

HIAWATHA KIDS LEAGUE RULES

General Rules

OBJECTIVE

It must be understood that the goals of the Hiawatha Kids League (HKL) are to teach the fundamentals of baseball and softball while, at the same time making it fun so that the boys and girls gain the confidence and spirit needed to participate.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The following rules stand for the CURRENT season. The board will take suggestions for changes or alterations for future season at any time. Please see a board member with your recommendations and/or email them to the Rules Committee.

THIS IS A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM. ALL COACHES AND BOARD MEMBERS ARE DONATING THEIR TIME. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP, PLEASE LET US KNOW BY CONTACTING ANY COACH OR BOARD MEMBER.

No alcoholic beverages or tobacco products are permitted at HKL activities.

All players, coaches, and parents are required to pick up papers, trash, etc., at the end of each game. This includes the bleachers and dugout areas.

Prior to the game the commissioner or a designee shall determine if the game is to be called because of unsafe field conditions, weather conditions, or darkness. It is the plate umpire's discretion after the game begins to call off the game. If no umpire is present, it will revert to the coaches' decision. In all instances, an onsite HKL Board member may determine that conditions are unsafe and call the games. In any of these instances, once it is determined that conditions are unsafe, all players, coaches, and spectators should leave the field and seek shelter.

Coaches, players, or spectators shall not use words or actions to incite or try to incite spectators, use profanity or remarks which are directed at opposing players, umpires, or spectators, or enter the area behind the catcher while the game is in progress. EFFECT: the offender may be ejected from the field. Players, coaches, or spectators shall not climb on or rattle dugout fences or stand on the benches.

The second team listed on the playing schedule is the home team. The home team will sit in the third base dugouts and visiting team in the first base dugouts.

Due to the educational nature of the HKL, there are general questions that may arise that have not specifically been addressed in our rules (but are covered in USSSA). As questions arise, umpires, board members, and coaches will address them in a manner that is educational and encouraging for our players.

For safety purposes, nobody other than team members, coaches, umpires, and adult volunteers will be allowed within the confines of the diamond during a game. The use of a bat boy/girl is prohibited.

No practice other than the game warm-up may be held after 12:00 p.m. (noon) for teams playing that day. Additional practices outside the HKL schedule may be requested by coaches. Contact the HKL Secretary to schedule an additional practice.

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ELIGIBILITY

Female players must be in Alternative Kindergarten through 7th Grade and male players must be in Alternative Kindergarten through 6th Grade. Player may lose their eligibility as a result of false information given on their application form, for repeated offenses of sportsmanship, conduct or attendance, or for any single flagrant violation of sportsmanship, conduct or other rules of the game.

Each child must have a registration form signed by the child's parent or guardian, and the registration fee must be paid before the child is eligible to play or practice. The HKL Board will provide medical release and emergency contact forms to all coaches and these forms must be filled out completely prior to the first practice and retained by the coaches.

No player may play or practice with any injury which requires a cast or any type of splinting or immobilizer. The HKL Board will make final determination on all injuries.

No more than 2 coaches will be identified as official coaches per team. All coaches must be at least 18 years old and have completed a background check. These two coaches will be allowed to have their children and/or relatives on their team. A maximum of 4 children/relatives will be allowed for any team.

A sponsor may have up to 2 children per team. The children's parents must be either the sponsor, a relative, or an active employee of the sponsor.

SPORTSMANSHIP - Zero Tolerance

Unsportsmanlike conduct or inappropriate behavior by coaches, players or spectators will not be allowed. Umpires may eject disorderly coaches, players and/or spectators from the game. An umpire, League Director or HKL Board Member may call a game for unsportsmanlike conduct. If this discipline is ignored, the offending team will forfeit the game. Use of profanity is considered disorderly conduct. The umpire will give one warning before ejection. All offenses will be reported to the HKL Board. The HKL Board will review all incidents. This action can include suspensions up to and including indefinite suspension or ejection from the league. All decisions of the HKL Board are final.

Penalty for player ejection consists of sitting on the bench for the remainder of the current game and also for the following attended game. Forfeits are excluded.

Coaches displaying unsportsmanlike conduct may not receive a warning from the League Director or HKL Board.

THROWING THE BAT IS DANGEROUS!! **Any batter throwing the bat will be called out.** No runners may advance, and the ball is dead.

The umpire will eject a player from the game for throwing a bat or helmet if done so in a display of anger. **The judgement of the umpire is final.**

The HKL Board must approve all coaches. **No unapproved persons allowed in the dugout/bench area during any game.**

See also Coaches Conduct and Parent Conduct detailed at www.hiawathakidsleague.com.

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The term Zero Tolerance encompasses a wide range of actions or verbiage directed from one person to another, or a group of people, including but not limited to: Unsolicited physical contact which would constitute assault under state law.

UMPIRES

The HKL will, to the best of their ability, provide umpires for all games. Coach Pitch coaches will act as umpire for their game. For all other divisions, head coaches will be asked to provide a volunteer umpire, one from each team, if one is not provided by HKL.

Score sheets must be properly completed and signed by both coaches and umpires at the end of the game. This will include any additional comments from coaches or umpires. Injuries or incidents occurring during a game should be reported to the HKL Board and notated on the back of the score sheet. **Please check the score sheet carefully before signing to ensure the proper score is recorded.**

Players are not allowed to dispute the umpire's decision. Coaches may appeal a disputable call, but the umpire's decision is still final. Repeated appeals causing delay of game will be denied.

It is the umpire's responsibility to keep the game moving as quickly as possible. Coaches will not be allowed to use excessive time-outs. Only 2 mound visits per inning will be allowed, with a maximum of 4 per game. Note: A pitching change is not considered a mound visit.

EQUIPMENT

Only equipment furnished by HKL will be used in the games and practices, with the exception of bats, catcher's gear, gloves, helmets and knee savers. If there are any problems with any of your equipment, please contact your League Director.

Loose equipment, such as helmets, bats, gloves, etc., must be kept in the dugout or behind the players bench for safety. Bats should not be hung from chain link fencing.

BAT SPECIFICATIONS

Baseball – No wood bats. Length must be less than 36". Maximum bat diameter of 2 ¾ inches. Little League USA, Babe Ruth, Pony League & USSSA only. BBCOR bats are also allowed as long as they meet the size restrictions.

Softball– All bats must bear either the wording Official Softball, USSSA or the ASA approved 2000 certification mark as shown below, and must not be listed on an ASA non approved list. If the bat is not distinguishable/or there are no markings, the bat will NOT be approved for player use. BBCOR bats are also allowed as long as they meet the size restrictions.



HKL reserves the right to reject any equipment brought into the league. Bats not meeting the requirements (illegal) will be removed immediately from play and returned only to a parent or guardian at the end of the evening. All decisions of the officiating umpire, division director, or board member are FINAL.

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The following symbol must be stamped onto the helmet.



Any player/coach who abuses equipment at any time shall be immediately disciplined by being ejected from the game. The umpire will report any ejection to the HKL Board for further action.

A safety base will be used. The batter-runner may use the orange portion on only the first attempt at first base. Once the runner passes first base, the runner must use only the white base from that point. The defensive player may use only the white base in making any play at first. **EXCEPTION:** A defensive player may use the orange part of the safety base if trying to avoid contact with the batter-runner. Note: If the defensive player uses the orange base in attempt to put out at the batter-runner and they are NOT trying to avoid contact, the batter-runner will be declared safe.

UNIFORM

Ankle length pants or ball pants with tall socks (no skin may be exposed on the leg) and gym shoes, rubber cleats, plastic cleats (no steel cleats) must be worn during practices and games. Uniform shirts must be worn at all HKL games. Shirts are not to be altered in any way. Only HKL hats/visors are to be worn if hats/visors are worn. Accessories are not to be worn, with exception of stud-type earrings only.

Catchers must wear protective gear (face mask, chest and throat protector, and shin guards) as approved by the HKL in practice and in games. Skullcaps must be worn during games. **Any player warming up the pitcher shall wear the face mask with throat protector.** Boys should wear a protective cup.

PLAYERS, SUBSTITUTES AND COACHES

Free substitution is allowed on defense only. If a player is injured and their turn in the batting order comes up, they will be skipped and no out will be recorded. The injured player may not bat again until they have played defense and their previous position in the batting order comes up.

. In the event that the player is currently batting, the player who made the last out will resume batting with the current ball/strike count. The player may re-enter the game but must play defense before being allowed to bat. The player substituted will be the one who made the last out.

In order to speed up play, the offensive team may substitute a runner for the upcoming catcher if there are two (2) outs or the offensive team is within one (1) run of the run limit for that inning and the catcher is on base.

All players present and wearing a uniform shall not sit out more than 1 consecutive inning. The only exception is a player who may be disciplined for bad conduct. The plate umpire and scorekeeper **MUST** be notified of such action **BEFORE** the game begins.

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Frequent absences by coaches and/or players from practices and/or games will be brought to the attention of the HKL Board and the board will take appropriate corrective action.

In the event that the coach and assistant coach are not present at game time, a board member or the umpire will ask for an adult volunteer to substitute coach. If no coach is found, the game will be forfeited.

THE GAME

Games are played Monday through Thursday, with an occasional Friday, weather permitting. All teams are guaranteed ten (10) completed games. Any games requiring rescheduling will be scheduled by the HKL Board.

Forfeit time for any scheduled game is 10 minutes past the scheduled starting time.

Games will not be started with less than seven (7) players on a team. At forfeit time, if less than seven player are present, the team short players will automatically forfeit the game. If a team plays with seven players they shall not be penalized with automatic outs for missing players. The game may be played for practice if a team has less than seven players present. The score of the forfeited game shall be 7-0 in favor of the team not at fault.

TIE-BREAKER RULE

If a game is tied at the end of the last scheduled inning and time permits, the remainder of the game will be played as follows:

1. The team at bat will place runners on 2nd and 3rd bases with 1 out. The runners will be the last two batters of the previous inning in the same order as batting.
2. The game will continue as usual. The limited runs per inning used prior to the last inning will be in effect.
4. The above applies to all extra innings if time permits.

BATTING

All coaches must list players, by first initial, last name and shirt number on the score sheet. If a player arrives late it will be the coach's decision to let that player participate. If the coach allows the player to participate, the late arriver will be put at the bottom of the batting order and the coach is responsible for putting that player's name in the official scorebook and notifying the umpire.

A continuous batting order will be used for all players through the game in all divisions. Prior to the game, a batting line-up will be prepared for all players present. Players will continue to bat in turn, even if they are not playing in the field.

Batting out of order, as applied to Machine Pitch and Majors divisions, is when the incorrect batter is in the batter's box and is ready for the pitch. When batting out of order is called, the team at bat will be charged with one out and the correct batter will be up to bat and will begin with a 0/0 count. If an out of order batter becomes a base runner and the error is discovered before the next pitch, the out of order base runner will be declared out and removed from the base. The official scorekeeper should call batting out of order.

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Helmet Rule- It is mandatory for each on-deck player, batter, runner, and players in the coach's boxes to wear a batting helmet. These players shall wear a helmet with extended earflaps which cover both ears and temples.

When an umpire witnesses a runner (including the batter-runner) deliberately remove a batting helmet during playing action the umpire shall stop play. If the helmet must be removed, the player must wait for "Time" to be declared by the umpire. If the pitcher wears a head protector, its entire outer cover shall have a non-glare surface.

BASERUNNING

If a base runner is hit by a batted ball before it passes an infielder other than the pitcher, said runner is out. If the ball hits a runner after it has passed an infielder other than the pitcher, said runner is not out.

The runner **MUST AVOID CONTACT/COLLISION** if a play is being made on the base he or she is advancing to. If the contact is intentional, the runner shall be called out and ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct. If the contact is not intentional, the runner shall be called out and the ball will be declared dead. Determination of intent will be the umpire's decision. Hurdling is prohibited. Hurdling is an attempt by an offensive player to go over the top of a defensive player who has the ball and is in position to make a tag. If a slide is not practical, the base runner must attempt to avoid contact with the defensive player.

BALL DEAD/BALL IN PLAY

Ground Rule Double is any batted fair ball that rolls through an outfield gate hole in the fence, or under a fence, or that goes over the outfield fence after first striking the ground in fair territory, or first striking the ground in fair territory and then being deflected off a player's glove. The ball is dead and all runners and the batter-runner advance two bases.

INFIELD FLY RULE - The infield fly rule will not be used in this league. Any ball hit in the air must be caught to record an out. Runners are at risk to either advance to the next base or return to the previous base.

Out of Play is when a ball is thrown or deflected out of the playing area or into either dugout or bench area. If a ball is thrown or deflected out of play by a defensive player, the base runners or batter-runner will be awarded two bases from the time of the throw.

DEFINITIONS

Appeal Play - An appeal play is a play upon which an umpire cannot make a decision until requested by a player. The appeal must be made before the next pitch, legal or illegal, is delivered to the batter and the ball must be live. The appeal must be made through the pitcher.

Base Path - A base path is an imaginary line three feet to either side of the direct line between the bases.

Dead Ball - Ball is not in play and is not considered in play again until the pitcher holds it in pitching position, the catcher is in the catcher's box, and the batter is in the batter's box, and the umpire has called "Play."

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Delayed Dead Ball - A delayed dead ball is the time sequence between a rule violation and completion of associated play. Umpires then determine enforcement of penalty or ignoring of inflation based on rule codification.

Fair Ball - A fair ball is a batted ball that settles in fair territory between home and 1st base or home and 3rd base; or that is on or over fair territory including any part of 1st or 3rd base when bounding to the outfield; or that touches 1st, 2nd, or 3rd bases; or that, while on or over fair territory touches the person of any umpire or player, or that while over fair territory passes out of the playing field beyond the outfield fence. A fair ball is determined by the position of the ball, not the position of player who touches it.

Force-out - A force-out is the putout of a base runner who is required to run; the putout is accomplished by holding the ball while touching the base to which the runner must advance before the runner reaches that base.

Foul Tip - A foul tip is a batted ball, which goes directly from the bat to the catcher's hands and is legally caught.

Infield Fly – An infield fly is a fly (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort; and provided this is made before 2 are out and at a time when 1st and 2nd, or 1st, 2nd, and 3rd bases are occupied.

Interference - Interference is the act of an offensive player or team member, which impedes or confuses a defensive player while attempting to execute a play.

Legal Touch - A legal touch occurs when the ball touches a runner or batter-runner who is not touching a base and while it is securely held in a fielder's hand. The ball is not considered as having been securely held if it is juggled or dropped by the fielder having touched the runner unless the runner deliberately knocks the ball from the hand of the fielder. It is sufficient for the runner to be touched with the hand or glove in which the ball is held.

Obstruction - Obstruction is the act of:

- a. A defensive player or team member which hinders or prevents a batter from striking or hitting a pitched ball, or
- b. A fielder, while not in possession of the ball, in the act of fielding a batted ball, or receiving a thrown ball, which impedes the progress of a base runner who is legally running bases. Faking a tag without the ball is obstruction.

Over Slide - An over slide is an act of an offensive player when as a base runner, the runner over slides the base the runner is attempting to reach. It is usually caused when momentum causes the runner to lose contact with the base, which then causes the runner to be in jeopardy. The batter-runner may over slide first base without being in jeopardy if the batter-runner immediately returns to that base without making a move toward 2nd base.

Pivot Foot - The pivot foot is that foot which the pitcher must keep in constant contact with the pitcher's plate, until pushing off as part of the stride during delivery.

Quick Pitch - The quick pitch is one made by the pitcher with the obvious attempt to catch the batter off-balance. This would be before the batter takes a desired position in the batter's box or while the batter is still off-balance as a result of the previous pitch.

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Strike Zone - The strike zone is that space over home plate, which is between the batter's armpits and the bottom of the knees, when the batter assumes a natural batting stance.

Hiawatha Kids League baseball/softball rules not outlined above will revert to the USSSA rules.