



NIAGARA INTERLOCK BASEBALL

2021 RULES

**Rules package covering all divisions from 9U to
18U (9U (Rookie) to 18U (Midget))**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENERAL

We are committed to providing appropriate levels of baseball for everyone with the emphasis being placed on skill improvement and enjoyment of the game.

1.2 DIVISIONS

1.2.1 ROOKIE DIVISION (9U)

An instructional and competitive division for players 9 years of age and under (during the calendar year). Female players are eligible at the age of 10 years and under. A pitching machine is used in place of a pitcher. Standard baseball fielder positions apply with the addition of an additional centre fielder. Two (2) coaches from each team are permitted on the field during play.

1.2.2 MOSQUITO DIVISION (11U)

An instructional and competitive division for players 11 years of age and under (during the calendar year). Female players are eligible at the age of 12 years and under. A pitcher is introduced to the game at this age for the first time. All standard baseball positions are used.

1.2.3 PEEWEE DIVISION (13U)

An instructional and competitive division for players 13 years of age and under (during the calendar year). Female players are eligible at the age of 14 years and under.

1.2.4 BANTAM DIVISION (15U)

An instructional and competitive division for players 15 years of age (during the calendar year) and under. Female players are eligible at the age of 16 years and under.

1.2.5 MIDGET DIVISION (18U)

An instructional and competitive division for players 18 years of age (during the calendar year) and under. Female players are eligible at the age of 19 years and under.

2. GENERAL RULES

- 2.1 Unless otherwise stated in this document the official rules of baseball and any rules adopted by Baseball Ontario will apply.
 - 2.1.1 The rules of any earlier division will apply unless otherwise or overwritten by a rule specific to that division within these rules.
- 2.2 Players who are playing on any team other than Niagara Interlock Baseball house league or a Niagara District Select Team. (i.e. those playing with Thunderbirds, All-star, FJSL, etc.), are restricted from playing in the Niagara Interlock Baseball house league.
 - 2.2.1 All games played with an ineligible player will be forfeited by the offending team.
- 2.3 Players who play House League may be rostered (previously AP'd) to a rep team in their center. These players are required to play with their house league team over the rep team they have been rostered to.
- 2.4 Lineup cards are required in the **15U (Bantam) & 18U (Midget)** divisions.
- 2.5 Any players overage for their division will be restricted from pitching or catching. These players must be identified at ground rules and on Lineup cards. Players must be a maximum one year overage, and there is a maximum of 3 overage players per team. All overage players must be approved by the Interlock Committee.
 - 2.5.1 These overage players are to meet the criteria as set out by the NIBC.
- 2.6 Field dimensions and diamond markings will be as adopted by Baseball Ontario.
- 2.7 Each association will confirm ground rules for their park prior to the start of the game.
- 2.8 Any person warming up a pitcher must wear a Mask w/ Throat Protector or Hockey Style Catchers Helmet
 - 2.8.1 **11U (MOSQUITO) & 13U (PEEWEE) DIVISION** players must also be wearing leg guards
- 2.9 All players must wear an appropriate athletic support
- 2.10 Players are to wear the uniform and protective equipment provided by their association.
 - 2.10.1 Players called up to play from a lower division must be wearing a team jersey, and if no team jersey is available they are to wear the jersey from their team.
 - 2.10.2 No one will be allowed on the field wearing an ejected player's uniform.
 - 2.11 Metal Spikes are ONLY allowed in the **18U (Midget)** division.
 - 2.11.1 Players are responsible for ensuring their actions do not cause injury to an opposing player. If, in the umpire's discretion, the player did have intent to 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 any player from the same team will result in a suspension for the coach of the offending team.
- 2.12 Jewelry will be allowed as per Baseball Ontario rules
- 2.13 Tie-breaking procedures
 - 2.13.1 Teams that do not complete 80% of their scheduled games will be ranked accordingly, AFTER all teams which have exceeded the required number of games.
 - 2.13.2 Regular Season & Playoff standings will be determined by: Win %, then by head to head results, followed by Defensive Runs allowed.

- 2.13.3 Tournament Games must have a winner determined in order to proceed.
- 2.14 Scores for games not played will be credited as follows:
 - 2.14.1 Forfeits: will be declared a 7-0 win by the non-forfeiting team.
 - 2.14.2 Ties: will be scored 4-4
- 2.15 Protests must be declared to the umpire at the time of the offence being protested.
 - 2.15.1 Judgement calls by the umpire cannot be protested under any circumstance.
 - 2.15.2 The protesting team must notify the convener within 48hrs.

3. STARTING & ENDING THE GAME

- 3.1 In a circumstance the game is ended by the umpire, or it is a complete game, or time the bottom half of an inning does not need to be played if the home team is ahead after the top half of the inning.
- 3.2 Games called for any reason before becoming a complete game will be replayed in their entirety.
- 3.3 Unless delayed by a previous game, weather, umpires arriving late, or a tournament all games begin at the scheduled time regardless of time of first pitch. In the above circumstances the first pitch shall be the official start time.
- 3.4 FORFEITS: Teams shall have a 15 minute grace period from the scheduled start time to field a team of eight (8) players. If a team is unable to be fielded it will be forfeited to the opposing team with a score of 7-0 recorded. If the forfeiting team is the visiting team they shall be responsible for covering the costs incurred by the home team (limited to: umpire fees, diamond fees, and lighting fees). Coaches are expected to use call-ups to ensure that this does not occur. The game start time is not affected by this.
 - a. If a team is left with fewer than eight (8) player as a result of an ejection the game shall be forfeited.
 - b. 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.
 - c. Teams with fewer than eight (8) players shall borrow players from the opposing team, and an exhibition game shall be played.
- 3.5 **9U (Rookie):**
 - a. Games are six (6) Innings in length.
 - b. It is an official game after three (3) innings of play.
 - c. A maximum of three (3) runs may be scored per half inning in the first four (4) innings. The fifth & sixth inning shall have a seven (7) run limit.
 - d. No new inning is to start after 1 hour 30 minutes, with a DROP DEAD time in effect after 1hr50min.
 - e. The game shall end if one team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs after four (4) complete innings. (If the home team is ahead after 3-1/2 innings have been completed).
- 3.6 **11U (Mosquito):**
 - a. Games are six (6) Innings in length.

- b. It is an official game after four (4) innings of play.
- c. A maximum of three (3) runs may be scored per half inning in the first four (4) innings. The fifth inning will have a cap of five (5) run maximum (unless the umpire has declared that the 5th inning will be the final inning, in this case the inning shall have no run limit). The sixth inning shall have no run limit.
- d. No new inning is to start after 1 hour 45 minutes, with a DROP DEAD time in effect after 2hr10min.
- e. The game shall end if one team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs after five (5) complete innings. (If the home team is ahead after 4-1/2 innings have been completed).
- f. Killarney Plate will be used as per Baseball Ontario Rules

3.7 13U (PeeWee):

- a. Games are seven (7) Innings in length.
- b. It is an official game after four (4) innings of play.
- c. A maximum of three (3) runs may be scored per half inning in the first four (4) innings. The fifth thru seventh inning shall have no limit.
- d. No new inning is to start after 2 hours, with a DROP DEAD time in effect after 2hr15min.
- e. The game shall end if one team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs after five (5) complete innings. (If the home team is ahead after 4-1/2 innings have been completed).

3.8 15U (Bantam):

- a. Games are seven (7) Innings in length.
- b. It is an official game after four (4) innings of play.
- c. A maximum of five (5) runs may be scored per half inning in the first four (4) innings. The fifth thru seventh inning shall have no limit.
- d. No new inning is to start after 2 hours, with a DROP DEAD time in effect after 2hr15min.
- e. The game shall end if one team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs after five (5) complete innings. (If the home team is ahead after 4-1/2 innings have been completed).

3.9 18U (Midget):

- a. Games are seven (7) Innings in length.
- b. It is an official game after four (4) innings of play.
- c. A maximum of five (5) runs may be scored per half inning in the first four (4) innings. The fifth thru seventh inning shall have no limit.
- d. No new inning is to start after 2 hours, with a DROP DEAD time in effect after 2hr15min.
- e. The game shall end if one team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs after five (5) complete innings. (If the home team is ahead after 4-1/2 innings have been completed).

4. POSTPONEMENTS

- 4.1 The park convener 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.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 All games postponed due to weather will be replayed as soon as possible under the following guidelines:
- 4.3.1 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.
 - 4.3.2 The home team will give at least two (2) weeks notice to the visiting team for the makeup game unless the visiting team waives this time frame.
 - 4.3.3 All games postponed during the last two (2) weeks of the season will be declared ties, only where 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 above cannot be adhered to, or if the visiting team agrees to waive 4.3.2.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 Games can ONLY be re-scheduled as in 4.3 (weather) and 4.5 (tournament) above.

5. BATTER

- 5.1 There will be a continuous batting order.
- 5.2 Any player arriving late will be placed at the bottom of the batting order.
- 5.3 Wood bats are allowed providing they conform to the rules of baseball.
- 5.4 The infield fly rule does not apply in **9U (Rookie) & 11U (Mosquito)**.
- 5.5 The on deck batter, batter, base runners and batperson must wear a prescribed protective helmet with flaps, covering both ears. This may not be changed except after the inning has been completed, or the player has been retired or has crossed home plate. In **9U (Rookie), 11U (Mosquito), and 13U (PeeWee)**, helmet chinstraps are mandatory unless the presence of a manufacturer installed face guard (C-Flap) prevents the use of the chinstrap and is worn as designed by the manufacturer.
- 5.6 **9U (Rookie)**: Each batter will receive a maximum of 5 hittable pitches. Each pitch must be considered hittable by the umpire in order to count as a pitched ball. Swinging at any pitch and not making contact will be considered a strike. Questioning an umpire's judgment on this has the same penalty as arguing the strike zone. It is immediate ejection from the game. If the batter's 5th pitch is hit foul the batter will be able to attempt again until struck out, or the ball is put in play.
- 5.7 **9U (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.

- 5.8 **9U (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.
- 5.9 **9U (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.

6. RUNNER

- 6.1 Batting helmets be worn by all base runners. Helmets must be worn in compliance with rule 5.5 above.
- 6.2 If the scheduled catcher is on base when the second out is made the catcher will have a courtesy runner to speed up play. In 9U (ROOKIE) & 11U (MOSQUITO) a courtesy runner can be utilized at anytime. The courtesy runner will be the last player called out.
- 6.3 Runners are instructed to slide to avoid making contact with a fielder that is making a play at that base. Runners who do not slide to avoid contact with any defensive player making a play at 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.
- 6.4 The catcher, without the ball in his possession, has no right to block the pathway of the runner attempting to score. The base line belongs to the runner and the catcher should be there only when he is fielding a ball or when he already has the ball in his hand. This will result in an obstruction call, and the runner will score. If contact is made, and the Umpire in his discretion feels that the contact was malicious, the offending player will also be ejected from the game.
- 6.5 **9U (Rookie)**:
- 6.5.1 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.
- 6.5.2 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 off first base will follow the same as above. 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.
- 6.6 **11U (Mosquito)**:
- 6.6.1 A runner may not lead off, but may attempt to steal second or third base only, and may not advance home as a result of a continuous play resulting from stealing second or third base. A baserunner. Each time a batter-runner reaches base, they may

only attempt to steal one (1) base during their time as a runner and may not advance due to an overthrow during the attempt to put them out during the steal attempt. 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.

6.6.2 A runner may only score as a result of a HIT BALL, or WALK. The runner is not entitled to score on any stealing play.

6.7 **13U (PeeWee):**

6.7.1 A runner may lead off on first and second base, and attempt to steal second or third base only. A runner may advance home as a result of a continuous play resulting from a steal attempt.

6.7.2 Any runner attempting to steal home may only leave third base once the pitcher has released the ball. A player leaving early will be given one warning; a second time leaving early will result in the player being called out.

6.7.3 Any defensive player making a fake play (i.e. tag) at a bag or base with no ball will result in an ejection.

6.8 **15U (Bantam):**

6.8.1 A runner may lead off and attempt to steal on all bases.

6.8.2 Any defensive player making a fake play (i.e. tag) at a bag or base with no ball will result in an ejection.

6.9 **18U (Midget):**

6.9.1 A runner may lead off and attempt to steal on all bases.

6.9.2 Any defensive player making a fake play (i.e. tag) at a bag or base with no ball will result in an ejection.

7. PITCHER

7.1 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.

7.2 **11U (Mosquito):** A pitcher may pitch a maximum of three (3) innings over two (2) games, and a pitcher shall pitch one (1) inning only if they are a pitcher in one of the first three (3) innings. In the final three (3) innings a pitcher may pitch a maximum of two (2) innings.

7.3 **13U (PeeWee):** A pitcher may pitch a maximum of five (5) innings over two (2) games, and a maximum of three (3) innings in any single game.

7.4 **15U (Bantam):** A pitcher may pitch a maximum of seven (7) innings over 2 games, and a maximum of four (4) innings in any single game.

7.5 **18U (Midget):** A pitcher may pitch a maximum of seven (7) innings over 2 games, and a maximum of seven (7) innings in any single game.

7.6 Overage players are subject to rule 2.5.

7.7 One pitch thrown in an inning constitutes one inning pitched.

7.8 Any player who is removed from the pitching position shall not return to the pitching position in the same game.

7.9 Any players, who are called up, are restricted from pitching.

- 7.9.1 Coaches for all divisions must report the innings pitched by their pitchers via e-mail when reporting scores.
- 7.9.2 The returning pitcher will be allowed five (5) warm-up pitches at the beginning of an inning. A new pitcher coming to the mound will be allowed eight (8) warm-up pitches.
- 7.10 **Balks:**
- 7.10.1 **11U (Mosquito):** A balk is not called at the time of the infraction, but the umpire will discuss the infraction with the pitcher and coach between innings. Runners will not advance in the case of a balk.
- 7.10.2 **13U (PeeWee):** In the case of a balk the umpire will call time after the play and explain to the pitcher why a balk would be called. A balk will be called, and one (1) warning will be given to each pitcher. After the warning a balk will be called and enforced.
- 7.10.3 **15U (Bantam):** A balk will be called and enforced.
- 7.10.4 **18U (Midget):** A balk will be called and enforced.
- 7.11 **Mound Visits:**
- 7.11.1 **11U (Mosquito):** Mound visits will be limited to 2 visits per pitcher and shall be no longer than one (1) minute per visit. The umpire has the right to grant an additional visit for a pitcher but should only do so if they believe it is not being used to delay the game. Mound visits will be limited or prohibited if the umpire feels these visits are being abused or a deliberate attempt to delay the game. In the latter case, the coach is subject to time being added to the game, and/or may be forced to remove the pitcher from the game, and/or may be subject to being ejected from the game.
- 7.11.2 **13U (PeeWee):** Mound visits are unlimited unless the umpire feels these visits are being abused or a deliberate attempt to delay the game. In the latter case, the coach is subject to time being added to the game, and/or may be forced to remove the pitcher from the game, and/or may be subject to being ejected from the game.
- 7.11.3 **15U (Bantam):** Mound visits are limited to two trips per inning. The second trip results in immediate removal of the pitcher from the pitching position. The second trip to the mound may not result in removal of the pitcher if it is to check up on an injury of the pitcher and the visit is requested by the pitcher/umpire as opposed to the coach.
- 7.11.4 **18U (Midget):** Mound visits are limited to two trips per inning. The second trip results in immediate removal of the pitcher from the pitching position. The second trip to the mound may not result in removal of the pitcher if it is to check up on an injury of the pitcher and the visit is requested by the pitcher/umpire as opposed to the coach.
- 7.12 **9U (Rookie):**
- 7.12.1 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.
- 7.12.2 Any player who assumes the pitching position in an inning must wear a regulation helmet with a face shield and the chin strap done up.
- 7.12.3 Only the pitcher may return a live ball to the batting machine operator.
- 7.12.4 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.

7.12.5 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 for location/height,. Anyone caught tampering with the speed of the machine will be ejected from the game.

7.12.6 The umpire will signal the machine operator to start each batter turn by saying "play ball" when everyone is ready.

8. SUBSTITUTIONS

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

8.2 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.

8.3 No player will sit out two (2) consecutive innings.

8.4 **9U (ROOKIE) thru 13U (PEEWEE):** No player will play more than two (2) consecutive innings in the outfield, and not more than four (4) in the outfield in a game.

9. UMPIRE

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

10. FIELD CONDUCT

10.1 Abusive 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.

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

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

10.4 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 behavior can result in ejection from the game and/or park.

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

10.6 In the event a player and/or a coach are ejected from a game. The following shall apply:

10.6.1 Ejected first time one (1) game suspension

10.6.2 Ejected second time two (2) game suspension

10.6.3 Ejected a third time indefinite suspension pending Review by a committee of

Representatives from each Association within 7 days

- 10.6.4 Any ejection for fighting and/or physical abuse of an umpire is an automatic indefinite suspension pending executive review.
- 10.6.5 Suspension duration is not affected by the beginning of the playoffs and such carry through regardless.
- 10.7 Any player or coach ejected from a game shall be noted on both teams' game reports which are emailed to the Interlock Scores reporting site.
- 10.8 All coaches must be wearing shoes with closed toes and closed heels.

11. SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 11.1 The home team is responsible for putting the bases out before a game and putting them away after the game.
- 11.2 The 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.
- 11.3 It is important that coaches realize that time is of the essence. It is important to keep the game moving.
- 11.5 Only baseballs approved by Baseball Ontario are to be used in their respective divisions.
 - 11.5.1 **9U (Rookie)**: One (1) new and one (1) good used ball at the beginning of the game, and any further balls will be good used balls. The home center may supply a bucket of designated balls to maximize the pace of play.
 - 11.5.2 **11U (Mosquito)**: One (1) new and one (1) good used ball at the beginning of the game, and any further balls will be good used balls.
 - 11.5.3 **13U (PeeWee)**: One (1) new and one (1) good used ball at the beginning of the game, and any further balls will be good used balls.
 - 11.5.4 **15U (Bantam)**: One (1) new and two (2) good used balls at the beginning of the game, and any further balls will be good used balls.
 - 11.5.5 **18U (Midget)**: Two (2) new and two (2) good used balls at the beginning of the game, and any further balls will be good used balls.
- 11.6.1 Scores will be submitted by each Centre as outlined and established the Niagara Interlock Committee each year.
- 11.7 All teams must submit their team rosters by June 30 to the respective division email address noted in
- 11.8 The required information shall include the first name, last initial, jersey number and whether the player is designated as an A/P player to a Rep team.
- 11.9 Teams that have not submitted their roster by this date will not be eligible for the playoffs. Any new players to be added to the roster after this date must be approved by the Interlock Committee.