

Lehigh Valley MABL

2024 Rule Book

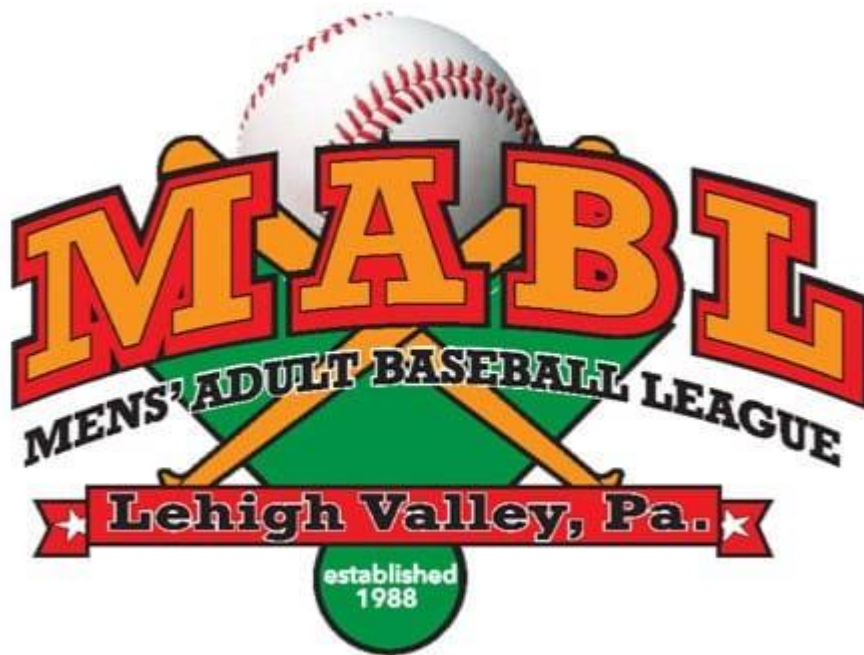


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1 Uniforms

- 1.1 **All players and coaches must have complete baseball uniforms no later than week 3 of the season.** After the 3rd week, anyone not in proper uniform will not be permitted to participate.
- 1.2 **Uniforms must consist of:** metal/molded baseball cleats, baseball socks, baseball pants, and baseball shirt and baseball hat consistent with the rest of the team. Players must wear a numbered Jersey that properly identifies the player listed on the roster.
- 1.3 **Jersey:** The team jersey must be an athletic jersey like any Major or Minor League jersey. T-shirts are not considered a Jersey.
- 1.4 **Pitchers:** No white or gray pitching sleeves, batting gloves or wrist bands will be permitted for pitchers on the field.
- 1.5 Players who are invited to participate in league events (All Star Games Tournaments, etc.) are required to wear full team uniforms.
- 1.6 Uniforms must be returned to rightful owner. Uniforms not returned to a team will result in suspension of the player until the Jersey is returned or paid for.

2 Helmets

- 2.1 **All batters and runners must wear batting helmets.**
- 2.2 **Earflaps:** Helmets with two earflaps are recommended. All batters must wear a helmet with an earflap facing the pitcher.
- 2.3 **Catchers:** Catchers are required to wear a protective helmet under their catcher's mask.
- 2.4 **Base Coaches:** It is recommended that a batting helmet be worn while coaching 1B or 3B.

3 Bats

- a. Ash, Bamboo, Maple, Composite wood bats and wood bats are allowed in Lehigh Valley MABL games, league tournaments and playoffs.

4 Baseballs

- a. Teams are required to use the official sanctioned baseball of the Lehigh Valley MABL.
- b. The current sanctioned baseball is the **Marucci MSBL BB Pro** MOBBLMSBLP9-1 2. In the event of a change in balls by the league, the balls used in the previous season may be used for the current year.
- c. **The HOME TEAM** will supply 3 new baseballs at the start of the game. Like new baseballs are permitted during the game as approved by the umpires. (Gentleman's agreement to share balls if home team loses to many)
- d. One dozen baseballs are provided by the league for each League Championship Series, and All-Star Game.

5 Shoes

- 5.1 Sneakers and turf shoes are unsafe for use in a baseball game and are not permitted.
- 5.2 All players must wear metal or molded baseball cleats to participate.

6 Alcohol Rule

- 6.1 No League Participant is permitted to play in league events while under the influence of alcohol. That includes practices, scrimmages, and games. Players are not permitted to drink alcoholic beverages before or during any league games or events.

The Lehigh Valley MABL does not condone drinking alcoholic beverages after league games at any baseball facility even when permitted by the field owner. Assume all Field Owners have a non-alcohol policy and always abide by the rules of the complex.

All League contracted fields by default are no-alcohol facilities.

7 Code of Conduct

- 7.1 Managers, players, and teams' fans shall conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner. Only Team Managers are permitted to argue or discuss an umpire call or decision.
- 7.2 A league official has the authority to discipline a player or manager who acts inappropriately toward the league, an official, opponent, etc. at any time, up to and including, ejection from a game or league event.
- 7.3 **Ejection/Disqualification Rule:** If an Umpire, Manager, or League Official deems necessary, a player will either be disqualified or ejected from a game or league event.

Ejection Types (Umpires will determine at the time of the infraction the type of ejection and report the single game disqualification or ejection plus one additional game to the league):

- **Disqualification-** Player is ejected and disqualified for the current game only. This type of ejection is at the sole discretion of the Umpires or League Officials at the game. Single Game Ejections require a completed Player Incident Report from both game managers and umpires. Game disqualifications can be reported to the league at any time.
If the disqualified player is registered for multiple teams, he will be permitted to play the next scheduled game for either team.
- **Ejections:** Player is ejected and disqualified for the current game plus automatically ineligible to play in the next scheduled game. The number of ineligible games may be increased based on the details submitted with the Player Incident Report from both game managers and umpires. Game Ejections can be reported to the league at any time.
If the ejected player is registered for multiple teams, he will not be permitted to play the next scheduled game for either team.

Example: Misconduct during or after an ejection, history of previous incidents or a request from the Umpires, Manager or League Officials may increase the number of ineligible games.

- 7.4 **Post Ejection Protocol:** A player is to exit the field silently, quickly, and without further incident. The umpires and manager should notify the League Officers immediately after the game. Umpires and Managers at the game must submit a completed "Player Incident Report" available to logged in Managers and Team Administrators to the President of the League, Umpire Assignor, and appropriate League Officers within 24 hours of the event. After review of the incident report, the President, League Officers, or team manager of player, has the right to additionally suspend, expel, fine or place a player or manager/coach on probation for the infraction. If it is shown that a manager failed to control a player, the League will educate the manager on how to appropriately deal with the situation. If it is a repetitive issue or an offense the

League deems highly objectionable; the manager may also be disciplined.

- 7.5 **Team Infractions:** If a player(s) or anyone associated with the team disrespects an umpire, League Officer, opponent, teammate, or fan, and it cannot be determined who committed the infraction, the entire team, and more severely, the manager, will be held responsible and disciplined. The manager and players in the vicinity may face discipline including suspension if the player that committed the infraction does not take responsibility. It is the Manager's responsibility to police his team and seek the proactive assistance of the League Officers if the behavior is uncontrollable or feels unsolvable.
- 7.6 Disrespectful comments when an umpire is present will not be tolerated. Umpires are always to be treated with respect, on and off the field. At no point during a league game, while walking to or from their vehicle or commute home are teams permitted to act disrespectfully. No warning needs to be issued for an ejection/discipline. The rulebook serves as said warning. Umpires have full authority to eject a player before, during or after a game. When the game ends the umpires are still in charge until they decide to leave the playing field.
- 7.7 Ejections are not required for individual or team discipline to be administered.
- 7.8 **Ineligible Player:** A player that is not approved by the league to play in a game. A player who has not been placed on a team's roster or has been suspended due to misconduct. Said player cannot bat, pitch, run, or play defensively.
- 7.9 **Infractions:** Player/Manager infraction/ejections will be tracked and carried over from previous seasons. Players who commit multiple infractions or are ejected more than once during their playing career could be subject to additional discipline.
- 7.10 The best way to prevent any disciplinary action is to adhere to the rules and be respectful. Every player and manager should know the contents of this rulebook.
- 7.11 League Officers, along with the President and Vice President, has the authority and responsibility to determine the discipline for each case.
- 7.12 **Grievances:** An individual player or team manager may file a grievance in writing, to the League Vice President. The Vice President shall adjudicate all such grievances.
- 7.13 **Appeal:** If the decision of a grievance is not satisfactory, a further appeal can be made to the League President, with a non-refundable \$50 grievance filing fee. The President's decision is final and not subject to any further appeals.
- 7.14 **Infraction Matrix:** The Matrix is ONLY an example and is generally used as a guideline to determine discipline. Extraneous considerations such as previous history of infractions or discipline, will be taken into consideration when determining discipline. Each case is unique and will be adjudicated accordingly.

Infraction Violation Examples

Violation	Examples	Discipline
Level I	Throwing equipment, taunting opponent or fans or umpires. Vulgar language, vulgar gestures.	Most likely 1 Game Suspension
Level2	Flagrant disrespect toward an Umpire, Manager, Fan. Unsportsmanlike conduct that is considered very offensive such as spitting on a player, attempting to intentionally harm a player.	Most likely 2 game suspension
Level3	Threatening an opponent, umpire, fans, or teammates, either verbal or physical. Refusing to leave after ejection. Failure to abide by an umpires or manager's decision. Flagrant disregard for League Rules. Repeated Level 1 or 2 Infractions.	Most likely 3 game suspension and probation for remainder of season and/or following season.
Level4	Violent and/or threatening behavior that is considered harassing to any league player, umpire, fan or official. Threatening of a league official in any way. Any combination of Level 1, 2 or 3 infractions.	Most likely multiple game suspension and/or Expulsion from the league. Fine imposed and/or charity work as a tradeoff.

- 7.15 Managers will be notified when the league takes disciplinary action for all teams.
- 7.16 Be less emotional, you can act very illogically when you are emotional.
- 7.17 If He can calm the raging sea He can calm the storm in me.

8 Field Maintenance

- 8.1 Teams must comply with the field owner's and League's rules.
- 8.2 Teams must have a valid field permit and proper league insurance to play any game during the Lehigh Valley MABL season.
- 8.3 Teams who play on fields without permission will be fined and/or suspended by the League.
- 8.4 Teams who play on county fields with permits are not allowed to trade permits or keys without county and League approval.
- 8.5 Teams utilizing League-controlled fields may be charged per use or per season as per League discretion.
- 8.6 Field Responsibility: Teams must clean, repair, rake, lockup, and leave the field in proper playing condition when finished with a game. Teams who do not properly care for a league assigned field will be fined \$50 for a first offense, \$100 for a second offense, fined \$100 and disallowed to use the facility after a third offense.
- 8.7 **Dugouts:** The dugouts and any areas surrounding the fields, including parking lots, must be cleared of all debris before leaving.
- 8.8 **Visiting Teams** are encouraged to assist with cleaning and repairing the field in an act of good sportsmanship. Visiting Teams ARE responsible for cleaning their dugouts and will be disciplined for failure to do so.

9 Season Start and Ending

9.1 Season start date and end date will be announced each season for all divisions.

In General:

- All scheduled games are expected to be played. Games not played by the season end date will be considered no plays and will impact the final standings.
- Teams who do not make every effort to complete season games can be excluded from the playoffs.
- In the event of rain on the final weekend of the season, the remaining games must be played on Monday or Tuesday evening. A game with a minimum of 5 innings must be played to be official.
- Teams cannot elect to forfeit season games even if the game doesn't matter for the standings or playoffs.
- The league can decide to waive the games for a rained-out week late in the season.

9.2 Point System to Adjust Final Standings when there are un-played games:

- 3 Points for a Win
- 2 Points for a Tie
- 1 Point for a Game Played

Forfeits:

The team that wins a forfeit will get 4 points. 3 points for the win and 1 for the game played.

The team that forfeited a game will get 1 point deducted from the total. The point being deducted will reflect the game not being played.

10 Legal Team Rosters

- I0.1 A sanctioned team will be considered legal if all the following conditions are met:
- The team has a minimum of 13 players (Max 30) registered.
 - Teams must have legally registered players with each player completing a player registration on the league website.
 - Team registration fees paid in full.
 - Each player must have a jersey number registered with the league.
- I0.2 Teams may add players to their roster up until the 8th game played or Teams may add players up until June 15th of the current year whichever occurs first. Any players added to a roster must meet the same eligibility requirements as any player for playoff eligibility, as listed in Playoff Eligibility Rules.
- I0.3 Unregistered or ineligible players are not covered by the league insurance policy. Using unregistered players is strictly forbidden.
- I0.4 If a player is ineligible to participate and is discovered playing the following rules apply:
- The Team Manager will be suspended for 1 game and could be fined up to \$250 for the offense.
 - The game(s) that the ineligible player participated in will be forfeited.
 - The ineligible player must register on the league website with the league within 3 days of discovery.

11 Team Registration

- 11.1 Coaches and Players register online for their teams each season. For more information regarding fees, please contact the team manager.

All players playing in the Lehigh Valley MABL must have completed the league player registration and the league, player waiver form. The completion of the registration is also an acknowledgement of the risks involved in playing baseball and the risks of social gatherings. It is, required that each player complete the form online.

12 League Eligibility

- 12.1 No players under the age of 18 will be permitted to play in the Lehigh Valley **MABL**.
- 12.2 An 18-year-old player must be 18 years old prior to January 1 of the current year to be eligible to play in the Lehigh Valley MABL.
- 12.3 A player exceeding the age requirement in any division can play in that division.
- 12.4 A player who is 24 on January 1 of the current year and will turn 25 during the current year will be considered 25.

NOTE: The goal of dropping our age to 18 is to separate the 18/25 division into two divisions, one division will allow players under the age of 25 while the other division will not allow players under 25. When this growth occurs, we will let each of the teams with no players under 25 choose which division they play in. A team with players aged 18-24 will not have a choice. They will play *in* the under 25 division. When we reach this point, each division will play each other, and each division will have a regular season champion and a playoff champion. When we grow to 10 teams, we will re-evaluate this.

13 Double Rostered Player

- 13.1 A player may play for two different teams if he does not compete against a team within his own age bracket/division.
- 13.2 Multiple Rostered players must register for each team with Manager approval.
- 13.3 Multiple Rostered players should explain to each Manager who they will play for and when. It should be clear of the priority to avoid conflicts with Managers.
- 13.4 A multiple-roasted player will pay subsequent fees to each team.
- 13.5 If a double rostered player leaves a team and only plays for, 1 team the team fees are not refunded.

14 Changing Teams

- 14.1 After a waiver has been signed, a player is bound to his team unless he is released by his manager during the season. After the end of the season, every player is a free agent and does not require his manager's permission to move to a different team.
- 14.2 A player leaving a team during the regular season will not be credited for playing time between both teams, in order for the player to be eligible for the playoffs he must meet the playoff eligibility on his new team. The said player may not return to the old team in the current year for the purpose of playoff eligibility.
- 14.3 Any player leaving a team during the regular season with a manager's release is not guaranteed participation with another team. Fees are not refundable after playing 1 inning of one game.
- 14.4 Should any player choose to play for a different team, that player must complete his monetary obligations, if any, and return all uniforms and/equipment to his former team.

15 Pre-Game Workouts

- 15.1 the home team must relinquish the field 40 minutes before the start time of the game to allow the visiting team to perform pre-game workout.
- 15.2 The lining of the field, setting of bases, and other field preparations are to be completed before the visiting team begins its pre-game activities.
- 15.3 The away team will have 30 minutes for pre-game workout.
- 15.4 10 minutes before the official game time start is to be used for line-up exchange, ground rules with the umpires, and other pre-game activities.
- 15.5 If there is a preceding game, the two teams will split the available time remaining before their scheduled game.
- 15.6 If the previous game lasts up to your game's start time, both teams may have the field for ten minutes and the game may start thirty minutes late.

16 Length of Games

Regular Season:

- 16.1 All games shall be 9 innings when both teams play only 1 game on game day.
- 16.2 All **regular season** and **playoff game doubleheaders** shall be 7 innings, even if a team plays two different opponents.
- 16.3 Weeknight scheduled games shall be 7 innings.
- 16.4 A game called due to darkness, rain, or other unforeseen circumstances, shall be considered complete after 5 innings. The losing team must bat 5 times and both teams must bat 5 times in case of a tie.

16.5 Time Limit:

7-inning games are limited to 2 1/2 hours from the original scheduled game time start. The inning during which the 2 1/2-hour time limit is met, will be completed.

9-inning games are limited to 3 hours from the original scheduled game time start. The inning during which the 3-hour time limit is met, will be completed. The time limit is enforced by the Umpires and can result in a win, loss or tie depending on the score at the expiration of time. In the event of a delayed start, the time limit is enforced from the scheduled start time.

Playoff Games:

There is no time limit for playoff games.

- 16.6 A single playoff game will be 9 innings, a doubleheader, two playoff games in one day, will be 7 innings.
- 16.7 A game called due to darkness, rain, or other unforeseen circumstances, shall be considered a suspended game, and therefore, incomplete. It will be played from the point where it was stopped. Teams must pay the original full fee if the game extends past 5 complete innings. If the game is suspended before the completion of 5 inning the fee due is 50% of the full game fee. When resuming a suspended game, the umpires get a percentage for each inning played based on the number of innings the game was supposed to be played.

If the same umpires can be used to finish the suspended game, they get paid the full game fee due. No additional fees are paid to the same umpires for a suspended game.

- 16.8 If either a 7 or 9 inning game completes and the game remains tied, every subsequent half-inning will begin with a runner on second base. The runner on second will be the player in the batting order, or a substitute, immediately preceding the half-inning's leadoff hitter.

17 Umpires

Umpire Fees

- 17.1 The umpire fee for **7-inning games are \$75.00, 9 inning games are \$85.00.**
- 17.2 Umpires will be paid at the start of each game. Should a game be cancelled due to rain before it is a complete game, umpires shall keep 50% of game fees for that game.
- 17.3 If only one umpire shows up for a game, he will be paid \$50 from each team for a 9 inning or 7 inning game. If the second umpire shows up more than 45 minutes late, then the team managers will decide whether they want to continue with one umpire or two umpires. If they choose two umpires, then the plate umpire shall return the \$50 to each team, take a full game fee from the home team and the away team shall pay the late umpire.
\$35 for a 7-inning game or \$45 for a nine-inning game.
- 17.4 If umpires do not show up for a game by the scheduled start time, the league by contract gives a 15-minute courtesy. After 15 minutes the teams
may agree to play the game and umpire the game themselves from behind the pitcher's mound. The self-umpired game cannot be protested.
- 17.5 If umpires are not notified and show up for the game, they will be paid a travel fee of \$25 by the home team.
- 17.6 If the "late" umpire arrives more than 30 minutes after the start of the game, the team managers shall decide whether to continue the game with one umpire or two umpires. If the managers elect to continue the game with two umpires, the away team shall pay the "late" umpire \$50 for a nine-inning game or \$40 for a seven-inning game.

18 Cancellations, Rescheduling and Partial Game Rainouts

- 18.1 If a manager cancels a game, **OTHER THAN** a **RAIN-OUT**, he must notify the umpire assignor, opposing manager and League Officers no less than **72 Hours/3 Full Days** before the scheduled game.
- 18.2 If the game is not canceled within 72 hours of the scheduled time, the team will be responsible to pay both umpires. That fee must be paid to the League by Tuesday after the canceled game. No scheduled games can be played until these fees are paid.
- 18.3 If a game is cancelled for any reason the makeup game must be reported to the League Officers via email with a carbon copy to the League President that day.

Rainouts- Show up Fee.

- 18.4 If the **HOME** team determines that the game cannot be played, due to unplayable field conditions they **MUST**:

- Call the umpires assigned to your game.
- Contact the opposing Manager.
- Contact the League to update the game status.
- Contact the Assignor to update the game status.

If weather causes a cancellation less than 2 hours before game start time and the umpires arrive (30 minutes before game start time) they receive a \$25 show up fee.

- 18.5 Cancellations, and/or rainouts need to be rescheduled **immediately** and reported to the league. Makeup games will be scheduled according to the following process:
1. Communication from either Manager to the League Officers with an agreed date, time, and field for makeup game **within 72 hours of cancelled game**.
 2. **After 72 hours** the league can automatically schedule a double header the next time the teams are scheduled to play the same opponent.
 3. If the teams are not scheduled to play another game during the remainder of the season, the League Officers will pick three dates for the teams to consider.
 4. Once the three dates are selected the teams will have **48 hours** to agree on the best date or propose another agreeable date. The agreeable date will be the date and cannot be rescheduled by either team.

5. **After 48 hours** if a date cannot be agreed upon between the teams, the League Officers will schedule the game date, time and location considered the most reasonable. The league will schedule according to available fields and not necessarily either team's home field. That game date is considered final. In the event of a rainout for the makeup date the same process will be followed for the new game date.
- 18.6 Games that are rained out before being completed (5 complete innings) shall be continued from the stop point.
- 18.7 Although the league tries to allow much flexibility for make-up, all teams are advised that the League Officers have the authority to schedule games which may or may not be convenient for some teams. Because teams may be required to play weekday evening games, it is important that teams make every effort possible to reschedule games on their own and as soon as possible.
- 18.8 If you are, forced to delay your game due to weather mid-way through, the game time stops at the point of the delay and will resume from the time the delay started and resume play. (you do not lose your game time because of a delay due to weather)

19 Forfeits

- 19.1 Forfeits are unacceptable, and every attempt should be made to avoid any forfeit. Teams who forfeit a game(s) will be subject to fines and disciplinary action by the league. A forfeit compromise the integrity of the league. Only in extreme extenuating circumstances will a team be permitted to forfeit.
- 19.2 If a team forfeits and it's determined that the team needs to be disqualified for the season, there will be no league fees refunded to any player, manager, or sponsor of that team.
- 19.3 If a team forfeits a game, the forfeiting team is responsible to pay the umpires. the game fee for both teams. The umpires must be paid the day of the forfeit. The team who forfeits and doesn't pay the umpires will not be permitted to play until the umpire payment is complete.
- 19.4 There will be no double header forfeits. If a doubleheader is scheduled against the same opponent and one team forfeits, the second game will be rescheduled. The team that forfeits is responsible to pay the umpires for the forfeited game.
- 19.5 If a team does not have enough players to start a game (8 players), there will be a fifteen-minute grace period, after which time a forfeit will be declared. A forfeited game will not be allowed to be rescheduled.
- 19.6 If a team forfeits for any reason and does not pay the umpires the day of the game, the league will pay the fees on behalf of the forfeiting team. The team must repay the league in full plus a \$50 fine before the next played game following the forfeit. If the team does not pay the forfeit money within three days following a forfeit, a league official can cancel all remaining games until the payment is received. The forfeiting team will not be permitted to play another game until all fees owed to the league are paid.

20 Lineups

- 20.1 Teams must have 8 eligible players in the lineup for an official game to start. When an offensive lineup consists of 8 players, the 9th position is NOT an automatic out when due up.
- 20.2 Batters may only hit in one lineup spot during a game. An offensive player who is replaced by a pinch hitter, pinch runner or becomes injured and removed from the lineup cannot hit during the rest of that game. The Player may play defense even if taken out of the lineup. If the starting pitcher is removed, he may re-enter once in the same game as a pitcher, provided at least one batter has either made an out or reached base.
- 20.3 A team may borrow a player from an opposing team with the opposing manager's consent.
- 20.4 If the team's ninth player arrives after the start, the borrowed player reverts to his original team. An official lineup must consist of at least 8 hitters. If 9 players are present 9 must bat. If 10 or more players are present only 9 are required to bat.
- 20.5 If the manager wants to add players at the bottom of the lineup, he may do so at any time. The player added to the lineup cannot be a player who was previously in the lineup in that game.
- 20.6 If a player is replaced with a pinch-hitter or a pinch-runner (not a courtesy runner), the replaced player cannot re-enter the game as a hitter or runner but may stay in the game defensively.
- 20.7 Batters cannot be deleted or skipped over, regardless of their batting position or when they were added during the game.
- 20.8 If a player is forced to leave a game due to injury or an emergency, a reserve player, not previously entered in the lineup, must hit in the batter's place. If no reserve is present, that spot is an automatic out.
- 20.9 Anyone who has a prior commitment must have it announced before the game starts. When that player must leave the game, if no reserve is present, that spot is an automatic out.
- 20.10 All players may be substituted for defensively at any time without affecting the players' offensive status in the line-up.
- 20.11 If a player is ejected from the game, and there are no substitutes available, that player's batting order spot is left vacant, and an out is registered every time he is due up.

20.12 Managers may optionally choose before each game to utilize the A/B Rule.

A/B Rule definition:

A team MAY declare at the time that lineups are exchanged prior to the start of play that any batting order position can be occupied by two (2) players in each such batting position. The A batter will hit the first time through the batting order. The B Batter will hit the second time. The third and each subsequent time through the batting order either batter may hit. The A/B batters may freely run for each other.

20.13 A manager or his designee (i.e., the batter) must alert the umpire and opposing manager to any change in the batting order. If a pitch is thrown to an unannounced additional or substitute player, that player is an automatic out and the game status will revert to its status prior to that pitch. This includes pinch hitters as well as hitter's added mid-game to the end of the batting order.

21 Courtesy Runners

- 21.1 No team is required to use a Courtesy Runner. A courtesy runner is the last batted out when used.
- 21.2 With two outs in an inning a team may use a runner for the pitcher and the catcher. This rule will be considered the speed up rule, and runners used for the speed up rule will not count against the allotted number of courtesy runners and the speed up runner must be the last batted out.
- 21.3 A courtesy runner must be on the base within 30 seconds from time, being called.
- 21.4 Two maximum courtesy runners will be permitted per game.

22 Decoys

- 22.1 If an infielder decoys a throw, all runners will be entitled to advance to one base. If the same fielder decoys a throw twice in a game, he will automatically be ejected from the game by the umpire.
- 22.2 The decoying referred to is where a player on base slides unnecessarily due to a fielder faking as if a throw is coming to the base.
- 22.3 No hidden ball tricks will be allowed.

23 Collisions

- 23.1 Players shall not intentionally collide with any player.
- 23.2 In the case of a runner intentionally colliding with a fielder. The runner may be called out at the umpire's discretion and could be expelled from the game.
- 23.3 All base runners must either slide or give up their right to a base, (avoid a collision by stopping or leaving a base path) if the defensive player has possession of the ball.
- 23.4 If a defensive player is **not in possession of the ball, is not in the act of receiving the ball, or is not about to immediately receive the ball** so that he is able to record an out (apparent play at any base), he cannot block the base or be in the base path so as to impede or obstruct the base runner's right to that base. Under such circumstances, the defensive player shall be responsible to avoid any collision. If a collision does occur under these circumstances, the runner will always be considered safe, and the obstruction rule shall be enforced. The defensive player may be ejected from the game, at the discretion of the umpire, if the action is deemed intentional. A player must slide or give himself up at all bases. A fielder must always give clear access to the base.
- 23.5 * A runner attempting to score may not deviate from his direct pathway to the plate to initiate contact with the catcher (or other player covering home plate). If, in the judgment of the Umpire, a runner attempting to score initiates contact with the catcher (or other player covering home plate) in such a manner, the Umpire shall declare the runner out (even if the player covering home plate loses possession of the ball). Unless the catcher is in possession of the ball, the catcher cannot block the pathway of the runner as he is attempting to score. If, in the judgment of the Umpire, the catcher, without possession of the ball, blocks the pathway of the runner, the Umpire shall call or signal the runner safe. Catchers must allow a player clear access to home plate any time the catcher is not in the act of directly receiving the ball.

***Rule 23.5 comment-** The failure by the runner to try to touch the plate, the runner's lowering of the shoulder, or the runner's pushing through with his hands, elbows, or arms, would support a determination that the runner deviated from the pathway to initiate contact with the catcher in violation of Rule 23.5. If the runner slides into the plate in an appropriate manner, he shall not be adjudged to have violated Rule 23.5

A slide shall be deemed appropriate, in the case of a feet first slide if the runner's buttocks and legs should hit the ground before contact with the catcher. In the case of a headfirst slide, a runner shall be deemed to have slid appropriately if his body should hit the ground before contact with the catcher.

24 Intentional Walks

- 24.1 An **intentional walk** occurs when the defending team elects to **walk** a batter on purpose, putting him on first base instead of letting him try to hit. The manager can signal an **intentional walk** from the dugout at any point during a plate appearance, putting the batter on first base automatically.

25 Mercy Rule

- 25.1 During any official league game including the playoffs." The Mercy rule is in effect. The Mercy rule means a team is winning by 12 runs after 5 complete innings. After the completion of the 5th inning the game is over when one team takes a 12 run lead.
- 25.2 Mercy rules apply for Playoff and Championship games.

26 Protests

- 26.1 All protests must be logged in writing by email within 24 hours of game completion. The protest form should be emailed to the League President within 48 hours of the game completion.
- 26.2 A non-refundable \$50 fee must accompany the protest form.
- 26.3 All protests will be considered and resolved by the League Officers. If necessary, a Manager Vote in the Division.
- 26.4 Form a protest committee consisting of President, Division Directors, if not involved, an official from another league and the President of the Umpire Association, if not involved, not a standing committee, an appointed committee when needed.

27 Stats

- 27.1 **Both teams are required to enter scores after each game, before the Tuesday following their game.** On the league website. Scores can be entered separately from stats, so the scores should be entered right away.
- 27.2 Each team must keep an accurate line-up of the opposition. It is not necessary to keep detailed records of the opposition's play, but the list of players and participants in the game must be recorded.
- 27.3 **The home team scorebook is the official score of the game. Away teams should check the score a few times during the game.**
- 27.4 Stats are to be calculated and entered accurately based on the player's actual performance. At no time is it permissible to enter stats that are not accurate.
- 27.5 Major League rules will apply in all instances not covered by the Lehigh Valley MABL Rulebook.

The rulebook priority is as follows:

- 1. Lehigh Valley MABL Rulebook has priority.
- 2. National MSBL/MABL Rulebook has second priority.
- 3. Major League Baseball Rulebook has third priority.

28 Standings

28.1 Points Based System- Point Based is when a team is awarded a fixed number of points for a win, a tie, or a loss. Also refer to Rule 9.1.

Win: 2 points

Loss: 0 points

Tie: 1 point per team.

*Forfeit counts as a loss and may disqualify a team from the playoffs.

Tiebreaker Rules:

Win, Loss, Head-to-head, W%, Run Diff (Runs scored- Runs given up)

28.2 The regular season League Standings will be automatically generated and updated as scores are entered for completed games. The online scoring calculation is considered the master.

29 Playoff Eligibility

- 29.1 Managers are excluded from this rule. Only the team manager that is reported to the league as the manager can qualify for this rule. This rule does not apply to assistant managers.
- 29.2 In order for a player to qualify for his team's playoff games, he must play in 1/2 (one half) of the scheduled games minus 1. The number will be rounded down as follows:

Scheduled Games	Formula	Games Required
16 Games	8 games played minus 1	7 required.
17 Games	8.5 games played minus 1 = 7.5	7 required
18 Games	9 games played minus 1 = 8	8 required
19 Games	9.5 games played minus 1 = 8.5	8 required
20 Games	10 games played minus 1 = 9	9 required
21 Games	10.5 games played minus 1 = 9.5	9 required
22 Games	11 games played minus 1 = 10	10 required
23 Games	11.5 games played minus 1 = 10.5	10 required
24 Games	12 games played minus 1 = 11	11 required

A player needs to have 1 plate appearance or 1 defensive inning or 1 inning pitched combined equal to the required games to be eligible for the playoffs. In an 18-game schedule the combination of appearances must be equal to 8 which is the number of games a player must appear in to be eligible.

Note: Forfeits against a team count as a game played for ALL players on the roster. If your team forfeits, your players DO NOT get credited for a game played.

Any player who qualifies based on these criteria can participate in any facet of the game; that is a member who has become eligible because of having enough plate appearances, innings pitched or defensive innings and played in one-half of the scheduled games (minus one) can participate in the playoffs.

A player who sustains an injury during the season can become playoff eligible by playing in 33% of all officially scheduled games. The League must be notified of an injured player before the end of year qualification report is delivered.

The League sends a playoff eligibility report to all managers at the end of regular season play. Teams whose stats are not completed on a weekly basis and left to enter at the end of the year will be considered ineligible at the discretion of the League Officers or League President.

Only verifiable and immediately documented injuries of legally rostered LVMABL players will be given credit for missed games. An official doctor's note from a licensed medical practitioner that does not participate with the LVMABL is required within 21 days of the reported injury.

- 29.3 Scores and statistics must be submitted to the League website within 24 hours of game completion on a weekly basis for a team to be eligible for playoffs and post-season. Statistics must be submitted game-by-game (not cumulative).
- 29.4 Any challenge to the eligibility of a player in the playoffs will be determined by the final statistics submitted by the player's team.
- 29.5 If a team has less than 8 players (official minimum number for a game) eligible for the playoffs, that team will be ineligible to play post season. All seeding will be adjusted accordingly.
- 29.6 For the purpose of playoff eligibility a player required to serve Active Military Duty during the season will follow the same report procedure as an injured player.
- 29.7 All playoff eligible players must be on the team's roster as per rule # 10.2.

30 **Playoff Rules**

- 30.1 Playoffs are intended to provide very competitive, tournament style baseball. **The league will enforce one Saturday game starting at 4 pm and two Sunday games starting at 1 pm by default as the standard schedule.** Teams can agree to play anytime Friday through Sunday provided both teams agree with the schedule. If there is a disagreement regarding the schedule the league will enforce the standard schedule.
- 30.2 The highest seed will determine the Home/Away teams and locations for Game 1 of the series. Game 2 will be scheduled based on the decision for the Game 1 of the highest seed.

The highest seed will be the home team for either Game 1 and 3 or Games 2 and 3.

The choices are as follows:

Game 1: Low Seed is Home

Game 2: High Seed is Home

Game 3: High Seed is Home

- 30.3 Teams qualifying for the playoffs will get home field priority. If league teams share a field, the league will schedule home games ahead of regular season games during the playoffs. Teams playing a regular season game on a shared field will be moved to another field to accommodate playoff or championship games. However, if the Township or governing body of the field will not allow the higher seed to play at their home field on a playoff weekend, then those games will be moved to a neutral field.
- 30.4 Playoff seeding rules are determined each season based on the size of the division and manager votes. The website is updated prior to the start of each season.

31 All-Star Games

- 31.1 The Lehigh Valley MSBL/MABL conducts the All-Star Games. The event is a marquee event for our league and should be attended by every player in the league who can reasonably attend. Players and Managers should understand the need to both promote and support the event.

In general, the following rules apply specifically for the All-Star Games.

- Managers who are selected to the All-Star Games must have the team batting lineup prepared 30 minutes before the start of the game.
- Every player who makes the All-Star Team Roster must play in the game by either pitching, playing offense or defense.
- Children are not permitted in the dugouts during the game without league approval. Bats boys/girls wearing a protective helmet who are pre-authorized by a league official only are excluded.
- Players must keep the dugouts, bullpen and hitting areas always clean.
- Player warmups on the field are not permitted, except throwing.
- Players must be ready to be announced before the start of the game.

32 Team Awards

32.1 Teams' awards are issued to teams winning the Division Championship. A League Official will be onsite for the final game of the series whenever possible.

The award for winning the Division Championship is as follows:

- Team awards will be issued to the regular season champion and the playoffs champion.
- A team photo plaque will be given to both teams and each team will be recognized on the website and the Facebook page.
- A cash award will be given to the regular season champion.
- A cash award will be given to the playoffs champion.
- Cash awards will be available based on budgetary restraints and will vary from year to year.

33 Miscellaneous Rules

- 33.1 All rules and regulations are subject to review and interpretation by the League Officer or rules committee.
- 33.2 All rule changes are discussed and determined by Managers and executives of the League.
- 33.3 Any Pitcher who hits 4 batters during a game may be considered ineligible to pitch during the rest of that game. The opposing manager, at his discretion, has the authority to **request the umpire** remove the starting pitcher after the 4th hit batter of the game. The umpire can and at his/her discretion determine the pitcher ineligible. If the pitcher is considered ineligible, he may not re-enter to pitch in that game.

Catch and carry, should we have a standard rule for the league or should it be left up to the umpires depending on the field each game.

34 Pace-of-Play Rules

Pace-of-Play rules are designed to eliminate unnecessary time delays and improve the overall rhythm of the baseball game. The rules are not intended to "rush" the game, but to provide a more modern version of the game that players and fans can really enjoy.

- 34.1 With certain exceptions, hitters must keep one foot in the batter's box between pitches throughout their at-bat.
- 34.2 Umpires will have between-inning timers to ensure the next half-inning starts promptly. The timers will be set at 2 minutes, 25 seconds. Pitchers and hitters will both be encouraged to be ready to go when the clock reaches :20.
- 34.3 Pitchers must deliver a pitch within 12 seconds with no one on base.

34.4 Time Out Rules

Teams are limited to 3-time outs per game (including extra innings) for the following defensive and offensive are separate:

- 1. Manager or coach conferences with the pitcher.
- 2. Manager and/or Coach conferences with the batter.

Conferences during pitching changes and time outs due to injuries or other emergencies do not count towards the limit.