance.

Baserunners should take modest leads and also establish secondary leads upon the delivery of the pitch, even without the ability to advance except under the circumstances noted above.

After the halfway point of the season, the rules restricting baserunning will be lifted and runners are permitted to advance to all bases consistent with the official rules of baseball as they apply regarding taking leads and stealing (baserunners can go at any time the ball is in play, with no limitations)

Nonetheless, coaches are asked to use their judgment in regard to runner advancement during a game, and may agree to special “gentlemen” rules put into place, given the game’s circumstances. The game of baseball is highly renowned for its “unwritten rules” which often demonstrate a level of sportsmanship and civility that is demonstrated through actions dictated by score, situation, and other particulars of any game. For a recreational league, coaches would do well to exhibit these character traits in the interest of the players’ development as both ballplayers and citizens.

G. Third Strike Putouts

Sacred Heart will not be implementing the dropped third strike provision typical of Ripken Baseball 50/70 play, whereby batters would have the opportunity to try to advance to first on a third strike not caught cleanly by the catcher. Instead, for recreational games, batters will be considered out immediately upon a third strike, even if the catcher drops the ball, is juggled, bounces in the dirt, or sails over the catcher’s head.

H. Infield Fly Rule

This Division uses the Infield Fly Rule, consistent with the Official Rules of Baseball.

I. Contact Rule and Head-first Sliding

If in the umpire's judgment a runner attempting to reach any base **intentionally and maliciously** runs into a defensive player, he/she will be called out on the play and ejected from the game. The runner must slide or otherwise attempt to avoid contact. In the absence of intentional or malicious contact initiated by the runner, there should be no call other than out or safe (based on a tag play or force play).

Head-first sliding is not allowed. Exception is when a player is diving back to a base from a somewhat stationary position, while not trying to advance to the next base. Baserunners attempting a head-first slide while advancing to the next base will be automatically called out in all instances, and will be ejected from play for a second infraction in any single game.

Enforcement of the sliding / contact rules is entirely an umpire's judgment call and may not be appealed.

J. Pitching Rules

Coaches are encouraged to use as many pitchers as possible over the course of the season, providing the opportunity for any player interested in pitching. **To promote this, in every game, each team in the Majors Division must have at least one scoreboard inning (3 outs in the same inning, or the maximum run limit was realized) pitched by non-12 year old pitchers. If a team brings in a 12-year old pitcher in the inning started by the 11-year old and still allows the maximum run limit, the 11-year-old requirement is considered to be met. However, this isn't the way it's intended to play out Coaches should work on developing the 11 year old pitchers.**

Example: 11 yr old Eddie begins the inning at pitcher, and allows three runs while recording just 1 out. Coach brings in 12 yr old Tommy to pitch, and he records the final two outs to finish the inning with a total of four runs scored. The 11 yr old requirement was not met – the team will have to try again in another inning. There's no carryover of outs recorded by the 11 yr old – we don't want to get into having 11 yr olds coming in just to face one particular batter in multiple innings in order to meet the requirement. However, if the team reached the maximum run limit (6), the 11 yr old requirement has been met. (not ideal, but it's just more efficient to play it this way!)

For 50/70 play, pitchers are expected to pitch from the stretch when runners are on base. Even during the first half of the season when runners are not permitted to run on the pitch, coaches should have pitchers pitch from the stretch in appropriate game situations, for developmental purposes. Warnings will be given for balks, with play stopped and the pitcher to be provided instruction. Upon implementation of full stealing during the second half of the season, a pitcher's first balk call will result in no runner advancement (warning and instruction only), however, subsequent balks called for the same infraction will result in runners advancing in accordance with official baseball rules. (Umpires will be instructed to use good judgment in calling balks, to

promote development without necessarily impairing the flow of play to any great extent.)

There is a pitch count limit of 60 for this division, requiring any pitcher to be removed upon completion of the batter during which the pitcher reaches the 60 pitch limit. (Note: pickoff attempts are not to be included in the pitch count tally.) During the regular season, pitchers are permitted to pitch a maximum of 2 innings per game (still subject to the pitch count limit) and those innings must be consecutive innings. (Any portion of an inning pitched counts as 1 inning for any player.)

For example, a pitcher throws 46 pitches in inning 1, and then in inning 2 reaches his 60th pitch. He is permitted to finish pitching to that batter, and then must be replaced regardless of game situation. Another example, a pitcher throws 48 pitches over 2 innings, but still must be replaced based on the 2 inning limit even though he is still within the pitch count limit.

No pitcher may pitch more than 6 innings per week, regardless of the number of games played in that week. A week is defined as any rolling 7 day period.

Pitchers are not permitted to issue an “intentional walk” to batters during the rec season. (Intentional walk being defined as either the traditional way of having a catcher receive up to four pitches in a standing position far off the plate, after extending arm outward, or by asking the umpire to provide the batter first base without having to throw a pitch). Intentional walks are not disallowed during the end of season tournament, however, we don’t endorse their use. Our intention is to let the kids play the game and rise to the challenges presented in game situations.

Pitching rules for the playoffs at the end of the season will be the same as in place during the regular season.

Violations of the pitching rules are viewed with great disdain by the league and will result in forfeiting of games.

K. Field Preparation and Reconditioning, Warm-up’s

Both teams are responsible for preparing the field before the game. This includes the batter’s box, pitching mound, bases, and anything else that needs to be addressed. Fields should be properly raked and lined prior to the start of every game. When it starts to get hotter it is also a good idea to water the field periodically. This all helps in keeping our fields in the best condition possible and giving the players the best playing experience possible.

General team warmup’s are not to be conducted on the infield. Instead, the outfield area is to be used in addition to the batting cages, where preference is usually provided for games on the immediate schedule.

Both teams are also responsible for cleaning up the field after games as well. Fields should be left in a condition that makes them ready for another game’s use. Filling in holes around home plate and the pitcher’s mound will increase the likelihood that the field is still playable the next day if there is rain overnight.

Additionally, before leaving the dugout area, coaches and team members are responsible for picking up any trash and scanning the area for any items that might otherwise be left behind.

L. Dugout Behavior

Cheering for teammates is encouraged and a great way to keep players' minds on the game at hand. However, it is requested that loud, team rally chants and songs be discouraged, particularly while the pitcher is in his wind-up and delivery. Hitting the fence with bats or rattling the fence is not permitted at any time. Coaches are not allowed to yell instructions to their players while the pitcher is delivering his pitch in an attempt to tip off the batter. This guidance applies to coaches and parents as well, with all parties being expected to act within the context of the Sacred Heart Code of Conduct.

M. Umpires

Paid umpires are used in this Division, and it is understood that the home plate umpire has complete charge of the game and has final say on all matters.

As such, Sacred Heart has adopted a ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY, whereby any coach (including assistants) that is ejected from a game will also be subject to an immediate SUSPENSION for the team's next two games, (including playoffs). A second offense will subject the coach to a meeting with the division coordinator, with penalties that could include suspension for the remainder of the season.

Coaches can discuss, in a civil manner, any questions or disagreements with the umpire. Balls and strikes cannot be disputed and may result in ejection. Abusive, offensive, or belligerent language directed at players, umpires or coaches by anyone (including parents) may result in forfeit at the umpire's discretion.

Coaches and parents are expected to be supportive of the umpire's efforts and maintain the flow of the game in the interest of quality play.

N. Protests

Protests will be accepted on rule interpretations only. No protests will ever be permitted on judgment calls made by the umpires. If a head coach wishes to protest a game, he/she must inform the umpire of the protest immediately after the activity-in-question occurred, but before a new pitch is made. The protest must be in writing and presented to a Sacred Heart Board member within two (2) days of the game. The Board will review protests immediately and will inform the coaches of the Board's decision within a reasonable time period, generally before either team plays its next game.

O. Rescheduling Rainouts and Other Stopped Games

A Board member on duty has the responsibility of deciding whether to begin games. Once games

Sacred Heart Majors Baseball Rules, Updated 3/24/15 for use thereafter

are started, any decision to stop a game is the result of consultation between the game's umpire and a Board member on duty.

Rained out games are to be replayed in their entirety, unless the rained out game has been declared official or the coaches of both teams agree to resume an otherwise unofficial game that had begun before being rained out.

All makeup games will be played in the next available opening in the league schedule. A Board member responsible for scheduling will confirm arrangements with the coaches and have the final decision regarding the rescheduling. Any game not played in the reassigned time may be considered a forfeit by the team(s) that fail to show up.

League officials reserve the right to modify rainout makeup rules (including the decision to not make up a game), particularly during periods where there is a backlog of rainouts or other league activities.

P. Recording and Reporting Scores

Team scorekeepers should confirm the game score with the other team periodically throughout the game. In instances where a discrepancy exists and cannot be readily resolved, the home team's scorebook is to be considered the official scorebook.

Teams are required to record the pitch count and innings pitched for every pitcher at the conclusion of every game in the Pitching Log located on the desk on the inside of the Snack Shack.

Additionally, final scores are to be emailed (by both teams: win or lose, home or away) within 24 hours to the email address used by the league. In doing so, coaches should also report their team's pitching activity for the day.

Please submit results in the following format, to shcyobaseball@gmail.com:

Subject: 4/15 Dev 8: Astros 6, Mets 3 (*putting this information in the subject line helps identify the game ... on any given Saturday, our league will have as many as 30 games*)

Message: (*each team is responsible for reporting their own pitchers ...if you can, also cc your opposing coach from the game, too*)

Astros pitching: (innings, # pitches)

Jones (1, 22)

Smith (1, 25)

Johnson (1, 16)

Etc.....