



2023 MTLL High Minor Baseball Rules

(Updated: March 2023)

1. GENERAL

1.1 Our purpose is to teach the game of baseball and allow our children to have fun. Let's be good teachers and set a good example to the players and fans.

1.1.1 Negative cheering is not allowed at any time by any player, coach or fan. Chanting or cheering directed towards the opposing team is not allowed. Each coach is expected to enforce this rule for his/her team and fans.

1.1.2 Cooperation with the umpire is expected at all times. There will be no harassment of the umpire at any time by any player, coach or spectator. Coaches are expected to enforce this rule. If an umpire has misinterpreted a rule, a team head coach or acting head coach should call time-out and speak to the umpire in the presence of the opposing team head coach. The umpire reserves the right to reverse his or her decision to reflect the correct rule interpretation. No intimidation of an umpire will be allowed. The umpire will have complete authority of the rules during the game. The umpire will report to the League Director any instances of non-sportsmanlike behavior by a player, coach or spectator and the umpire has authority to eject any violators from a game and/or ballpark. The MTLL Board will further reprimand offenders if determined as necessary.

1.2 Coaches are to remove a player from a practice or game if the coach determines that the player exhibits signs, symptoms, or behavior consistent with a concussion or head injury or the coach suspects the player has sustained a concussion or head injury.

1.3 A player's league is determined by his or her grade in January of the year in which play is conducted. The High Minor League is for all 3rd and 4th grade players. All players must be registered and have a completed and signed medical release, MTLL Release of Liability Agreement, and Parent-Athlete Concussion Agreement to be eligible to practice

or play in games.

1.4 Players are assigned to teams by methods determined by the League Director. Head Coaches will be assigned to a team by the League Director. Assistant Coaches will be assigned to a team either by (a) the League Director or (b) the Head Coach recruiting from parents of the players assigned to his or her respective team.

1.5 Team rosters will consist of a maximum of 14 players.

1.6 Foul language or use of tobacco or alcohol is not allowed on or off the playing field. This applies to all players and coaches.

1.7 Players should be taught to control their emotions. If a player throws any equipment in anger, or threatens any other participant, that player may be ejected from the game.

1.8 Players must not wear watches, rings, pins, jewelry or other metallic items. This includes necklaces, bracelets and earrings. Players and the Umpire should keep their shirt tails neatly tucked in to their pants.

1.9 Eyeglass lenses shall be unbreakable plastic, not glass. Goggle type sports eyeglasses are recommended.

1.10 Players with plaster or fiberglass casts are not eligible to play, and cannot be included on the team's roster for purpose of fielding a legal team.

1.11 Shoes with metal spikes or metal cleats are not permitted. Shoes with molded rubber or plastic cleats are permissible.

2. GAMES

2.1 A minimum of eight players is required to start and continue regulation play. A team with less than eight eligible players will forfeit the game. Game start time may be extended up to five minutes to accommodate a late arriving player, only if that player is needed to reach the eight-player minimum. If a team is short players, younger players may be brought up from the MTLL Low Minor League to field a complete team under the following conditions:

a) Low Minor League players may be brought up only to complete a 9-player lineup. If 9 or more core High Minor team members are present, Low Minor League players may not be used.

b) Low Minor League players must wear their Low Minor team jersey and hat. **The Low Minor League player may not miss a scheduled game for his/her Low Minor League team in order to "play up".**

c) Low Minor League players must bat in the last position(s) in the batting order. d)

Low Minor League players may only play in the outfield.

2.2 The team listed second on the schedule is the Home team, and shall occupy the first base dugout. The Visiting team is listed first, and shall occupy the third base dugout.

2.3 All games shall start promptly at 6:00 p.m. (or 7:45 p.m., if so scheduled) and will be **limited to 90 minutes**. For warm-up purposes, the Visiting team shall have the field from 5:20 p.m. to 5:40 p.m. and the Home team shall have the field from 5:40 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. for 6:00 p.m. games. Pre-game practice for 7:45 p.m. games is limited to whatever time is available after the conclusion of the first game. This time is to be split equally between the two teams.

2.4 A regulation game consists of six innings, unless extended because of a tie score or shortened due to darkness or threatening weather. If lightning occurs, stop immediately and seek shelter. Do not take chances. The Lightning and Thunder Suspension Rule Set forth below shall apply. A game will be considered complete if called after four complete innings or 3-1/2 innings if the Home team is ahead. If a game is called during the 5th or 6th inning, the final score is the total score at the end of the previous inning. No inning shall be started after 7:30 p.m. for 6:00 p.m. games or 9:15 p.m. for 7:45 p.m. games. **If there is a 7:45 p.m. game following, a game starting at 6:00 p.m. must end at 7:45 p.m. even if the inning started before 7:30 p.m. If this occurs, final score is the score at the end of the last completed inning.** No play may continue after 10:00 p.m. at Fireman's Park. Ties will count as a half game won and a half game lost.

2.4.1 LIGHTNING AND THUNDER SUSPENSION RULE.

Criteria for suspension and resumption of play:

- When thunder is heard, or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play and take shelter immediately.

- Thirty minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play. - Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30 minute count, reset the clock and another 30 minute count should begin.

2.5 Each Head Coach should exchange lineups five minutes prior to the start of the game. Lineup information should include players' names, jersey numbers, and batting order. No changes may be made to the batting order after the start of the game, except that players who show up after the start of the game are inserted last in the order. If a player has to leave a game early, that player's position in the batting order is skipped.

2.6 All ground and game rules should be discussed between Head Coaches and the Umpires prior to the start of the game.

- 2.7 Each team will furnish the Plate Umpire with a new baseball for each game. Baseballs will be supplied to each team by the league.
- 2.8 All players are included in the batting order for the entire game regardless of whether or not they are in the game defensively.
- 2.9 Coaches are required to rotate players defensively in order to provide players with opportunities to play various positions.
- 2.9.1 Each player must play a minimum of four innings in the field defensively. The exception to this rule is when the game has been shortened due to darkness, time limit or when a player has been injured. No player may sit out a second inning defensively until every player has sat out one inning.
- 2.9.2 Time in the field does not have to be consecutive. Free substitutions are permitted; players can enter and leave fielding positions without restriction. Violations of the minimum playing time rule should be reported by coaches or parents to the League Director.
- 2.9.3 A player may play a specific position for no more than two innings. Additionally, a player should not play infield positions for more than three innings per game. (Pitching and Catching are not included in this limitation.)
- 2.10 A game can be canceled because of rain or wet field by agreement of the Head Coaches or the League Director.
- 2.11 Rained-out games and partial, unofficial games may be completed if agreed to by both Head Coaches (with notification to the League Director).
- 2.12 Slaughter rule – a maximum of seven runs per inning at bat (for every inning, including the last). Teams will continue play even if one team is mathematically out of the game until six innings or the allowed time has expired.
- 2.13 The Head Coach of the winning team shall contact the League Director with the score of the game within 24 hours. The League Director shall update the standings on the MTL website.

3. COACHES

- 3.1 The team on offense is allowed two coaches on the field, one at 1st base and one at 3rd base.
- 3.2 The team on defense may have a coach on the field. This coach is usually positioned in either the Left Center Field or Right Center Field areas. A coach is allowed to take a minimal amount of time to provide instruction to a position player.

3.3 Coaches, other than base coaches or the defensive coach in the field, are to remain behind the fence line.

3.6 It is the obligation of the Head Coach to keep all of their players participating in the League throughout the regular season and playoffs. The League recognizes that family vacations and other conflicts may cause a player to miss some games. A coach that discourages any player from attending any game (especially a playoff game) will be reprimanded by the MTL Board of Directors. Parents are asked to report abuses to the League Director.

3.7 After the game, coaches should make sure that any trash in the dugout or stands area is picked up.

4. CATCHERS

4.1 Catchers must wear a full-length chest protector, shin guards, helmet and facemask during each warm-up, practice, and game.

4.2 Male catchers must wear an athletic supporter with a plastic cup. Be prepared to verify compliance to this rule if requested by an umpire.

5. PITCHING

5.1 A pitcher may pitch a maximum of two innings per game. One pitch in an inning is considered an inning pitched. A pitcher can be removed and reinserted as a pitcher provided the two-inning limit has not been exceeded and if at least two other pitchers have pitched at least one out.

5.2 A pitcher, once removed from pitching, can play any other position.

5.3 A pitcher will be immediately removed from the game, as a pitcher, upon hitting three batters (cumulatively) with a thrown pitch. A pitcher, once removed from pitching, can play any other position. (Note that this pitcher may not be reinserted as a pitcher in the game being played, even if they have thrown less than 2 innings.)

5.4 The pitcher must keep the pivot foot in contact with the rubber throughout the windup of the pitch. The pitcher will be given one warning by the umpire. Additional illegal pitches shall be called a ball unless the batter reaches first base on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batter, or otherwise. There are no balks at the High Minor level.

5.5 The Head Coach is allowed two visits to the same pitcher in one inning. A third visit results in the automatic removal of the pitcher. No other coaches are allowed to visit the pitcher.

5.5 Pitchers cannot wear batting gloves; sweat bands, or wristbands while pitching.

5.6 Pitchers will be allowed a maximum of 5 warm-up pitches between innings and when a pitching change is made.

6. BATTING

6.1 The strike zone is the space over home plate between the batter's armpits (top of) and knees (bottom of) when the batter assumes a natural batting stance.

6.2 The batter's box extends back 36" from the center of home plate. If either foot is entirely out of the batter's box, and the batter makes contact with the ball, hitting it either fair or foul, the batter is out. If the batter is out of the batter's box and makes contact with the catcher, the batter is out, and the ball is dead (offensive interference). If the batter is in the batter's box and makes contact with the catcher, the batter is awarded 1st base, and the ball is dead (defensive interference). This is a judgment call by the umpire.

6.3 The batter is out on the third strike if the catcher cleanly catches the ball or drops the ball (read: there is no dropped third strike rule in effect). If the third strike is foul tipped and the catcher drops the ball, the batter is not out.

6.4 Bunting is not allowed. Any batter attempting a bunt will be declared out. (MTLL wants to emphasize batting skill development at the High Minor Level.)

6.5 Any 2-1/4" diameter bat is allowed. 2-5/8" and 2-3/4" diameter bats are allowed only if they contain the USA Baseball or USSSA 1.15BPF stamp. There is no bat weight restriction.

6.6 Batters, base runners, and on-deck batters must wear batting helmets. No other offensive players are allowed inside the fence lines.

6.7 A batter batting out of order is automatically out.

6.8 A batter intentionally throwing a bat or helmet will be ejected. A batter unintentionally throwing a bat will be given a warning by the umpire. A second violation by the team will result in that batter being called out.

7. BASERUNNING

7.1 To avoid injuries at first base, the 1st Baseman should use only the inside half of the base and the batter/runner the outside half of the base. (The batter/runner should always try to touch the orange, or inside, base when running to 1st.) A batter/runner cannot be tagged out after over-running or over-sliding 1st Base if the runner promptly returns to the base and doesn't make any movement toward 2nd Base.

7.2 A base runner must slide at all times while running into 2nd, 3rd, or home, and there is a

play being made at that base (a "close play"). This is to prevent collisions on the bases and to teach the players when to slide. Base runners failing to observe this rule will be called out. **No warnings will be given. Base runners will also be called out for sliding head first. The only exception for sliding head first is if the runner is returning to a base he or she has already occupied.**

7.3 A base runner must stay in contact with the base until the pitch passes home plate; leading off is not permitted. Base runners failing to observe this rule will be called out. **No warnings will be given.**

7.4 Stealing 2nd or 3rd is permitted on any pitch that gets behind the catcher. ("Behind the catcher" is to be defined as an imaginary line, parallel to the pitching rubber, which is centered off the catcher's heels.) Stealing on pitches that are caught, blocked or deflected so that ball does not get behind the catcher is not permitted. Delayed steals of 2nd or 3rd are not allowed unless the return throw to the pitcher touches the ground. Players occupying 3rd base may attempt to advance home if the defensive team makes a play on any runner. Runners may also attempt to advance home due to overthrows on steal attempts.

7.5 A runner is out when running more than three feet away from the baseline to avoid being tagged, unless avoiding interference with a fielder fielding a batted ball.

7.6 A runner is out when intentionally interfering with a thrown ball or hindering a fielder attempting to make a play on a batted ball. (The Umpire will declare other base runners out or safe, based on best judgment of what would have happened had the interference not occurred.)

7.7 A runner is out when touched by a fair batted ball in fair territory before the ball has touched or passed an infielder other than the pitcher. The ball is "dead," and no runner may score or advance except runners forced to advance.

7.8 If the ball ends up out of play (ex: outside the fence due to a wild throw), the ball is "dead," and a runner will advance one base as determined by his or her position at the time the ball left the field of play. (i.e., the runner advances to the next base).

7.9 A pinch runner will be allowed only for a player that is injured while batting or base running. An exception can be made if prior to the game a coach can demonstrate that a player is injured and should not be base running, but is capable of batting.

Pinch runners should be the player who made the last out.

7.10 With two outs a pinch runner must be substituted for the catcher. This runner must be the person that made the second out of the inning.

7.11 If a runner fails to tag after a catch, the umpire will call the runner out without an appeal.

8. FIELDING

8.1 Each defensive team will play 10 defensive players consisting of the following positions: Pitcher, Catcher, 1st Base, 2nd Base, Shortstop, 3rd Base, Left Field, Left Center Field, Right Center Field, and Right Field.

8.2 Infielders may be positioned even with or behind the 2nd and 3rd base paths. No outfielder may be positioned any closer than 10 feet from a base.

8.3 All bases, including home plate, are in fair territory (The orange, or outside, bases at 1st base are to be counted as foul territory).

8.4 A foul ball caught inside the fence lines is an out, and base runners can advance after the catch at their own risk. A foul ball caught outside the fence lines is out of play, and is not an out. The ball is dead, and runners cannot advance.

8.5 A ball hit under, or bouncing over the outfield fence, is a ground rule double. Base runners will advance two bases. The outfielder closest to the ball is to indicate that the ball has rolled under, or bounced over the fence, by raising both arms. A ball hit over the outfield fence on a fly is an automatic home run. (Note: During times when the outfield fences are not up, all unobstructed fair balls hit to the outfield are in play, and runners can advance at their own risk.)

8.6 If a fielder fakes as though a play on the ball will be made for the purpose of making a base runner slide, the fielder shall be given a warning from the umpire. The second offense by a team will result in the ejection of the offending fielder.

8.7 The infield fly rule does not apply. However, if it's obvious than an infielder intentionally let a ball drop for the purpose of getting a double play, the batter will be called out, and the runners will return to their bases. In all other situations, the ball is in play, whether it is caught or not.

9. SPECIAL PLAYOFF AND CHAMPIONSHIP GAME RULE

9.1 No games may end in a tie. All games will be played until there is a winner.

Time limits as follows:

6:00 start-no inning shall start after 7:45. If played on a field with lights, no inning shall start after 9:45.

7:00 start-no inning shall start after 8:45. If played on a field with lights, no inning shall start after 9:45.

8:00 start- no inning shall start after 9:45. If a game is not tied at a restricted time no matter how many innings have been played, it shall be declared final.

If the game is tied at a restricted time, it shall be suspended and shall resume at a time and location determined by the League Director.

If a game is tied after 6 innings, "sudden-death innings" will be played using modified California rules. Both teams must continue to use the same batting order they used in regulation play. The visiting team will bat first. The home team will bat second. The batting team starts their at bat with a base runner on second base. This base runner will be the player that batted last in the prior inning. The batting order will continue from regulation play. An at bat continues until 3 outs are recorded. Continue with this format until a winner is determined.