



**WBSA** – [www.wbsall.com](http://www.wbsall.com)  
**Whitman Baseball & Softball Association**  
**P.O. Box 223**  
**Whitman, MA 02382**

## **2017 Addendum to the WBSA Official Baseball Home Rules: *WBSA Farm League***

WBSA Farm League Mission: Farm League is designed as a hybrid instructional/minor league division with a focus on building fundamentals, enjoying the game, and gradually, systematically preparing players for the next level of play.

- I. Batting and base running:
  - a. Base runners may not advance on an overthrown ball that goes out of bounds (beyond first or third base – **FOR ALL FIELDS.**)
  - b. No leading and no stealing but players may leave the base as ball crosses the plate.
  - c. No wild pitches and no balks
  - d. Tagging-up on a fly ball is allowed
  - e. Bunting is not allowed
  - f. There is no infield fly rule.
  - g. All teams will use a continuous batting order or “full roster batting.” Every batter bats in turn, regardless of whether he or she is playing in the field or on the bench. Only batters that cross the plate count as runs scored.
  
- II. Game play/Scoring:
  - a. Farm league coaches will utilize free substitution. Ten players are allowed on the field, including 4 outfielders (Left, Left-Center, Right-Center, Right). No short fielders. Players may be moved in and out of the field positions at will, except for the pitcher.
    - i. *Once removed as a pitcher, a player may not pitch again in that game but may play any other position on the field.*
  - b. WBSA requests coaches to rotate fielding positions throughout the season in order to allow ALL players to develop the skills needed to play different positions with a strong consideration for safety. (i.e. if a child is having a difficult time paying attention, he/she may not be ready to play a highly active position such as 1<sup>st</sup> base).
  - c. Mercy Rule: There is a 5-run mercy rule per inning OR once through the order. ***There is no game-ending mercy rule in Farm League.***

- d. A team's at-bat will end after 3 outs are recorded, after 5 runs have scored, or the team has gone once through the order.
  - i. This rule applies to all innings and for all **REGULAR** season games. (During the playoffs, there will be no Mercy rule in place during the last inning of play.)
  - ii. The manager of the batting team will approach the plate umpire to quietly inform them that the next batter is the last batter when appropriate. This is to prevent the runners from taking additional bases.
- e. Games are two hours long, no extra innings allowed – games may end in a tie. Games may need to end before 6 innings at the discretion of the umpire(s) due to darkness or weather-conditions. A game is considered "regulation" after 4 full innings (or 3 ½ if the Home team is ahead).
- f. The ball is dead when it is held anywhere on the mound by any player. Runners advancing will be returned to the last base touched if they are halfway or less to the next base (umpire's discretion).
- g. The "slide or avoid" rule applies in Farm League. However, head-first sliding is NOT allowed.
  - i. If a play is being made on a runner he/she must slide or avoid contact. (umpire's discretion)
  - ii. If a play is being made on a runner with no slide and contact is made – runner is out.
- h. Farm league playoffs will include runner-up games whenever possible to provide multiple teams with opportunities for more play-time at the end of the season
  - i. *This will be at the discretion of the League Director, Scheduling Director, and Umpire-in-Chief for Baseball.*

### III. Pitching:

- a. Farm League will be primarily coach or machine pitched for first two weeks of the season (the first 4 games) – exclusively, no exceptions. For the remainder of the season (including playoffs) games will be *half* player-pitched and *half* machine or coach-pitched. (A *half* game is considered **3 innings** or **1-hour** whichever comes first).
  - i. ***Walk-limit discretion***; During the player-pitched portion of the game, a team's manager should consider replacing a pitcher after **4 consecutive walks or 6 cumulative walks** for that inning. The inning may be completed with machine or coach pitching at the discretion of the manager.
- b. During the player-pitched portion of Farm games, strike zones will be *slightly* larger than Minor/Major divisions, well-defined and agreed upon by every plate umpire.
- c. A player may pitch to his/her pitch count, **regardless** of the number of innings it takes to get that pitcher to the count. (*Previous Rules that included a two-inning limit are no longer valid.*)
  - i. A 7 year old may pitch a maximum of 40 pitches per game.
  - ii. An 8 year old may pitch a maximum of 50 pitches per game.

- d. WBSA *strictly* requires coaches to keep accurate records of pitch counts and utilize a league-provided pitch counter for all games. WBSA will strictly adhere to Little League rest day rules.
  - i. Little League pitching rest days are as follows:
    1. ***If a player pitches 36 to 50 pitches in a day, two (2) calendar day of rest must be observed.***
    2. ***If a player pitches 21 to 35 pitches in a day, one (1) calendar day of rest must be observed.***
    3. ***If a player pitches 1 to 20 pitches in a day, no rest is required.***
- e. Once a player is pulled from the pitching position, a player may not return as a pitcher in the same game.
- f. A pitcher must be removed after hitting 2 consecutive batters in an inning or 3 batters in a game.
- g. Pitchers will throw from a throw-down pitching rubber (anchored if possible) placed approximately 3 feet closer to home than the normal distance for Little League pitching or 43 feet from the back or peak of the plate. (Normal Little League distance is 46 feet.)
  - i. Managers should agree on pitching rubber location prior to the start of the game.
  - ii. Exception: *due to the recent age changes, if there is a "league-age" 7 year old who is actually 6 years old, managers may request that player pitch from a 40 foot distance, at the discretion of the plate umpire and in collaboration with the opposing Manager.*
- h. Regulation Little League approved baseballs must be used. Each team provides one new ball to the plate umpire at the start of a game.
  - i. No "soft" or "T-Balls" allowed.
- i. Pitching-Machine game play:
  - i. There should be an 8-foot diameter circle chalked around the Zooka pitching machine. This area is called the "free hit zone." Any batted ball that lands in this area is dead, and the hitter is awarded first base. All base runners advance one base. If a hit ball strikes the pitching machine it will be considered a live ball – unless it lands within the circle. **Players are not allowed to field the ball in this area.** A player is placed on the outside of this 8-foot circle and assumes the defensive position of a pitcher—one foot must be touching or placed on the edge of the circle.
  - ii. **Players do not feed the machine** – Only the adult coach placed in the "free hit zone" may feed the machine.
  - iii. The plate umpire will have the final say as to the speed of the pitching machine. The pitching machine will be set between **35 and 40 mph and placed 43 feet from home plate.** For the beginning of the season, all games will start at the lower end of the speed range. The pitching machine can only be adjusted (height and speed) at the beginning of a new inning with the agreement of both coaches and the umpire.

IV. Coaching and Umpires:

- a. In addition to a first base and third base coach, the only coach allowed on the field of play is to be positioned behind the catcher to return any passed balls.
  - i. The defensive team should supply this coach each inning. This coach should not instruct, direct, or otherwise coach players from that position. This coach must stay to the left or right of the catcher (not directly behind.)
- b. Umpiring should be done from behind the catcher.

V. ***\*\*Except as herein provided, the Rules of Play shall be governed by the Little League Baseball Rules in force and effect for the applicable season (2017). 2017 Little League Baseball Rules apply unless covered by any of the above addendum items (I. through V.)\*\****