

NIAGARA INTERLOCK BASEBALL

2011 RULES

Revised: March 22, 2011

1 – Introduction

1.0 General - The Rookie, Mosquito and Peewee divisions are instructional divisions. We are committed to providing appropriate levels of baseball for everyone with the emphasis being placed on skill improvement and enjoyment of the game. It is important for the development of a player's skills that a player has the opportunity to play positions in both the infield and outfield. Winning, losing and what the score is should not be important at these levels. Winning isn't everything, but the effort to win is. Competition is not a concern but developing good citizens who are good players is.

1.1 Rookie Division - The emphasis is placed on instructing the players on how to throw and catch a ball, and how to hit a pitched ball. Very little emphasis will be placed on base running, as base running becomes more of a concern in Peewee Division.

1.2 Mosquito Division—The emphasis is placed on instructing the players on pitching and hitting. Some emphasis will be placed on base running, as base running becomes more of a concern in Peewee Division.

1.3 Peewee Divisions—The emphasis is placed on instructing the players how to pitch, how to hit a pitched ball, and how to run the bases.

2 - Definition of Terms

2.1 Uncarded Players – are players who are playing on any team other than Niagara Interlock Baseball house league (Thunderbirds, All-star, etc.). These players are restricted from playing in the Niagara Interlock Baseball house league.

2.2 Overage Players (Junior Only) – Unlimited number of overage players (only one year older) are allowed per team, with no restrictions on pitching or catching.

2.3 All Games played with an ineligible player will be forfeited by the offending team.

2.4 Senior teams will be allowed to sign Junior players as A/P players. These players may only be on one Senior roster and must be reported as being a Senior A/P player on their team roster.

3 – General Rules

3.1 Unless otherwise stated in this document the official rules of baseball and any rules adopted by Baseball Ontario will apply.

3.2Field dimensions are as laid out in the official rules of baseball.

3.2.1Rookie

3.2.1.1The pitching machine is placed forty (40) feet from the tip of home plate. The distance between all bases will be sixty-five (65) feet.

3.2.1.2There shall be a line marked half (1/2) way between all bases including home plate.

3.2.1.3An eight (8) foot diameter safety circle shall be marked off directly in front of home plate and its center shall be forty (40) feet from home plate. Only the pitching machine and the person operating the pitching machine are allowed in the circle. No player is permitted to enter the safety circle which is a dead ball area. Enter means if any part of the player's body enters the circle. If a player enters the circle the ball will be declared dead and the batter will be awarded first base. All runners will advance if forced.

3.2.1.4Lines shall be drawn from the release point of the pitching machine to four (4) feet beyond the safety circle in the direction of first base and third base. The pitcher must stand behind the line.

3.2.2Mosquito – The pitching rubber is forty-four (44) feet from the tip of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber. The distance between all bases will be sixty-five (65) feet.

3.2.3 Peewee – The pitching rubber is fifty (50) feet from the tip of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber. The distance between all bases will be seventy-five (75) feet.

3.3Each association will supply a copy of the ground rules for each of their parks and the ground rules will become a part of the rules.

3.4Any person warming up a pitcher, no matter where they are, must wear a helmet, mask and throat protector.

3.4.1Mosquito & Peewee – If it is another player, they must also wear the extra set of leg guards provided.

3.5All players must wear an appropriate athletic support.

3.6 Players are to wear the uniform and protective equipment provided by their association. Anyone not in uniform will not be allowed on the field, nor will anyone be allowed on the field wearing an ejected player's uniform.

3.7Metal spikes are only allowed in the Midget and Junior Divisions. Players are responsible for ensuring their actions do not cause injury to an opposing player. If, in the Umpire's discretion, the player did or could cause injury to a member of the opposing team, the player shall be ejected from the game and not allowed to wear metal spikes for the remainder of the season. A second infraction by a player of the same team (not necessarily by the same player) will result in a one (1) game suspension for the Coach of the offending team/player.

3.8No jewelry allowed (including "Live Strong" bracelets).

3.9Rookie – Each team will consist of 10 players defensively. The positioning is the same as regular baseball with the tenth player being a second center fielder.

3.10Tie-Breaking Procedure:

3.10.1Regular Season:

- total points

-head to head games

-total runs against

3.10.2Playoffs:

- total playoff points

- head to head in playoff games

- total runs against (after 4 innings of play in playoff games)

- regular season points

3.11Scores will be credited as follows for the following:

3.11.1 All games forfeited will be declared a 7-0 win by the non-forfeiting team (4-0 after four innings score in the playoffs).

3.11.2All games that are a declared tie will result in a 4-4 score.

3.12For the Bantam, Midget and Junior divisions, a team must complete 16 games to be eligible to take part in the playoffs

4 - Starting & Ending Game

4.1 All games are seven (7) innings long.

4.1.1 Rookie – All games are five (5) innings long.

4.1.2Mosquito – All games are six (6) innings long.

4.2It is an official game after four (4) innings of play.

4.2.1Rookie – It is an official game after three (3) innings of play.

4.3 Games called due to curfew, darkness, weather, or any other reason before becoming an official game, will be replayed in their entirety.

4.4 No new inning will start after 2 hours.

4.4.1Rookie – No new inning will start after 1 hour and 30 minutes, no time limit for semi-final and championship games.

4.4.2Mosquito – No new inning will start after 1 hour and 45 minutes, no time limit for semi-final and championship games.

4.4.3Peewee - No time limit for semi-final and championship games

4.4.4Bantam – No time limit for semi-final and championship games

4.4.5Midget – No time limit for semi-final and championship games

4.4.6Junior – No time limit for all play-off games.

4.5All games begin at the scheduled start time unless they are delayed by a previous game or the umpires arriving late. In these cases, time begins with the first pitch.

4.6A team will have a fifteen (15) minute grace period from the scheduled start time to field a team of no fewer than eight (8) players. If a team is unable to field a team of eight (8) players, the game will be defaulted to the opposing team and a final score of 7 to 0 will be recorded. If the team forfeiting the game is the visiting team they will be responsible for covering the costs of the home team (to be limited to umpires fees, diamond fees and lighting fees). Coaches are expected to use call-ups to ensure that this does not occur. A game shall be forfeited if a team has one or more players ejected and as a result cannot field a team of eight (8) players. If a team is left with fewer than eight (8) players as a result of an injury, and the injury occurs before it is an official game, the game will be rescheduled. If the injury occurs after it has become an official game, the team may continue with less than eight (8) players.

4.6.1 Rookie, Mosquito & Peewee – The team with fewer than eight (8) players will borrow players from the opposing team and an exhibition game will be declared and played.

4.7A team left with fewer than eight (8) players as a result of an ejection will forfeit the game, regardless of when the ejection occurs during the game. The score will read 7-0.

4.8A maximum of five (5) runs may be scored per half inning in the first four innings. From the fifth inning on there are unlimited runs.

4.8.1 Rookie & Mosquito – teams are allowed to catch up and go no more than five (5) runs ahead in all innings played.

4.9 The game ends if one team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs after five (5) complete innings. (If the home team is ahead by 10 runs then after four and one half (4-1/2) innings have been completed). For clarity, if the visitors go up by ten runs during their at bat, the inning continues until the full inning has finished. If the home team goes up by ten (10) runs during its half of the inning, the game ends at that point even if three (3) outs have not been recorded.

5 – Postponements

5.1 The park convenor of each association will make the decision to postpone a game where field conditions are unplayable and call the visiting team's coach no less than one (1) hour prior to the start of a game. If it is less than one (1) hour prior to the start of the game the decision will be made at the diamond once both coaches have arrived. Where possible, this decision should be made in sufficient time to inform coaches and umpires. The game will be rescheduled.

5.2 Once the umpire has taken the field to start a game, the umpire is the only one who can cancel a game. If this occurs before it is an official game, then the game will be replayed in its entirety.

5.3 All games postponed due to weather will be replayed as soon as possible under the following guidelines:

5.3.1 The home team must reschedule the game within seven (7) days of the originally scheduled date, sending notice to both the visiting team and the score reporting email address by that time, or they shall forfeit the game.

5.3.2 The home team will give at least one (1) week notice to the visiting team for the make up game.

5.3.3 All games postponed during the last two (2) weeks of the season will be declared ties, only where 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 above cannot be adhered to, or if the visiting team agrees to waive 5.3.2.

5.4 There is a system of call ups used by each association. This allows coaches to get enough players from the next lower OBA division house league, so their team doesn't have to forfeit as a result of not having enough players. Players called up must become part of the roster for the game and they must be played the same as everyone else during the game. Players must be cleared by their parents (if under the age of 18) to play. If a center does not have a lower house league division team available to pick up from (no team entered in the division or all teams in the division are playing), they will be able to pick up players from any lower Niagara Interlock Baseball house league team.

5.5 Games that need to be re-scheduled due to a team playing in a tournament must be re-scheduled, with a date set, one week prior to the originally scheduled date.

5.6 Games can ONLY be re-scheduled as in 5.3 (weather) and 5.5 (tournament) above.

6 - The Batter

6.1 There will be a continuous batting order.

6.2 Any player arriving late will be placed at the bottom of the batting order.

6.3 Wood bats are allowed providing they conform to the rules of baseball.

6.4.1 Mosquito – All batters are out on a catcher's miss of a third strike.

6.5.1 Rookie – The infield fly rule does not apply.

6.6 Batting helmets with chin straps must be worn by all batters and on-deck batters.

6.6.1 Midget & Junior – Chin straps optional.

6.7 Rookie – Each batter shall receive five (5) pitches. The batter must either put the fifth pitch in play or strike out to end his/her at bat.

6.8 Rookie – Batters cannot walk or bunt. If the umpire rules that a batter attempted to bunt, the batter will be declared out and the base runners cannot advance

6.9 Rookie – If a batted ball hits the pitching machine, the ball bucket, or any adult in fair territory, the ball is declared dead and the batter is awarded first base and each base runner will advance one base if forced to advance.

6.10 Rookie – If a batted ball goes through the pitching circle without touching anything, it is a live ball. The batter and any runners advance at their own risk.

7 - The Runner

7.1 All base runners are permitted to lead-off and steal.

7.1.1 Rookie – A runner may not lead off, attempt to steal or steal a base. If a base runner leaves his base before the pitched ball has crossed the plate and the batter hits the ball, the runner shall return to his original base (if the batter is retired) or he must return to an unoccupied base nearest the one he left depending on the advance of the batter. There are no passed balls or wild pitches. A runner cannot advance if the ball goes behind the catcher.

7.1.2 Mosquito – A runner may not lead off, attempt to steal or steal a base. All base runners shall not leave their base until the pitched ball has crossed the plate. If a base runner leaves the base before the pitched ball has crossed the plate he will receive one warning after which he will be called out.

7.2 If the scheduled catcher is on base when the second out is made the catcher will have a courtesy runner to speedup play. The courtesy runner will be the last player called out.

7.3 Batting helmets with chin straps must be worn by all base runners.

7.3.5 Midget & Junior – Chin straps optional.

7.4 Runners are instructed to slide or attempt to avoid making contact with a fielder. Runners who do not slide to avoid contact with any defensive player at home plate or any base, will be called out whether the contact is malicious or not, regardless of the outcome of the play. If the Umpire in his discretion feels that the contact was malicious, the offending player will also be ejected from the game.

7.5 Rookie – When a fielder makes a direct attempt to throw a ball to any base to make a play, the umpire will call time after the completion of the play, whether the ball is caught or missed. Any overthrow of first base will follow the same as above, with runners only advancing further if the ball goes out of play. All base runners will be placed according to where they were when time was called. They will be sent to where they were going if they are past the half way line otherwise they will be sent back. The placement of the runners will be at the discretion of the umpire. Questioning the umpire's judgment on this will be cause for immediate ejection from the game. Coaches should understand that once the defense has control of the ball in the infield, they should hold their runners. As coaches move to higher divisions, they will not be able to just send runners. Why embarrass young baseball players by trying to force them to make a play on one of your runners? It doesn't teach good base running.

8 - The Pitcher

8.1 Pitchers shall be limited to the following limitations. Any pitcher that pitches more than these limitations will result in the forfeiture of the game for the team with the offending pitcher. It should be noted that if a player is suspended for any reason, the games under suspension do not count as games not pitched under this rule

8.1.1 Mosquito – A pitcher shall pitch a maximum of two (2) consecutive innings.

8.1.2 Peewee – A pitcher shall pitch a maximum of three (3) consecutive innings per game and no more than five (5) innings in any two (2) consecutive games. (i.e. innings allowed will equal 5 minus the number of innings pitched in the last official game played by the team, to a maximum of 3 innings)

8.1.3 Bantam - A pitcher shall pitch a maximum of four (4) consecutive innings per game and no more than seven (7) innings in any two (2) consecutive games. (i.e. innings allowed will equal 7 minus the number of innings pitched in the last official game played by the team, to a maximum of 4 innings)

8.1.4 Midget & Junior - A pitcher shall pitch a maximum of seven (7) consecutive innings per game and no more than seven (7) innings in any two (2) consecutive games. (i.e. innings allowed will equal 7 minus the number of innings pitched in the last official game played by the team)

8.1.5 Any players called up to play in a higher division is restricted from pitching in the division they are called up to.

8.2 One (1) pitch thrown in an inning constitutes an inning pitched.

8.2.2 Mosquito & Peewee – Any player who assumes the pitching position in an inning will be charged with one inning pitched.

8.3 Any player who is removed from the pitching position shall not return to the pitching position for the remainder of the game.

8.3.2 Mosquito & Peewee – Any player removed from the pitching position in the middle of an inning must be replaced by a player on the field. A player removed from the pitching position in the middle of an inning, must take a position on the field in the inning the player was removed. A pitcher cannot be replaced by a player from the bench in the middle of an inning.

8.4 Coaches of all teams for Peewee division and higher must report the innings pitched by their pitchers with the scores for each game.

8.4.1 All records of innings pitched will be set to zero (0) at the start of the playoffs.

8.5 Balks will be called and enforced.

8.5.2 Mosquito – In the case of a balk the umpire will not make a call at the time of play, but will approach the pitcher and his/her coach between innings and explain why a balk would be called. No runners will advance.

8.5.3 Peewee – In the case of a balk the umpire will call time and explain to the pitcher why the umpire called a balk. No runners will advance from the start of the year until July 1st. Starting July 1 there will be only one warning per pitcher per game.

8.6 Trips to the mound are unlimited unless the umpire feels that this privilege is being abused or is a deliberate attempt to delay the game. In the latter case the coach is subject to time being added on and / or being ejected from the game. (Coaches should be cognizant of the need to keep the game moving.)

8.7 The pitcher will be allowed five (5) warm-up pitches at the beginning of an inning. A new pitcher coming to the mound in the middle of an inning will be allowed eight (8) warm-up pitches.

8.8 Rookie (Pitching Machine)

8.8.1 – The pitcher must stand beside the pitching machine, outside the safety circle and behind the release point of the pitching machine. Lines shall be drawn from the release point to four (4) feet beyond the safety circle. The pitcher must stand on or behind the line until after the ball has been released from the machine.

8.8.2– Any player who assumes the pitching position in an inning must wear a regulation helmet with the chin strap done up.

8.8.3– Only the pitcher may return a live ball to the batting machine operator.

8.8.4– The speed of the pitching machine is to be agreed upon before the start of the game. If there is not an agreement, the umpire will make the decision.

8.8.5– The speed of the pitching machine cannot be changed until the end of an inning. However, if the machine becomes erratic, then it can be adjusted at any time by the umpire. Anyone caught tampering with the machine will be ejected from the game.

8.8.6– Each pitch must be considered hittable by the umpire in order to count as a pitched ball. Questioning an umpire's judgment on this has the same penalty as arguing the strike zone. It is immediate ejection from the game.

8.8.7– The umpire will signal the machine operator to start each batter turn by saying “play ball” when everyone is ready.

9 - Substitutions

9.1 Defensive substitutions are unlimited. Coaches may move players in and out freely.

9.1.1 Rookie, Mosquito & Peewee – No player will sit out a second time until every other player has sat out once. This rule then follows, that no player can sit out a third time until every other player has sat out a second time, etc. A pitcher who is going into their second or third inning on the

mound is exempt from this rule. It follows that they must sit out the next inning. No player will sit out two (2) consecutive innings or play more than three innings in the outfield.

10 - The Umpire

10.1The umpire's decision shall be final in respect of all matters relating to the interpretation of these rules.

10.2For all Bantam, Midget and Junior Final Playoff games a three (3) umpire system will be used.

11 – Field Conduct

11.1Abusive and/or foul language by coaches, players, or spectators will result in ejection from the game and/or park. The harassment policy set forth by baseball Ontario will be strictly enforced.

11.2No arguments will be permitted among any coaches, players, spectators or umpires. The umpire's decision is final. This behaviour will result in ejection from the game and/or the park.

11.3No arguments will be permitted between any coaches, players, or spectators. This behaviour will result in ejection from the game and/or park.

11.4 The use of tobacco products by players, coaches and umpires in any form, is prohibited from the time they enter the park until they have vacated the park. This behaviour can result in ejection from the game and/or park.

11.5The abuse of equipment may result in ejection from the game.

11.6In the event a player and/or a coach are ejected from a game.

The following shall apply:

11.7Any player or coach ejected from a game shall be noted on the game report (of both teams) emailed to the Interlock Scores reporting site.

12 – Special Responsibilities

12.1The home team is responsible for putting the bases out before a game and putting them away after the game.

12.2The visiting team may have the diamond twenty five (25) minutes before game time for a ten (10) minute warm-up. The home team may have the diamond fifteen (15) minutes before game time for a ten minute warm-up if time permits. Warm-ups should commence along foul territory before game time.

12.3Rosters for games will be completed before game time and exchanged between the teams. Each team will provide the home plate umpire with a lineup showing all players with their numbers taking part in the game. This lineup need not be in batting order.

12.4It is important that coaches realize that time is of the essence. It is important to keep the game moving.

12.5 All teams must submit their team rosters by July 15 to the interlock_scores@hotmail.com email reporting.

12.6 Baseballs – only baseballs approved by Baseball Ontario will be allowed to be used in their respective divisions.

12.6.1Rookie, Mosquito & Peewee: home team to provide one new and one good used ball at the beginning of the game, and any further balls required shall be at least good used balls.

12.6.2Bantam, Midget & Junior: home team and visiting team to provide one new and one good used ball at the beginning of the game, and any further balls required shall be at least good used balls and provided by the home team.

12.7 SOBA

12.7.1Any teams wishing to play in SOBA Championships must declare to the Interlock Committee no later than July 7

12.7.2Any playdowns required to determine a single team to represent the Niagara Interlock must be completed by the Civic Holiday Monday.

- Ejected first time one (1) game suspension
- Ejected second time two (2) game suspension
- Ejected a third time indefinite suspension pending Review by a committee of Representatives from each Association
- Any ejection for fighting and/or physical abuse of an umpire is an automatic indefinite suspension pending executive review.
- Suspension duration is not affected by the beginning of the playoffs and such carry through regardless.