

# WEST COAST FANTASY BASEBALL ASSOCIATION LEAGUE PLAYING RULES\*

(updated for the 2013 season)

In order to make our games a safe and enjoyable experience, we have made some modifications to the standard baseball rules. We WILL play the game of baseball except for the following changes which will reduce the potential for injuries and provide a competitive environment for all players. It is important to note that the umpires are NOT responsible for the enforcement of all rules. Batting order, courtesy runners, and pitching limitations are enforced by the coaches. If a coach believes one of the rules is being violated, they should call time and discuss it with the opposing coach.

1. **STEALING:** Stealing of bases is not allowed if the pitcher delivers from the stretch position. If the pitcher goes into a full wind-up with runners on base, runners may attempt to steal. However, under NO circumstances may a runner steal home.
2. **LEAD OFFS:** Runners may only lead off to the cutout of each base before the pitch is delivered. Once the pitch is delivered (leaves the pitcher's hand), runners may take a secondary lead.
3. **PICK-OFF PLAYS AND OVERTHROWS:** Even though there is no stealing when the pitcher is in the stretch, runners are still susceptible to pick-off throws by both the pitcher and the catcher.
  - o **PITCHER** - Per standard baseball rules, the runner must be tagged out if the pitcher attempts a pick-off move. If there is an overthrow on an attempted pick-off play by the PITCHER, all runners may advance without retagging their bases.
  - o **CATCHER** - A throw to an occupied base by the catcher can result in a force out. In other words, a runner must beat the catcher's throw to the base - it is NOT a tag play. If there is an overthrow on an attempted pick-off play by the CATCHER, the runner occupying the base that was thrown to must go back and tag up before advancing. ALL OTHER runners may advance without retagging their bases.
4. **PASSED BALLS / WILD PITCHES:** Runners may not advance on passed balls or wild pitches, unless one of the following three things occur:
  - o **The wild pitch or passed ball makes contact with the backstop** - The ball is dead and the runner(s) move up one base automatically. This includes runners on third base advancing to home and scoring. No defensive play can be made.
  - o **The wild pitch or passed ball does NOT make contact with the backstop, but the runner(s) are attempting a legitimate steal as outlined in Rule #1 above** - In this case, the runner(s) must have begun the attempted steal before the pitch crossed the home plate area. The ball is live and runners may advance at their own risk.
  - o **The wild pitch or passed ball is a dropped third strike which will be scored per normal baseball rules** - If first base is unoccupied with less than two outs or there are two outs AND the third strike to a batter is not fielded cleanly by the catcher, the ball is live and all runners (including the batter) may advance at their own risk. A runner on third base may attempt to score on a dropped third strike since this is not considered to be a steal attempt.
5. **FREE SUBSTITUTION OF PLAYERS ON DEFENSE:** Any team player can substitute for another player on defense at any time. See rule 12 for pitching limitations.
6. **FULL BATTING ORDER:** Barring injury, all players on the team must hit (not just the nine currently in the field). For tournament play ONLY, the batting order is rotating. In other words, the leadoff hitter for game #2 is the batter who was in the on-deck circle when the final out was made in game #1. The same applies to game #3's leadoff hitter which is based upon the final out of game #2.
7. **TIME LIMIT:** For double-headers, no new inning can begin after the **two hour and 40 minute** mark. For triple-headers, no new inning can begin after the **two hour and 25 minute** mark. The umpire maintains the master clock which each coach should synch up with prior to the start of the game. Games are expected to start at their scheduled time unless prior games were delayed. All infield practice, umpire pre-game meetings, and pitcher warm-ups should be completed before the official starting time of the game. Opposing coaches should coordinate their infield practice so each team has the same amount of time to use the field

without affecting the starting time of the game.

8. **INJURIES AND COURTESY RUNNERS:** All batters must run from home plate on balls put in play. Once a player reaches base, a courtesy runner is available under the following circumstances:

- Prior to the game, each team will be allowed to designate up to **two** players in their batting lineup who are to be replaced by courtesy runners once they have reached base. Once the game has started, **NO** changes or additions can be made to this designated player list.
- When a player who is currently playing the catching position defensively is still on the base paths with two outs, a courtesy runner can be employed. This is not mandatory, but it does allow the catcher to get their gear on and be ready for the start of the next half inning.

If one of the players described above reaches base, they will be replaced on the bases by the last **recorded** out. When determining the last recorded out, keep in mind the following:

- The last recorded out is the player who exits the field when the last out was recorded.
- In the event of a double play, the last recorded out is the second out recorded.
- The courtesy runner will be the second to last recorded out if either of the following are true:
  - If the last recorded out is also designated to receive a courtesy runner
  - If the last recorded out is currently playing the catching position and there are two outs
- If a runner is required in the first inning of a game and an out has not yet been recorded, the runner shall be the last player in the batting lineup provided they do not also require a runner.

Since a team's designated runner list must be set before the game, any batter who is unable to run the bases after the start of the game must be removed from the lineup and the lineup will be collapsed. When that player's position comes up again in the lineup, they will be skipped, but no out will be recorded. It is permissible for any such player to continue playing defense, but they cannot be added back to the batting lineup.

Team coaches are responsible for insuring that the correct courtesy runner is used. The opposing team can challenge whether or not the correct courtesy runner is used and if they challenge successfully, the runner will be removed from the bases and an out will be recorded. Any challenge must take place before the runner in question scores or the half inning concludes.

9. **OUTFIELD PLAYS AT FIRST BASE:** A batter running to first base on a ball hit on the ground to an outfielder cannot be forced out at first base on a throw from the outfielder. It is permissible for the outfielder to have their throw relayed to an infielder and then to first base to achieve a force out, but they cannot throw directly to first base.

10. **WOOD BATS:** Wood bats will be used. Exceptions to this rule are men 60 and over and any ladies who choose to use metal bats.

11. **SLIDE OR GET OUT OF THE WAY:** In order to avoid injury, runners must slide or get out of the way if there is a play at the base they are attempting to advance to. For example, if a ground ball is hit with a runner at first which results in a play at second base, the runner from first must slide into second base or peel off toward the outfield so the fielder may attempt to turn a double play if they so wish. Even if a double play is not in order, the goal is to prevent unnecessary collisions resulting in injury.

12. **INNINGS PITCHED LIMITATION:** No player may pitch more than six (6) innings in any one league game. Six innings is eighteen outs and they **DO NOT** have to be consecutive outs (i.e. a pitcher may exit the game and re-enter as long as the total number of outs does not exceed 18 while they are pitching).

Full-time players playing as pool players in games which do not include their primary team are limited to three innings pitched or nine outs.

13. **THREE HIT BATTERS PER GAME:** **\*\* NEW FOR 2013 \*\*** A pitcher must be removed from the pitching position if he/she hits three batters with pitches in one game. That person cannot return to the pitching position during the course of that game.

*\* Tournament playing rules may differ from these league-specific rules so be sure to read the rules before each tournament you participate in.*