

HOPKINS-MINNETONKA

BABE RUTH BASEBALL

SPECIAL LEAGUE RULES & REGULATIONS

The *Official Babe Ruth Rulebook*, in conjunction with the Major League rulebook, governs league play. In addition, Hopkins-Minnetonka Babe Ruth has developed and enforces a set of special league rules and regulations, as outlined in this booklet. A copy of this rules document is posted on the Babe Ruth section of the www.hopkinsbaseball.com Web site.

This version is current as of: **April 1, 2008.**

THE LEAGUE

The Hopkins-Minnetonka Babe Ruth league is a community-based baseball program for players age 13-15 (age levels are per a player's age as of May 1st of the current year). Players must reside in or attend schools in Hopkins School District #270.

The league is organized into two House divisions – **Majors** and **Prep**. Each division normally will consist of 6-12 teams, depending on the number of players registered.

The Majors Division is made up of 14- and 15-year-old players (typically eighth and ninth graders) with a maximum of seven 15-year-olds on a team. Majors games are played on a standard 90-foot field with 60 foot pitching.

The Prep Division is for 13-year-old players (typically seventh graders). The Prep Division plays with infield dimensions set at 80-85 feet and pitching distance at 53 feet.

In addition, the league offers a **Travel Team** opportunity to players based on their interest and ability. Three teams (one each for players at the 13, 14 and 15 age levels) are selected on the basis of pre-season tryouts to compete in the highest level Metro League division (AAA). The Metro League games will involve home and away games against similar teams from a region generally encompassing the Southwestern Metro area. Typically, Metro League teams play a 16-game regular season schedule plus a year-end tournament. In addition, Travel teams will play in approximately 4-5 weekend tournaments in May, June and July. Each Travel team will have 12-15 players.

Tournament Teams are also formed at each age level. Players on the Tournament Teams also play on House Prep and Majors division teams. Players are selected based on interest and ability as part of the same pre-season tryout process used to select the Travel Team members, however, Tournament Teams are not announced until 1-2 weeks into the season. Tournament Teams will play in 2-4 weekend tournaments in May, June and July. Tournament weekends are scheduled whenever possible not to conflict with House league games. Tournament teams will have 12-15 players.

GAME DAYS

Pre-Game

The designated home team occupies the third base dugout. When time permits, the home team will have the field for 30 minutes beginning one hour prior to game time, then switch to the batting cage 30 minutes prior to game time. The visiting team will have the opposite use of the field and cage. If less than an hour is available prior to game time, teams should split the field time available. Note that in the absence of a prior game or other field scheduling conflict, the field/cage time guidelines are fixed and operative regardless of late arriving teams and/or players. Coaches, on a mutual basis, can agree to different field and cage use but are not required to do so. Players warming up pitchers are **required** to wear a face-mask and encouraged to wear proper catching gear whenever possible.

Post-Game

Both teams are responsible for picking up trash in their respective dugouts. In addition, the home team has special responsibilities for field, spectator area and parking lot clean-up and closure. These responsibilities will be posted at the field but in general they include the following:

1. Empty dugout trash barrels into dumpsters where available.
2. Pull bases if last game of the day and return to storage area. Fill base post holes with inserts as provided by league. Rake the home plate area and pitching mound to fill any holes that otherwise might fill and hold water after a rainstorm.
3. Return electric scoreboard controller to storage area (where applicable).
4. Home team parents should pick up litter in grandstand and parking lot areas.
5. Close all gates and lock storage areas (where applicable).

Note: These post-game tasks will vary from field-to-field, and coaches will be advised as to what these differences are by their division coordinators.

RULES OF THE GAME

The *Official Babe Ruth Rulebook*, in conjunction with the Major League rulebook, governs league play. These rulebooks are given to each coach. In addition, the league has developed and enforces Special Local Rules as follows:

Smoking: Managers, coaches and umpires are prohibited from smoking during all practices and games. On game days, this means no smoking from the beginning of pre-game practice, until the last out has been recorded.

Pitching, Regular Season: Individual pitchers are limited to pitching a maximum of seven innings in league play during each Monday thru Sunday week. In addition, Prep League pitchers are limited to a maximum of FOUR innings per game. These innings can be accumulated in any combination of games, including seven innings in a single game – except Prep League. If a pitcher throws three innings or less in a single game, he can pitch the next day (if he still has eligible innings left for the week). If a pitcher pitches four innings or more in a single game, the pitcher must have at least TWO full days of rest before pitching again, in addition to conforming to the seven innings per week limit. A single pitch thrown constitutes a full inning pitched. Coaches are required to keep detailed records of innings pitched for their own players as well as opposing team pitchers, as part of maintaining their scorebooks for each game. Division coordinators *may* require teams to report innings pitched per player. Pitchers in Travel Leagues and Tournaments are subject to the pitching rules established by the Travel League and the tournaments. *Note: These pitching rules are designed to protect the arms of young pitchers and allow more players a chance to pitch. House league and tournament coaches are encouraged to be aware of players' pitching activity in house league and tournament play so as not to risk injury to the player.*

A starting pitcher in House league play is allowed to return to a game, so long as the pitcher was not pulled from the mound during the course of an inning (it is believed this rule encourages coaches to use more pitchers during the course of a game).

Pitching, House League Post-Season Tournaments: Pitching limitations are modified for the end-of-the-year tournaments for the Majors and Prep divisions. The specific pitching rules for these tournaments will be determined based on the tournament formats and schedule. The League Coordinators will determine the actual format with approval from the League President and Vice President.

Bats: The league and coaches do NOT provide bats for the teams. While players are not required to provide their own bats, they are subject to the goodwill of teammates willing to share a bat if they do not have one of their own.

The league sets its bat rules on the basis of commonly accepted rules and limits established by other organizations and leagues in the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area combined with National Babe Ruth rules. Basically, these rules specify maximum bat diameter (i.e. 2-3/4 inches for 13 year old league) as well as the maximum length to weight differential (weight of the bat in ounces MINUS the length of the bat in inches, or minus 9 maximum for our 13 year old league).

This year, the Babe Ruth league rules are as follows:

- **13-year-old Prep League and 13 Travel:** 2-3/4" diameter or less and minus 9 weight differential or less (or 2-1/4" diameter with unlimited weight differential).
- **14-year-old and 15-year-old Majors and 14 Travel:** 2-3/4" diameter or less and minus 5 weight differential or less.
- **15 Travel:** 2-5/8" diameter or less and minus 3 weight differential or less.

Note that bat rules sometimes are changed from year-to-year. Coaches and parents should check the updated local rules on the HMBR website for bat rule changes.

Courtesy runner for catcher: Courtesy runners can be used for a catcher under the following circumstances: 1) There must be two recorded outs; 2) The courtesy runner must be the last recorded out; 3) The catcher must catch the *entire* next inning.

- A pinch runner will only be allowed for the catcher who is scheduled or "theoretically" (*see below*) scheduled to catch the next inning. Pinch running for the catcher is *optional*.
- "*Theoretically*" means, even if it is the last inning, it can be assumed, "for the purposes of this rule", the game could go into extra innings and "theoretically" someone would be scheduled to catch that next inning. A "**next**" *inning is always assumed*. However, the next inning's scheduled catcher who is run for, must catch the entire next inning if it is played. (*unless injured*).

The "Courtesy Runner for the Catcher Rule" is designed to speed up the game.

Game length: Games are seven innings, with a minimum of 4.5 innings required to be an official game. In addition, there is a 10-run rule for all regular and tournament games: If a team is 10 or more runs ahead after five innings, that team is declared the winner. To ensure all scheduled games are completed in a timely manner, with time allowed for pre-game field prep, time restrictions are as follows:

- At West Jr. High School, Guillian, and Maetzold Fields – When a game is scheduled to follow, no inning may start after 2.5 hours have elapsed from the start of the game.
- Big Willow Field – no inning may start after two hours and 10 minutes of play after the official game and start time. No game will last longer than two hours and 20 minutes.

Prep League 5-Run Rule: In the Prep (Age 13) League, a team is allowed to score a maximum of five runs per inning for the first four innings. This rule will apply during both regular season and tournament play.

Lightning: All play will stop if lightning is sighted. Play may resume 15 minutes after the last lightning bolt.

Rainouts: Rainouts and/or other game cancellation information will be posted on the league website whenever time and conditions permit. In the absence of such notification or specific information from coaches, all players and families should assume games are on as scheduled.

Batting:

ALL players in attendance will be included in the batting rotation (round robin batting). Late arriving players will be automatically placed at the end of the batting order. Coaches are not obligated to play a late arriving player the minimum number of innings in the field as normally required in house league play. Late arriving is defined as a player who is not at the field in uniform prior to the first pitch of the game.

If a player must leave a game prior to its conclusion, that player's spot in the batting order will be skipped, with NO out recorded.

Minimum number of players: Eight players are required to start a game. Eight players are required to finish a game with the following exception: If a player is injured during the game and cannot continue, the game may be completed with the remaining players. If a team cannot field eight players for any other reason (ejection, early departure, etc.) the game will be forfeit.

Minimum Play: House league managers are required to play each player a minimum of four innings* defensively in a normal length game. The league strongly encourages each manager to equalize playing time over the course of the season.

**Some game situations (e.g., 10 run rule) may prevent the four inning requirement from being met in a specific game.*

Player Call-Up Policy: In house league play, when a team forfeit is possible due to a shortage of players, a team is allowed to “call-up” a player from the next lower division of play. Majors division teams can call up any HMBR rostered Prep division player. For the Prep Division, the Division Coordinator will provide a roster of eligible players, including names and phone numbers, to the coaches. For Prep Division call-ups, the eligible player list will consist of 12-year-old players who reside in Hopkins School District 270 and who compete for teams in the Big Willow, Glen Lake, Hopkins, and Golden Valley youth baseball programs. Those leagues will be asked to provide a select list of players based on ability to safely and effectively compete at the higher age level, and normally this means players who have qualified and played on all-star or tournament teams within their league programs. In no case may a player be called up when that player’s regular team has a game scheduled on the same day weekdays (Monday-Friday), or at any time on weekends when playing as a call-up would result in the player missing some or all of his regular team game.

Other call-up provisions are as follows:

1. A team’s roster for a specific game is limited to a maximum of ten (10) players if a call-up player is used. If 10 regular team players are dressed and available to play at game time, a call-up player cannot be used.
2. Each team will be allowed to select any eligible call-up player, but may use that player for only three games maximum during the course of the regular season and two games during tournament play.
3. Call-up players shall wear the uniform of their regular team. The name(s) of any call-up player(s) must be reported to the opposing team prior to the start of each game. Opposing teams should record the name(s) of call-up players used as part of their official scorekeeping book.
4. Call-up players cannot pitch or catch, must be in the last slots of the batting order at the start of the game, and play the required innings defensively.
5. Call-up player’s defensive innings may not exceed any regular player’s innings.

Playing Time for Travel and Tournament Players – League Guidelines

Minimum playing time for 13 year old Travel or Tournament players should be 3 defensive innings per game.* The starting lineup will provide an opportunity for every player to have a place in the batting order. Minimum playing time for 14 &15 travel team Metro league play should be 3 innings defensively*. Minimum playing time for 14 & 15 year old tournament play should average 2 innings defensively.

* Some game situations (e.g., 10 run rule) may prevent this from happening in a specific game.

Note: If a player is in the lineup as a designated hitter (DH), he may not receive any defensive playing time for that game. This guideline applies to players in good standing.
This league guideline will not apply to official State or National Tournaments.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Each coach will give an unsportsmanlike conduct advisory to the team and is responsible for ensuring all players know these rules. Any infraction of the following rules will result in immediate ejection on the umpire's ruling **with no further warning**.

- Throwing of helmet, bat, or any equipment in an unsportsmanlike manner.
- Profanity
- Any action taken with intent to injure.
- Any other action or behavior deemed unsportsmanlike by the umpire.

Any behavior causing ejection from a game will be subject to review by the board of directors and possible additional penalty, based on the following guidelines:

- A player's first ejection will require the player to sit out the balance of the game plus the next game, if the infraction occurs after the 3rd inning. (The player is required to attend the next game, sit in the dugout, and cheer on his team).
- A player's second ejection during the course of a season will require the player to sit out the balance of the game plus the next two games. (One game, if the infraction occurs before the 4th inning)
- A player ejected a third time is out for the season.

Coaches ejected from a game will have the circumstances reviewed by the rules committee and appropriate action will be determined then.

Inappropriate Behavior

The umpires have absolute discretion and authority to eject from the field of play any player, coach, parent, or other spectator whose behavior is abusive, threatening, or otherwise disruptive. *Arguing of balls and strikes is specifically prohibited.*

Protests

It is the strong desire and objective of the league that HMBR house league games be decided by players on the field. Coaches, umpires, players and parents are urged to establish and promote conditions whereby official game protests are rare, and rarely upheld when made. This can be accomplished by a thorough knowledge of the rules of baseball and league rules, in combination with a strong sense of sportsmanship and fair play.

On those rare occasions where a protest may be warranted, the league will receive a protest on the following conditions:

- Only a head coach during the game in question is allowed to file a protest.
- The protest must be made in writing, via e-mail, to the League President, with a copy to the Vice President and the respective House league commissioner. The Rules Committee of the Board of Directors will rule on all protests, on a majority vote basis. Protests must be submitted by noon on the day following the protested game.
- The responsible board members have sole discretion to resolve protests, including criteria used in the process. Note that technical violations of league rules are not by themselves sufficient cause for a protest to be upheld. The Rules Committee can consider all the facts in context and rule accordingly. All decisions are final.