

Bronco House League 2024 Rules and Regulations – Updated 2/23/24

Objectives:

- **Self-esteem**
- **Sportsmanship**
- **Skills**

The purpose of our program is to give participants a good social, athletic, and emotionally positive experience. We hope to develop their self-esteem, only in a positive surrounding. This organization was created solely for the benefit of the children. Please do not lose track of our purpose or forget that these kids are all 12 years old or younger.

Basics:

Each player must play at least 4 full innings in the field during the regular season and playoffs. Make a good faith effort to give all players a chance to play infield and outfield in multiple games during the regular season. Moving players within an inning to different positions is not allowed, except in the case of injury or pitch count rules. If a player wants to pitch, give that player few opportunities to pitch during the regular season. Baseball can be boring to a child on the bench, so try not to have players sit out consecutive innings. Teach your kids how to play baseball. They will improve with practice and become more successful. If you have any questions about fundamentals and mechanics or running a practice, ask for help or support. We offer instruction and clinics to help with this process.

Control:

Keep your team under control. You do not need to tolerate bad behavior or poor sportsmanship. We have **Zero** tolerance for foul language. If you need to discipline a player, you are within your rights to take away an inning or suspend them from a game if necessary. There is a difference between criticism and correction. At no time should a child

be negatively reprimanded in front of his teammates or parents. Corrections should be done off the field in private with the child. Bottom line, we want nothing but positive reinforcement in front of others. Please keep us informed if you have any such problems (this includes problems with parents).

If you explain to your players and parents what you are doing and why, they will understand more than we frequently than you might expect. If parents want an explanation why Jimmy doesn't pitch or bats 12th you should be able to explain. Remember that parents have an absolute right of advocacy and managers have the right to make up the line-up.

Sportsmanship Rules

- Only the manager or designated coach may engage an umpire during a dispute. Disputes can only be made regarding an inaccurate rule interpretation by the umpire, not a ruling of judgment (ex – out v. safe, balls v. strikes, balks, etc). If a manager/coach disputes a rules interpretation, they must show written documentation to the umpire and opposing coaches from MLB rules, or anything in this document that overrides MLB rules. If you have a question as to a rule, by all means, ask it. If you have statement as to a rule, you must prove it.
- No intimidation of umpires or players by coaches or spectators will be tolerated. WBA Board members reserve the right to intervene and act as they see fit.
- Players will not argue calls and **nobody** should have a running commentary with an umpire. If you do, you will only receive **one** warning before action is taken.
- This one is tough, but please avoid calling “safe” or “out” on close plays.
- Please avoid any attempt (other than rules clarifications) in influencing the umpire. Example – avoid excessive groaning or saying “nice pitch” after an ump calls a ball.
- Foul language is unacceptable – players, coaches and spectators are subject to ejection by umpires or WBA board members.
- Ejection means leaving the area of the fields. Refusal to leave promptly results in game forfeiture and/or possible suspension from future games.
- No taunting, razzing or anything for that matter directed at the opposition.

- **Throwing a helmet or bat will result in sitting out an inning** (which can also be an automatic out if they were to bat again during that inning).

Safety Rules

- Base runners must make a reasonable effort to avoid contact, especially at home plate if the catcher is in the area. The umpire has sole discretion to eject and call out a base runner that purposefully makes contact, drops shoulder, or otherwise attempts to take out a fielder. Have the kids run hard and slide to avoid contact. Sliding, by definition, will mean the base runner attempted to avoid contact.
- No head first slides are allowed to the next base or home plate (automatic out). Diving back head first to a previous base is allowed (ex. – pick-off play by the pitcher, or back to home plate when missed on the first attempt).
- **No stealing home on the Pitcher (automatic out), however stealing home on a passed ball or wild pitch is allowed. Ball must cross the plate before running towards or making any running motion towards home plate. This is a 100% judgment call by the umpires. A basic slow crawl step is allowed. A player is a Pitcher only when in contact with the pitcher's plate and about to throw a pitch, otherwise a fielder (for example, a Pitcher becomes a fielder if he catches the ball while standing on the pitcher's plate or anywhere else on the field – runner can go home).**
- No suicide squeeze (safety squeeze is ok – ball must cross the plate before running towards home plate). If a team attempts a suicide squeeze, batter is automatically out, and the Manager and third base coach are suspended the next game.
- No batter is allowed to fake bunt and then swing away (automatic out).
- Fielders cannot block or straddle bases, and catchers cannot block home plate. Violations will result in base runners being called “safe” at the base where the violation occurred.
- Lightening/Thunder/Town & golf course whistles – if any coach, player, **ump** or spectator sees or hears any of these, the game is to be immediately postponed 30 minutes after the last sighting or sound occurred. Players at Elam or Pomona should immediately head to their cars or the overhang under Wilmette Junior High School.

Players at Roemer Park should immediately enter their respective team's dug-out.

Roemer Park officials reserve the right to stop and start play at their discretion.

- Only the lead umpire or Roemer Park officials can call or postpone a game **in progress to another day** due to weather and/or darkness. Postponed games that have not completed enough innings to be ruled "official" will resume at the same spot where the game left off whenever rescheduled. **Otherwise, the game will be ruled a final.**

General Rules

- Games are 7 innings long, plus extra innings, if necessary, to break a tie. A game cannot be called "official" until at least 4 innings are played (or if the home team is winning after 3.5 innings). If 4 innings are completed and the umpire/Roemer Park officials call the game due to darkness or bad weather, the game is "official" even if the score is tied. If game is called after 4 innings, but teams have not had an equal number of innings at bat, the score at the end of the prior inning will be the final score.
- **Games can ONLY be canceled and/or rescheduled in advance by WBA or Roemer Park officials. This decision might not happen until close to the scheduled start time.** Managers should not use more than 3-4 bags of drying material per game.
- Games CANNOT be rescheduled due to lack of player or coach availability/scheduling conflicts. If you do not have at least 8 players available:
 - 1) Bronco A must try to recruit players from Bronco B, and Bronco B from Mustang
 - 2) If not enough Bronco B (or Mustang) players are available (not likely, players love the opportunity to play up a level), the opposing team will supply up to 3 outfielders each inning on a rotating basis, starting with the top of their batting order.
 - 3) If a team still cannot field 8 players with steps 1) and 2), that team forfeits the game.
- You have 10 minutes after the scheduled start time to roster a team before it's called a forfeit. You can start and play with at least 8 players.
- All players (from the same team **or recruited**, not borrowed players from opposing

teams) must bat in a continuous batting order throughout the game.

- Players recruited from Bronco B or Mustang must bat last, and not play more innings than your rostered players. You are to call up players only to play the game and not for any kind of advantage. Assuming availability, your rostered players should pitch and play infield prior to any recruited players.
- Strike zone is bottom of knees to shoulders, and a ball width outside the plate. Any ball passing through any part of the strike zone is a strike. Have the kids swinging.
- 1 balk warning per pitcher per game until May 1st. No balk warnings afterwards.
- Only weekend games have a time limit, and only if there is game behind you or Wilmette Park District has a scheduled event. You may not start another inning after the next game's scheduled starting time. Innings started prior to the next game will be finished. No time limit if there is no game behind you or weekday games.

Pitching Rules:

Bronco Pitching Rules are designed to protect a pitcher's arm. As you can see, the number of pitches increases on May 4th after the player has had a chance to build some arm strength. Managers are responsible for tracking their own pitchers. If a pitcher reaches the maximum number of allowed pitches, even within an "at bat," they must be removed from pitching. Opposing managers should keep track of the other team's pitch counts as well to help identify when a pitcher has reached the maximum. **Managers of each team are required to confirm pitch counts at the end of each inning, and stop the game within an inning when the max is reached. Umpires will not allow a new inning to be started until pitch counts are confirmed.**

Every pitch must be counted – for example, batted foul balls on a two-strike count must be added to the pitch count.

Days of rest are full days. For example, on April 15th, if a pitcher throws 28 pitches on Monday, he must rest on Tuesday, but can pitch again on Wednesday. If he throws 15 pitches on Monday, he can pitch Tuesday, but can throw no more than 30 pitches (total of 45 over 2 days).

The 7-day period for maximum pitches starts on each Monday and ends on Sunday. The rest periods always apply, no matter what day, including when we move to May 4th and Playoff pitching rules (nothing "re-sets"). The following are maximum limits that will be strictly enforced. In certain situations where the player goes to another position requiring a number of throws, e.g. shortstop, catcher, lower pitch counts are advisable. Remember, the

ultimate purpose is to avoid injury to young arms.

April 1st	
<u># Pitches Thrown</u>	<u>Required Days of Rest</u>
1-15	0
16-30	1
31-45	2
Maximum Pitches per 2-day period: 45	
Maximum Pitches per 7-day period (Monday-Sunday): 75	
Maximum 3 innings per game	
May 4th	
<u># Pitches Thrown</u>	<u>Required Days of Rest</u>
1-18	0
19-36	1
37-54	2
Maximum Pitches per 2-day period: 54	
Maximum Pitches per 7-day period (Monday-Sunday): 108	
Maximum 3 innings per game	

Playoffs	
<u># Pitches Thrown</u>	<u>Required Days of Rest</u>
1-18	0
19-36	0
37-54	1
Maximum Pitches per 2-day period: 54	
Maximum Pitches for playoffs: 108	
Maximum 3 innings per game	
Maximum 6 innings for playoffs (not including World Series)	
World Series	
<u># Pitches Thrown</u>	<u>Required Days of Rest</u>
1-18	0
19-36	0
37-54	1
Maximum Pitches per 2-day period: 54	
Maximum Pitches for World Series: 108	
Maximum 3 innings per game	
Maximum 6 innings for World Series	

One pitch constitutes an inning

Pain is a sign of fatigue - any kid who tells his manager his arm hurts should not pitch for at least five days - no exceptions. Learn to watch for fatigue, which could be the start of pain.

Violation of the pitching rules will result in a forfeit of the game.

Other Stuff:

- Don't hesitate to call 911.
- **Metal cleats are not allowed**
- All equipment must be out of play behind the screens.
- The on-deck hitter must be behind the screen.
- Only **one** player on deck waving or holding a bat. Please no batter in the hole.
- On offense, base coaches in the coach's box, everyone else **behind the screens**, except the manager if not coaching a base.
- No child may warm up a pitcher without a helmet and mask on.

- On defense, the manager or designated coach may be in foul territory.
- Everyone else behind the screens, especially at Roemer Park
- We don't take chances with the weather.
- An offensive player must wear a helmet when on the field of play. This includes to and from the dugout.
- Home team puts in the bases.
- Winning team takes out the bases and returns them to boxes at Elam and Pomona.
- Both teams are responsible for preparing a wet field.
- Each team supplies 1 game ball at Elam or Pomona. Roemer supplies at Roemer.
- Get your catchers dressed quickly. If the catcher is on base with 2 outs, the player may be substituted for last player batted out.
- No alcohol anywhere and no smoking on the field, spectator areas, or on the bench.
- Please clean up your refuse after a game.
- Winning managers updates the score on the web, winning pitcher and extra base hits for both teams, be liberal.
- **Mercy Rule (Bronco A) - 10 runs after 5 innings - trailing team must bat in the inning, but leading team does not have to bat**
- Pitchers get 8 warm-up pitches.

Bronco B Additional Rules

- Teams may only score 7 runs per inning in each of the first 4 innings. There is no run limit after the 4th inning. This rule does not apply to the playoffs and World Series.
- Mercy Rule (Bronco B) – 12 runs after at least 4 innings (3.5 if home team is winning)
- Maximum lead off at 3rd base is two strides (~2 yards). Recommend coaches draw a line in the dirt and show the umps.

Standings/Playoff Seedings

- The points system below is used to encourage managers to play all games:
 - 2 points for a win or win by forfeit
 - 1 point for a tie

- 0 points for a loss or loss by forfeit
- The team with the most points at the end of the regular season is the highest seed in the playoffs
- Playoff seeding tie-breakers:
 - Head to head W/L record, then
 - Head to head fewest runs allowed, then
 - Coin flip

Helpful Hints

- It's not about winning, it's about looking out for what's best for your kids.
- Show your players what you mean don't just tell them.
- When a batter is at the plate, leave them alone, don't overload
- Make sure you and your coaches all speak from the same page.
- Managers and coaches have the right to tell parents to stay out of the dugout.
- Play your infielders deep at all times a couple of feet behind the base line. Except 1st and 3rd base when appropriate.
- Kids take things very literal, think about what you say when communicating with them.
- 50 ground balls per player and 50 swings at bat every practice. All teams must run the WBA Core Practice Routine at each practice. A shorter version is suggested for pregame practices.
- Pre-season, each team should schedule at least 3 preseason practices of 90 minutes in length. During the season, one or more practices per week is recommended.
- Keep your instructions clear and simple during games.

Bat Regulations

We will use the same bat rules as Lake Shore Feeder Baseball League for Bronco 11U and 12U age groups. The current bat regulations are as follows:

- Maximum barrel diameter of 2 3/4 inches,
- Maximum length of 33 inches,
- Maximum differential of -12, and

- Stamped BPF up to 1.15
- USA Baseball or USSSA stamped bats meeting these size and weight standards are allowed

Use of an illegal bat results in the batter being called out, but only if the umpires are notified prior to the next pitch after the use of the illegal bat.

Wood bat week at Roemer Park (not Elam or Pomona) will be April 25th through May 2nd. If you don't have a wood bat, Roemer Park will supply a few for each game. If a player hits a home run with a Roemer wood bat, the player can keep it.

Roemer Park

Roemer Park is owned and operated by the Wilmette Baseball Association. Please observe the rules of the park.

Throw your litter in garbage cans and clean out your dugouts.

If the outside gates are locked, the park is closed, and entering the park is trespassing and will be treated as such.

Unless over-ridden by this document, MLB rules will govern all other rules of play.

Have fun this season!

Weather & IT Addendum

For games at Roemer Park, only Roemer Park officials will determine if the field is playable or whether a game needs to be canceled/postponed due to weather. Roemer Staff will contact both coaches.

At all other parks, WBA Bronco will make the determination if a game will be cancelled in advance of play (start times can be delayed). If the game is not cancelled, coaches can use up to 3-4 bags of drying material in the equipment box to improve field conditions.

After a game has started, only Roemer Park officials or the lead umpire can call/postpone the game to another day.

Additionally, the Home Team coaches are responsible for notifying the umpires of the cancellation unless the game is at Roemer (in which case the Roemer staff will do that).

Coaches notify umpires of a canceled game by texting the following to (847) 920-6020:

- League name
- Field name (must be spelled correctly – Roemer Park, Elam Field or Pomona Field)
- Date and time of the game canceled

Finally, the Home Team coach should report the game as canceled via the website, as detailed in the instructions online in the Coaches Corner of the website under “How to Score a Game.”

How to Enter Game Scores, Rainouts, and Other Cancellations

In the WBA, **Home Team** coaches have the responsibility of logging the results of games played into the WBA website at <http://www.wilmettebaseball.org>. The process for so doing follows:

Immediately after each game, the WBA’s website will send an email to the home team coach. Open the email and you will be given a link to a page on the website where you enter the results of the game. You either enter the final score or if the game wasn’t played, mark it as such and give the reason (canceled or forfeit). **Additionally, there will be a text box where you should write the names and numbers of all the umpires who were present so they can get paid!!!**

After the coach has submitted the game results, if the game was rained out, the home and away coaches will be contacted by the WBA and given alternate available times to reschedule the game. The two coaches should coordinate together and pick a time to reschedule and communicate the chosen time back to the WBA by emailing schedules@wilmettebaseball.org. When alternate times are presented, they are given on a first come, first served basis so quick replies are ideal. In some cases, when circumstances dictate, the WBA may reschedule the game without getting the input from the coaches.

Lastly, in rare cases, you may be playing an away game against a team from outside the WBA. **For 2023, House B teams will likely be playing an away game in Northbrook on May 7th.**

When that happens, there is no Wilmette home team. As such, you will not receive the email prompting you to score the game, but the Wilmette coach should email the results of the game to tech@wilmettebaseball.org and we will enter the results into the website for you.