



# Babe Ruth League, Inc.

A Non-Profit Tax-Exempt Organization for 4 to 18 Year Old Players

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TO: Babe Ruth League Membership  
FROM: Babe Ruth League Headquarters  
DATE: December 17, 2025  
RE: Babe Ruth League Baseball Rule Changes Beginning with the 2026 Season

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**The International Board of Directors has approved the following rule changes for Babe Ruth Baseball and Cal Ripken Baseball divisions beginning with the 2026 season. These changes will be reflected in the 2026 Babe Ruth League, Inc. Rules and Regulations. **Any rule changes for the Babe Ruth Softball division will be under a separate memo and placed in the 2026 Babe Ruth Softball Rulebook.****

## **Rule Changes Beginning with the 2026 Season (*Please note Division or Level of Play*)**

### **1. Rule 0.05 Team Composition (Paragraph 1) - Babe Ruth Baseball and Cal Ripken Baseball**

Cal Ripken - Each Cal Ripken team can have a maximum of fifteen (15) players, a manager, and three (3) coaches.

13-16 - Each 13-16-year-old team can have a maximum of fifteen (15) players, a manager, and three (3) coaches.

16-18 - Each 16-18-year-old team can have a maximum of eighteen (18) players, a manager, and three (3) coaches.

### **2. Rule 11.02 Team Composition (Paragraph 1) - Babe Ruth Baseball and Cal Ripken Baseball**

a. Each Cal Ripken tournament team may have a maximum of fifteen (15) players, one (1) manager, and three (3) coaches.

b. Each 13-16 and 16-18 tournament team may have a maximum of eighteen (18) players, one (1) manager, and three (3) coaches.

### **3. Rule 11.05 and 4.10b Tie-Breaker (Extra Innings Procedure) - Babe Ruth Baseball and Cal Ripken Baseball**

At the start of each extra inning, a runner is placed on second base- the runner will be the last recorded batter of the previous inning. Any eligible player may be substituted for this runner and is subject to the substitution rule (3.04). This format play shall continue until (1) the visiting team has scored more total runs than the home team at the end of a completed inning, or (2) the home team scores the winning run in an uncompleted inning.

### **4. Rule 0.04, Number 3 Note - Tournament Eligibility Communication - Babe Ruth Baseball and Cal Ripken Baseball**

To be eligible to participate in tournament play, a player, manager or coach must be listed

on the local league regular season roster and on tournament rosters before competing in the first level of tournament play.

#### 5. 6.10 Designated Hitter – Babe Ruth 13-16 and 16-18

Any Babe Ruth 13-16 and 16-18 League may elect to use the Designated Hitter Rule. The rule provides as follows:

A hitter may be designated for any one starting player and all substitutes for that player. The Designated Hitter must be named before the game, with both the DH and the player being hit for listed on the lineup card. It is not mandatory that a team use a DH, but failure to do so prior to the game precludes the use of a DH for that game.

If a pinch hitter or runner replaces the DH, that substitute becomes the new DH. The original DH may re-enter under the re-entry rule. The DH and the player being hit for are locked into the batting order. No multiple substitutions may be made that will alter the batting rotation of the DH.

A DH may be used in one of two ways:

- a. Tenth Starter: The DH bats for one defensive player. The DH role ends when:
  - 1. The defensive player (or any substitute) bats, pinch-hits, or pinch-runs for the DH; or
  - 2. The DH (or any substitute) plays defense.
- b. Player/DH: A starting defensive player also serves as the DH. The DH role ends when:
  - 1. A substitute enters that defensive position and later bats, pinch-hits, or pinch-runs; or
  - 2. The starting defensive Player/DH is substituted for as a hitter or runner.

**Note:** The type of DH must be declared before the game. Coaches cannot change the DH option once the game has started.

**Example 1:** If you list a DH to bat for your left fielder, the left fielder cannot bat, pinch-hit, or pinch-run later in the game. If he does, the DH is lost for the remainder of the game.

**Example 2:** If your lineup lists a LF/DH, that player both plays left field and bats for himself. If you later replace him on defense and that new left fielder comes to bat, the DH is lost for the remainder of the game.

6. **1.17 Non-Traditional Playing Equipment Communication - Babe Ruth Baseball and Cal Ripken Baseball**

Non-traditional playing equipment must be reviewed by the Babe Ruth League, Inc Baseball Rules Committee before it will be permitted for use.

- Hard and unyielding items (guards, casts, braces, splints, etc.) must be padded with closed-cell, slow-recovery foam no less than ½" thick.
- Knee and ankle braces unaltered from the manufacturer's original design do not require padding.
- Exceptions may be granted for participants with disabilities or extenuating circumstances, provided the equipment does not create risk or unfair advantage.

7. **Shoulder Emblems – Babe Ruth Baseball and Cal Ripken Baseball**

All teams participating in Babe Ruth local league and tournament competition are required to wear the Official Cal Ripken Baseball (4-12 year olds) or Babe Ruth Baseball (13-18 year olds) shoulder emblem on their left outer uniform sleeve, or if vest type, sleeveless jersey, on the upper left chest of the jersey. Players' and coaches' uniform jerseys shall not display emblems of other youth organizations other than Cal Ripken Baseball or Babe Ruth Baseball.

8. **Cal Ripken 8YO Coach Pitch Rules – See Appendix.**

9. **CLARIFICATION - Rule 4.15 – Forfeit**

a. Current:

- i. A game shall be forfeited to the opposing team when a team is unable or refuses to place nine players on the field.

b. Proposed:

- i. A game shall be forfeited to the opposing team when a team is unable or refuses to place nine players on the field, or ten players if using EP or DH.

**APPENDIX**

**8-YEAR-OLD COACH PITCH RULES**

(Used in Cal Ripken Invitational World Series)

**TIME LIMIT** - One hour, and 30 minutes (1:30), or six (6) innings, whichever comes first. In the event of a tie, the games will continue until there is a winner. In the Championship Games, there is No Time Limit.

**BUNTING** - Bunting is allowed in "Coach Pitch." However, NO FAKE BUNTING IS ALLOWED. If the batter offers to bunt, then the batter must bunt the ball or pull the bat back to take the pitch. If the batter offers to bunt, pulls the bat back, and then swings at the pitch, the batter will automatically be declared out by the umpire.

**BASE STEALING** - Base stealing is not permitted in Rookie Coach Pitch.

**OUTFIELDERS** - There will be four (4) outfielders. All outfielders must remain in the grass area of the outfield. They cannot be positioned in the infield at any time. This means there will be ten (10) batters in the line-up.

**EXTRA PLAYER (EP)** - An Extra Player (EP) can be used as the 11th batter. If a team elects this option, it must start and finish the game with the EP or the game is a forfeit. Both teams in a game are not required to use the EP.

**15-RUN RULE** - Any Cal Ripken Division tournament game must be terminated immediately if one team is ahead by fifteen (15) or more runs after two and one half (2 ½) or three (3) innings and has had equal times at bat.

**10-RUN RULE** - Any Cal Ripken Division tournament game must be terminated immediately once becoming regulation (3½ or 4 innings) if one team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs and has had equal times at bat. Or the home team is leading.

#### **PITCHING LINE**

- a. There shall be a line drawn forty (40) feet from the apex of home plate to establish the minimum forward point for the pitcher (Coach).

#### **PITCHING CIRCLE**

- a. The pitcher's mound shall serve as the Pitching Circle. The defensive player listed as the pitcher shall not leave the pitching circle (the pitcher's mound) until the ball is hit, unless the batter squares around to bunt. Penalty: The play continues. After the play has ended, the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or no-pitch.

#### **COACH PITCH MECHANICS**

- a. The pitching coach shall keep one foot on or straddle the pitcher's line.
- b. The pitching coach may pitch anywhere along the pitching line from 40 feet to 42 feet pitching circle.
- c. The pitching coach, either standing or from the knee, shall deliver the pitch overhand and at a velocity that creates a flat-pitch to the batter (no lobbing or underhand pitches).
- d. The pitching coach shall not verbally or physically coach while in the pitching position. The pitching coach may instruct the batter while in the box, but may not after the ball is put in play.
- e. The pitching coach shall position himself as not to be an obstruction to the defensive team on any possible play one the ball has been hit. If a coach violates this rule before the ball is pitched, first offense is a warning; second offense is removal of the coach as the pitcher for the remainder of the game.
- f. The catcher takes a normal position in full gear and returns the ball to the coach-pitcher after each pitch (live-ball situations excepted).

The player that assumes the pitcher's position must remain within the 5 foot radius circle, behind the Coach, and on one side or the other, until the ball is hit. If a pitcher violates these requirements, then (1) the play will stand, even if the pitcher is involved in the play, and (2) the umpire(s) will warn the violating pitcher's manager that if the same pitcher violates one of both requirements again, the player will be removed from the pitcher's position. The player can assume another position, but cannot re-enter as a pitcher in that game.

If a batted fair ball hits any part of the pitching Coach without touching any defensive player, the ball is immediately dead. The batter will be awarded first base. All other runners return to the base they last occupied before the ball was hit, unless forced to advance as a result of the batter being awarded first base. If a batted fair ball is first touched by a defensive player and then hits any part of the pitching Coach, it is a live ball. If a thrown ball hits any part of the pitching Coach, it is a live ball.

Each batter receives a maximum of four (4) pitches. If the batter strikes out, or if the ball has not been hit into play after four pitches, the batter is out

#### **NO INTENTIONAL WALKS.**

If the batter fouls the fourth (4th) pitch, the batter will receive pitches if the batter continues to foul pitches. (Note: Any foul bunt after two strikes is an out.) The batter is out if a batter swings on a third strike and misses the ball.

**HIT BY PITCH** - If the batter is hit by a pitch from the Pitching Coach, the batter will not be awarded first base.

**INFIELD FLY RULE** - There is NO infield fly rule.