

Minnesota 50+ Baseball League (M50BL) Rules (2022)

The M50BL will use the Official Rules of Baseball as its base and add some modifications.

Managers, players and umpires: Please read through the following rule modifications:

RULES OF PLAY

Batters box: Batters must keep one foot in the box at all times during their at bat, with the following exceptions:

1. When a batter is driven out by a pitch or has swung at a pitch.
2. Defense calls time out or pitcher is off the mound.
3. Defense attempts a play or a wild pitch/passed ball occurs.
4. Catcher leaves his position.
5. Offense (or batter) calls time out.
6. Batter feigns a bunt or assumes possible ball 4 (this does not mean go all the way to first base).

When batter is out of the box, he may not leave the dirt area around home plate except in the case of a substitution, a conference or an equipment problem.

The intent of this rule is to keep the game flowing. When a player is in violation of this rule, the umpire will ask that the batter return to the batter's box-one warning per offending player. If the offending player does not return to the batter's box immediately (or the violation is repeated), a strike will be called without a pitch being thrown.

Player contact and sliding: Any player who initiates intentional and forceful contact with any opponent shall be called out and if, in the opinion of the umpire, the contact is excessive, the player will be ejected from the game. If a warning was given after the first offense, the offending player will be ejected from the game after a second offense.

This includes barreling, roll blocks, pop-up slides, or sliding out of the baseline to initiate contact. Slides must be directly to the bag and the slide may go past the bag as long as it is NOT in the direction of the defensive player handling the baseball. Malicious contact is prohibited. The umpire may call a double-play if, in his opinion, there may have been time to throw out the a second runner had the fielder not been contacted. While there is no "must slide" rule, it would be advised to slide on any close play. Catchers will not block the plate and fielders may not block the baseline unless the ball is in their possession or the catcher has a reasonable opportunity, in the umpire's judgement, to make a play on the runner. Anything less will be considered obstruction.

Decoy tags/Hidden ball tricks: Decoy tags or inducing a runner to slide unnecessarily are prohibited. An offending player will be warned after the first offense and ejected after the second offense, with the runner being awarded at least one base or as many bases as he would have made without the obstruction. No hidden ball tricks. A fielder may fake a throw back to the pitcher and instead tag out the runner if the runner has left the base but a fielder may not hide and hold the ball any longer than it takes to throw it back to the pitcher.

Ejections: Ejected players must leave the field of play immediately and must leave the playing site upon gathering their belongings. Any further contact with the umpires, even after the game finishes, could bring possible suspension from future league and post-season games. A record of ejections will be kept in the commissioner's office.

Intentional walk: Pitcher points batter to first base-no pitches will be thrown.

Hit batters: Any pitcher who hits three batters with pitches during a game must be removed from the pitching position immediately upon hitting his third batter. He may continue to play offense and defense.

Outfield/Infield play: A batter may not be thrown out at first base by any defensive player who starts the play with one or both feet in the outfield grass. Outfielders may throw to any other base to record outs on force plays and then the player receiving the ball may throw to first base for the out.

Infielders must start each play with both feet on the dirt. They can go anywhere to retrieve the ball and throw to any base for an out. (Anderson rule)

PLAYING GUIDELINES

Players: Team's rosters must be posted on the M50BL website and will consist of up to twenty-five players during the regular season. A player may play on only one team in either 50s or 60s division. Only exception would be if a manager has more than one team playing in that division.

Most players will be at least 50 years of age or older. Each team may have players 48 or 49 years of age but may only have a maximum of three playing in any game. In 60s division, a player may be 58 or 59.

Pitchers must be at least 50 years old to pitch in 50s division and 60 years old to pitch in 60s division.

A player's age is defined by the age that they become any time in the year he is playing. If a player's birthdate is 12/31, he is considered that age for the entire year dating back to January 1 of that same year. In other words, a 47 year old who turns 48 on Dec 31, is considered a 48 year old for the whole year dating back to January 1 of that year. A player must present his driver's license or birth certificate to the commissioner at any time during the season if asked by the commissioner.

Players must play in at least five games (50s/60s combined) to be eligible for any post-season play. This rule is to prevent a team from bringing in a "ringer" to strengthen the team for the tournament only.

NEW: In the 60s division, a pitcher may pitch one complete game of any length or a total of six or fewer innings in a double header.

Single games: Official M50BL games are scheduled for 7 innings.

Double-headers: Double-headers consist of two six-inning games.

10-Run rule: In regular seven inning games, the rule will be in effect after 5 innings (4 1/2 if home team leads). In the six-inning double-headers, the 10-run rule applies after the team trailing by 10 comes to bat 4 times (3 1/2 innings if home team is leading).

Weather-shortened games: Games must go four innings to be considered a completed game (3 1/2 if home team is leading). If 3 or fewer innings are completed, the game will be cancelled or rescheduled.

Extra innings: If the score is tied after seven innings (single game), the game will be continued under the same rules for up to two more innings or until there is a winner (in 8 or 9 innings). If still tied after 9, the M50BL shootout will come into effect. In a double-header, the shootout begins after sixth inning.

The following are the M50BL shootout rules:

1. Visiting team will begin first extra inning with the last batted out of the previous inning on second base and the next hitter at the plate with a 3 and 2 count. This player must stay in the game for at least one more complete at bat before lifted for courtesy or pinch runner.

2. Each team get three outs. This process will continue until there is a clear winner after a completed inning.

3. If no winner is determined after 3 shootout innings, the game will be declared a tie in the standings.

Lineups: Managers will exchange lineups before the game. Lineups must include:

1. First and last name of each player present that day.
2. Correct corresponding uniform number.
3. How many batters in starting lineup (minimum 8!).

Batting order rules:

1. Teams may play with as few as 8 players for the game to be official.
2. If a team has 7 or fewer players present, the game will be a forfeit but should still be played if the team with enough players wants to play. A bench player from the other team can join the deficient team so that a game can be played.
3. If a team begins the game with 8 or more players and all are in the offensive lineup, and a player is forced to leave the game because of an injury, no “out” will be declared when that player’s position comes to the plate. However, if the offensive player leaves the lineup for any other reason (i.e., ejection or leaving the playing site), an “out” will be declared for that vacant spot in the batting lineup each time it comes to the plate.
4. Exception to the automatic out: A game may not end on the automatic out.
5. A player not in the starting lineup, may be added to the end of the lineup at any time throughout the game. This usually occurs when a player arrives late for the start of the game.

Courtesy runners, pinch hitters and shared lineup option: A team may use a courtesy runner at any time for any player but he may courtesy run only once per game. Courtesy runners may be any legal players present that day, in or out of the starting lineup. A player who is not in the original offensive lineup may pinch hit only once but the player for whom he is hitting is out of the offensive lineup for the remainder of the game. No re-entry to the offensive lineup.

Teams have the option to use the “shared lineup” system whereby two or more players occupy the same line in batting lineup. Line shares may run for each other or hit for each other when their position comes up in the batting order. Umpire and opposing manager must be alerted before the game begins, that their team is using the line-share system. Manager yells out: “line share” for each player the first time it is going to be used in that spot in the lineup. The current system of using the “courtesy runner” cannot be used when you are using the line share system. Line share is most helpful when a team has thirteen or more players that day. Again: **you cannot not use both the line share system and courtesy runner system in the same game.**

Defensive substitutions: There will be free and unlimited defensive substitutions, without reporting to the umpire or the opponent’s scorekeeper. Exception: pitching changes must be reported to the umpire and to both team’s scorekeepers. All pitchers are allowed to pitch again (only once more) provided they have remained in the game defensively. He may not pitch again until the next inning.

UNIFORMS, EQUIPMENT

Uniforms: All participating players, coaches and managers must be in full, numbered baseball uniforms while within the confines of the field of play.

1. Uniform must be buttoned up and tucked in.
2. No cutoff sleeves are permitted, either on sleeved jerseys or on t-shirts under vest jerseys.
3. No shorts, sweatshirts, sweatpants or any civilian attire to be worn on the field.

Helmets: Batters and runners are required to wear NOCSAE-approved helmets. Cracked helmets are prohibited.

Bat boys: Bat boys (or girls) are required to wear a double-ear helmet whenever out of the dugout.

Wood bats: Bats must be made of solid wood or solid wood composite only.

Shoes: Metal or rubber spikes are allowed; however only those manufactured for baseball.

HOME TEAM'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide a baseball field with a pitcher's mound, backstop and outfield fences.
2. Provide a competent, experienced umpire with an umpire's uniform.
3. Provide at least 3 new high quality baseballs before the start of the game. Five balls for doubleheaders. For tnmt, each team puts in two balls for first game only.
4. Allow the visiting team use of the infield/outfield and batting cage before the game.
5. Give the visiting team as much notice as possible if conditions for a game are not safe or field is not playable or if home team is forfeiting game for any reason.
6. After game(s) completed, teams must inform the commissioner the game results (preferable by text).

