

# ADULT MEN'S THREE-PITCH BASEBALL RULES & REGULATIONS:

Summer 2011 – Version 1.0



## BASIC LEAGUE PRINCIPLES:

The Burlington Amateur Sports Leagues Inc. guiding principle is to have fun. This league stresses good sportsmanship, camaraderie and recreation. Players are expected to conduct themselves in a manner conducive with this philosophy and any disputes should be handled amicably at the ball park between the umpires and team captains. **Alcohol and other intoxicants are strictly prohibited at City parks.**

This league follows standard Three Pitch Ontario rules with the exceptions applied as listed in this document. Further variations to these rules are allowed provided that team captains agree prior to the start of each game. If there is no agreement, there is no variation.

## RULES & REGULATIONS:

### Diamond Layout:

- The distance between bases shall be 65 feet.
- The pitchers mound shall be 35 feet from home plate.
- A commitment line shall be used, drawn perpendicular to the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line to the dug-out fence at 35 feet from home plate.
- A "Safe Line" shall also be used. It is a line parallel to the first base line from the front most edge of home plate to the backstop. This is also the "Score Line".
- First base will be equipped with a safety bag. The white portion shall be in fair territory and the orange part in foul territory.
- Bases must be properly secured in position with pegs attached to the base straps and driven safely in ground.

### Equipment:

- Players must wear athletic shoes on the field at all times. Open toe, steel or hard plastic cleats are prohibited. Rubber baseball cleats approved for use in softball are permitted.
- Players may not wear jewelry during playoff games. Medic Alert bracelets are accepted.
- All players must use a baseball glove.
- Players may provide their own aluminum bats, approved for softball use. Bats must comply with current USSSA standards found at [www.ussa.com/ussa/ussa-general/LegalBats.asp](http://www.ussa.com/ussa/ussa-general/LegalBats.asp).
- Cracked or damaged bats are not permitted and bat handles must have taped or rubber grips.
- Team jerseys must be worn at each game. Collars and sleeves MUST NOT be altered.
- One new game ball is required for every double-header and is provided by the home team of the first game. All game balls are supplied by the league and distributed to the captains at the beginning of the season. Only league approved and supplied game balls may be used in all games.
- If back-to-back games are scheduled on the same diamond, the home team of the early game is required to set up the diamond prior to the scheduled start time. The home team of the following game is required to take down the diamond. If there is no back-to-back game scheduled, the home team shall retain set-up and take-down responsibilities.

### PITCHING SCREENS

- Pitching screens are mandatory in all games.
- **Helmets are encouraged for the protection of all players and umpires. Players are encouraged to use helmets when batting, pitching or umpiring.**

### 3-PITCH PLAYING FORMAT & BALL PARK RESTRICTIONS:

- NUMBER OF TEAMS: The B.A.S.L. Inc. Men's 3-Pitch League consists of 14 teams.
- ROSTER SIZE: Team rosters shall consist of a minimum of 14 male players and a maximum of 20 male players. Female players are prohibited.
- AGE RESTRICTION: The B.A.S.L. Inc. minimum age restriction is 21 years.
- MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PLAYERS ON THE FIELD: Shall be 10, five outfielders and five infielders.
- MINIMUM NUMBER OF PLAYERS ON THE FIELD: Shall be eight. A team fielding less than eight (8) players shall forfeit the game.
- ROSTER QUALIFICATIONS: All players must be registered B.A.S.L. Inc. members.
- LOANING PLAYERS:
  - The B.A.S.L. Men's 3-Pitch League encourages avoidance of forfeited games.
  - During regular season play only, any team may, (and is encouraged to) loan players to another team in order to avoid a forfeit.
  - Only enough players needed to avoid a forfeit may be borrowed.
  - Borrowed players must remain on the team roster until the end of the game and must play a minimum of three innings.
  - **Players may not be loaned to other teams during the playoff games.**
- PLAYOFF QUALIFICATIONS: All players must participate in at least 50% of all regular season games, (for mid-season replacement players, ½ of the games remaining at the time of signing), in order to be eligible to play in the playoff games.
  - Players injured during the season or special circumstance players are exempt for their absence only if their injury prevents them from attending the ballpark each week and assisting the team in some other capacity.
- ALCOHOL: Alcohol and other intoxicants are strictly prohibited at City Parks. Players who are in possession of alcohol at City Parks or who are suspected of intoxication will be ejected from the game and asked to leave the park.
- UMPIRES: Regular season games will be self-umpired. The batting and fielding teams will umpire each inning as follows:
  - The pitcher will umpire second & third base and outfield fly balls.
  - The first base coach will umpire first base and home plate.
  - The catcher will call foul balls.
- PLAY MINIMUM OF THREE INNINGS: Players listed on the game roster must participate for at least three complete innings.
- LATE ARRIVALS & EARLY DEPARTURES:
  - Late arrivals may be added at any time prior to the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> (fourth inning) and must be inserted at the bottom of the batting order.
  - If players depart early or are injured during play, their place in the batting order shall be skipped.
- MERCY RULE:
  - There shall be a maximum of eight (8) runs per inning per team except the last inning, which shall be unlimited.
  - If the spread between teams is greater than eight runs in any one inning, the lower scoring team shall be allowed to score the spread plus one run for that inning.
  - The game ends when the spread between teams is 20 runs or more at the end of any inning after four (4) complete innings.
- STANDINGS:
  - Regular season play will determine final team ranking leading into the playoffs.
  - Teams will be awarded two points per win, one point per tie and zero points per loss.
  - Teams that win by forfeit will be awarded a game score of 10-0.
  - Both teams are responsible to report the game results to the league convener at the end of each game.
  - Team captains are responsible to track their team's score during each game.
- RANKING TIES:
  - Ranking ties at the end of the regular season shall be broken:

- I) First by the team who has the greatest number of wins.
- II) Second by greatest point spread of total points for vs. total points against.
- III) OUT OF PLAY BOUNDARIES: Out-of-Play boundaries are to be communicated between both team captains prior to game start.

## **PLAYING TIMES, GAME DURATION & CANCELLATIONS:**

- **START TIMES & GAME TIME LIMITS:**
  - Regular season games will start promptly at the scheduled start time.
  - All regular season games will consist of seven innings.
  - **REGULAR SEASON:** The bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning is played only if the visiting team is leading. Play stops at three outs or as soon as the home team scores the winning run.
  - **PLAYOFFS:** The bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning is played regardless of the game score as total points for & against are used as a 3<sup>rd</sup> level tie breaker for playoff seeding.
  - **TIME LIMIT:**
    - A new inning may not begin one hour & 20 minutes past the **scheduled** start time regardless of the game score. This applies to the regular season and playoffs.
- **INCLEMENT WEATHER & CANCELLATIONS:**
  - Play is to be stopped upon sight of lightning. The game may resume once the storm has passed if time & light permits.
  - If the game cannot be resumed, four complete innings will constitute a full game.
  - Game cancellations due to inclement weather must be decided at the park unless cancellation is called by the league convener at least 1 hour prior to game time.
  - If a rain out advisement or league cancellation is provided, no official games shall be played or recorded for that day. Exhibition games may be played.
  - Non-league initiated cancellations shall be recorded as a split result, (1 win/1 loss; Score = 10-0) if neither game has been played. Non-league initiated cancellations include captain's decision to cancel based on unsafe playing conditions or City of Burlington Park closures. These cancellations will affect only those games impacted by the cancellation.
  - Team captains are responsible to notify their players of any cancellations or rescheduled games.
  - Rescheduled games must be arranged between the home team captain and the league convener.
  - In the event a game in progress is called due to rain, games are considered complete after four full innings.
  - Rescheduled games for reasons other than inclement weather must be pre-arranged with the league convener and agreed to by team captains at least two weeks prior to the scheduled game night.
- **FORFEITS:**
  - A game forfeit may be declared by the team captain at 15 minutes past the scheduled start time if the opposing team cannot field a minimum of eight players.
  - During regular season play, teams are encouraged to avoid a forfeited game by loaning or borrowing players from another team where appropriate. See "LOANING PLAYERS".
  - Teams who forfeit a game shall be awarded zero (0) points in the standings. The winning team shall be awarded the win and two (2) standing points and a score of 10-0.
  - Teams that cancel or forfeit without 24 hours notice are compelled to provide the opposing team with 24 cold beers!
  - **Players may not be loaned or borrowed during the playoff games.**

## **BATTING RULES:**

- **THREE PITCH MAXIMUM:** Each batter is allowed only three consecutive pitches, regardless of quality.
- **FOUL OUTS:** Batters who foul the third pitch will be called out.
- **FOUL TIPS:** Foul tips caught by the catcher will render the batter out. There is no longer a height restriction for this rule. **ALL** caught foul tips now apply.
- **PARTIAL SWINGS:** Partial swings are not allowed. The batter shall be called out.
- **PITCHING SCREENS:**
  - A batted ball that hits the screen counts as one strike (dead ball).
  - Batters are out if the ball contacts the screen on the third pitch.
- **HIT PITCHER RULE:** Batted balls that hit the pitcher are counted as a strike against the batter. **Occurrences on the third pitch, the batter is out.** The ball is considered dead in all cases. Please see PITCHING SCREEN section above.
- **SCORING:** To score, any part of the player's foot must touch the ground past the home plate safe line before the catcher has possession and control of the ball and touches home plate.
- **HOME RUN RESTRICTION:** A maximum of four home runs per game may be hit by either team. Once the home run limit per team is reached, additional home runs will count as a strike against the batter. See HOME RUN DEFINITION below.
- **HOME RUN DEFINITION:** A home run for the purpose of the restriction rule shall be defined as follows:
  - For parks with fences, a home run is a hit "over the fence" only. In the park home runs are unrestricted and do not count as part of the home run total.
  - For diamonds without fences, any and all home runs are considered and are restricted to four per team per game.
- **GROUND RULE DOUBLE:**
  - A batter may advance to second base only if his/her ball travels under or bounces over an outfield fence.
- **ILLEGAL BAT USE:**
  - Teams caught using a bat not listed on the official USSSA Approved Bat list shall immediately forfeit their game at the time of discovery.
  - Games completed prior to discovery are unaffected and games pending may still be played, (without the use of the illegal bats).
  - No league penalty shall be brought against the offending player who owns or uses the illegal bat.

## **PITCHING RULES:**

- The batting team provides its own pitcher.
- **PITCHING FORMAT & DISTANCE:**
  - Pitchers must pitch from the pitcher's mound marked at 35 feet from home plate.
  - Pitches are to be underhand only.
  - Fastball or "windmill" pitches are not permitted.
  - Each batter is allowed three consecutive pitches only, regardless of quality.
- **PITCHER OBLIGATIONS:**
  - The pitcher must remain on the field and in play until the play is considered stopped. If a pitcher leaves the diamond before the play is stopped, all base runners will be returned to the base they were on at the time the pitcher left the diamond.
  - Baseballs must be returned to the pitcher to consider play stopped. Pitchers must field balls returned to them by an infielder, otherwise all runners must return back to the previous bag at the time of the infield throw.
  - Only infielders may return the ball to the pitcher. The pitcher is not obligated to recover a ball returned by an outfielder and the ball is considered "still in play".
- **PITCHING SCREENS**
  - Pitching screens must be positioned facing home plate within 6'ft from the pitchers mound between the pitcher's mound and home plate.

- Pitchers are NOT PERMITTED to pivot the screen before a pitch. They may reposition the screen either closer or farther away from home plate if desired.
- A ball that hits the screen through incidental contact at any time immediately stops the play.
  - Runners in progress must return to the bag they just departed.
  - This includes runners who have passed the commitment line but have not yet passed the scoring line. They MUST return to third base.
  - Intentional contact of the ball with the screen IS NOT PERMITTED.
    - Players may not intentionally throw the ball at the screen to stop any play.
      - PENALTY: Play stops immediately. All runners advance one base.
- Pitchers are encouraged to pivot the screen 90 degrees at any time AFTER THE PITCH to avoid interference with a play.
- HIT PITCHER RULE: Batted balls that hit the pitcher are counted as a strike against the batter. Occurrences on the third pitch, the batter is out. The ball is considered dead in all cases. See PITCHING SCREEN above.
- PITCHER OBLIGATIONS:
  - The pitcher must remain on the field and in play until the play is considered stopped. If a pitcher leaves the diamond before the play is stopped, all base runners will be returned to the base they were on at the time the pitcher left the diamond.
  - Baseballs must be returned to the pitcher to consider play stopped. Pitchers must field balls returned to them by an infielder, otherwise all runners must return back to the previous bag at the time of the infield throw.
  - Only infielders may return the ball to the pitcher. The pitcher is not obligated to recover a ball returned by an outfielder and the ball is still considered “still in play”.

#### **BASE RUNNING RULES:**

- The following activity is prohibited and will result in offenders being called out:
  - No base stealing.
  - No bunting or partial swings.
  - No leaving the base until the bat makes contact with the ball.
  - No re-crossing the commitment line between 3<sup>rd</sup> and home plate.
  - Runners may not touch home plate.
  - No throwing the bat.
- INTERFERENCE:
  - Obstruction of the base path by a defending player or any contact between a runner and a defending player is prohibited.
- BASE LINE RULE: Runners who run beyond three feet on either side of the base line to intentionally dodge a play will be called out. Rounding base is accepted.
  - RUNNER INTERFERENCE:
    - Runners who interfere with a defending player making a defensive play shall be called out.
    - Defending players who are not fielding a ball or making a play and who interfere with a runner, the runner shall be awarded one base.
  - HOME PLATE TAGS: Tags at home plate are prohibited. Players who are tagged at home plate will be considered safe.
- SAFETY BAG RULE: Runners must always use the safety bag, (orange) at 1<sup>st</sup> base if there is an obvious play at 1<sup>st</sup> base, (example: infield ground ball). Players who fail to use the orange bag in this case will be called out. If there is no play at 1<sup>st</sup> base, either bag, (white or orange) may be used.
- OVER RUNNING FIRST BASE: Runners who run through 1<sup>st</sup> base must move into foul territory, (to the right) or they will be considered still in play and may be tagged out as they return to 1<sup>st</sup> base.
- INJURED RUNNERS:
  - Players who declare they require a substitute runner may not proceed past first base for the remainder of the game from the time they make their declaration.

- A home run hit by declared players, (see HOME RUN DEFINITION) is counted toward the teams home run total. The declared player however cannot go past first base. All other players on base may advance.
- The requirement for a substitution runner must be disclosed to the opposing team captain before the game starts, unless resulting from an injury during the game.
- Substitute runners must be the last player called out of the same gender.

### **FIELDING RULES:**

- **CATCHER:** The fielding team provides its own catcher.
- **MINIMUM FIELDERS:** The fielding team must provide 5 outfielders and 5 infielders. The minimum a team may play with is eight players. Outfielders must play in the outfield and infielders must play in the infield.
- **INFIELD FLY RULE:** The infield fly rule **IS IN EFFECT.**
- **PLAYS AT FIRST BASE:** The first baseman cannot make plays on the safety bag, (orange). Runners will be considered safe. First base position **MAY NOT** stand on first base or on the first base line **IF THERE IS NO PLAY AT FIRST BASE.** This is runner interference, (and is extremely unsafe). If a collision results, the runner shall be awarded one base.
- **DEFENDING PLAYER INTERFERENCE:**
  - Interference with a runner by a defending team player will result in an awarded base to the runner **UNLESS** the defending player is fielding the ball.
  - Defending players who are fielding the ball own the base path and runners must yield to the defending player.
- **POSITION CHANGES:** Are prohibited during an inning. A “no pitch” will be declared and play will return to where it was prior to the infraction. Players must maintain their same defensive position throughout the inning unless:
  - Injury occurs during a play and the player must be removed or relocated to another fielding position.
  - A defensive player must leave the game during an inning for other legitimate reasons.
- **BASE AWARDS:**
  - Runners on base will be awarded the base they are traveling to **PLUS ONE** for balls caught and run out or thrown out of play by the outfielders.
  - Runners on base will be awarded the base they are traveling to **only** for balls caught and run out or thrown out of play by an infielder.
  - Runners standing on the base when the ball is run or thrown out of play will be awarded **ONE BASE** only.
- **FAKE TAGS:** Fake tags are prohibited. All runners will be awarded an extra base.
- **FOUL TIPS:** Foul tips caught by the catcher will render the batter out. There is no longer a height restriction for this rule. **ALL** caught foul tips now apply.
- **PITCHING SCREENS**
  - A ball that hits the screen through incidental contact at any time immediately stops the play.
    - Runners in progress must return to the bag they just departed.
    - This includes runners who have passed the commitment line but have not yet passed the scoring line. They **MUST** return to third base.
    - Intentional contact of the ball with the screen **IS NOT PERMITTED.**
      - **PENALTY:** Play stops immediately. All runners advance one base.

### **DISPUTES & APPEALS:**

- **SETTLEMENT:** Disputes must be settled amicably between team captains.

- **WRITTEN:** Appeals must be presented in writing within 5 days of the game date and be accompanied by a non-refundable appeal fee of \$50.
- **QUALIFIERS:** Only appeals that could affect the outcome of the game will be heard by the B.A.S.L. governing body. (ie: league executive and B.A.S.L. convener).
- **DECISIONS:** Appeal decisions will be by majority vote of the league executive and B.A.S.L. convener.
- **B.A.S.L. CONVENER'S ROLE IN DISPUTES:**
  - The convener's approval is required to sanction any recommended solutions.

## **PLAYER MISCONDUCT:**

- **UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR:**
  - Excessive swearing, fighting, intoxication, unruly or confrontational behavior is prohibited. Players may be ejected from the game by the team captains or umpires for exhibiting these behaviors.
  - All cases of player misconduct will be brought before the B.A.S.L. governing body, (ie: league executive and B.A.S.L. convener) for further assessment.
- **YELLOW CARD ASSESSMENT:**
  - First occurrence of player misconduct may result in a "Yellow Card" status assessed to the offending player by the league governing body.
  - This status will remain with the player until the season ends.
- **RED CARD ASSESSMENT:**
  - Players assessed with a "Red Card" status will be immediately ejected from the league.
  - Red Card status will be granted upon the following infractions:
    - Second occurrence of player misconduct from a Yellow Carded player.
    - Fighting or any other extreme circumstances.
  - Red Carded players are banned from the league for a period of 2 years.
  - No refunds will be granted to ejected players.