

# MSHYB – 2026 GENERAL RULES

## GENERAL

1. The current year Babe Ruth Rule Book (Cal Ripken Division) (the “Official Rules”) applies, except as modified by the local rules.
2. The rules submitted by the Rules Committee and approved by the Board of Directors are final. No rules may be changed at League coaches meetings. The Rules Committee, prior to submission to the Board, must review any rules proposed by persons or committees other than the Rules Committee.
3. Except in the Northern League, the base running appeal play (Rule 7.10 in the Official Rules) is eliminated. Infractions are to be signaled immediately by the umpire and penalties imposed upon completion of the play.
4. No chain shall solicit parents or players for the sale of any items or for any supplementary contributions without prior Board approval.
5. Teams are required to wear league-issued team hats and shirts without modification.
6. With the exception of water and sports drinks, no food or beverages may be consumed in the dugouts or in the immediate vicinity of the playing fields. For reasons of safety, players are not permitted to share food or beverages at any time when at an MSHYB facility for games or practices.
7. In all MSHYB leagues, batters are required to wear batting helmets with attached metal face masks. Helmets with “C-flap” face guards are not acceptable alternatives.
8. Effective January 1, 2018, all MSHYB leagues operate under the USA Baseball bat standard adopted by Babe Ruth Baseball. All non-wood bats (both 2 1/4 inch diameter barrel and 2 5/8 inch “big barrel” bats) must be stamped with the **“USA Baseball”** logo to be legal for play in MSHYB.
  - It is the primary responsibility of team managers and coaches to ensure that their players use **USA Baseball** compliant bats.
  - Bats stamped with **“USSSA 1.15 BPF”** are not compliant with the USA Baseball standard and are illegal in MSHYB leagues
  - The penalty for using an illegal bat is described in the Babe Ruth Rule Book:
    - If the illegal bat is discovered prior to a batter completing the at bat, the bat is simply removed from play and the at bat continues.
    - A player who uses an illegal bat and hits a fair ball will be ruled out. No advancement on the bases will be allowed, and any outs during the play shall stand. This is an appeal play. The at bat will be considered legal once a pitch is thrown to the next batter.
  - It is not intended for this penalty to be used by a defensive team that is aware an illegal bat is in use to create a competitive advantage by waiting to see the result of an at bat before appealing that an illegal bat was used. Therefore, in the interest of good sportsmanship, the coaches of the defensive team should inform the offensive team as soon as they become aware that an illegal bat is in use.

## **MANAGERS & COACHES**

9. All managers, coaches, adult umpires not otherwise carded by an umpire certification organization, MSHYB Board members and Officers of the Day must be certified by completing the prescribed training course selected by MSHYB's Board of Directors before working with the players. Managers, coaches and volunteers are responsible for paying any fee required for the training course and certification.
10. Each team shall have one and only one manager, who must be an adult, and one or more coaches, each of whom must be certified as required in Rule #9 (above). If a team's manager will be absent from a game, a coach for that team will act as manager for that game.
11. Team managers should use reasonable efforts to allow players to play a variety of positions in order to provide diversity of instruction and fielding opportunities.
12. During a game, the only persons allowed in the dugout are:
  - The team players
  - Certified coaches (including the team manager), subject to the further details below
    - Northern – maximum of 4
    - Southern – maximum of 4
    - Gulf Coast – maximum of 4
    - International – maximum of 5
    - American Association – maximum of 5
    - Atlantic Coast – maximum of 5
  - A player from any higher league in the same chain acting as a base coach under Rule #35 below
    - Such player will count against the maximum number of certified coaches permitted in the dugout for such league but may not act in roles that require a certified coach
  - MSHYB Officials, when acting in their official capacities
  - Chain Manager, who may not act as a coach beyond the maximum number of coaches permitted in the dugout for such league

One certified coach is required to be in the dugout at all times. It is the team manager's responsibility to be certain that the maximum number of certified coaches in the dugout and at the bases is not exceeded.

For purposes of complying with the limitation on the number of coaches in the dugout:

- Any coach standing or sitting on the concrete or any other area adjacent to the dugout is considered to be inside the dugout.
- Coaches who are acting as a base coach (all leagues), a coach-pitcher (International League, American Association or Atlantic Coast League) or a defensive outfield coach (American Association when permitted or Atlantic Coast League) do not count against the limit on coaches in the dugout but only while they are actively acting in one of these roles. As soon as a coach stops acting in one of these roles either during or at the end of an inning, he or she may not enter the dugout if the number

of coaches inside the dugout would exceed the relevant league maximum.

- Any additional coaches present at a game must be positioned outside the field of play at least three feet from the dugout. The additional coaches may rotate into the dugout or one of the permitted positions above as long as the maximum permitted number of coaches inside the dugout is not exceeded.

If MSHYB decides, or managers/coaches believe, that appropriate social distancing should be maintained in the dugout due to a change in circumstances or health guidelines, managers/coaches should reduce the number of players and coaches in the dugout to achieve appropriate social distancing, with players who are not in the dugout remaining within the immediate vicinity of the dugout under the supervision of a coach or other adult.

- 13.** Recognizing that the game is primarily for the benefit of the players themselves, it is the policy of MSHYB that managers and coaches take the field as a privilege, not a right, and are permitted onto the playing field with specific limitations as set forth below:
  - Once the game has begun, no manager or coach may enter the playing field without the umpire's permission, except to assist an injured player.
  - A manager or coach may "warm-up" a pitcher on the playing field while the catcher is getting ready.
  - Once the inning has begun, a manager or coach may be granted a time out to meet with the pitcher, along with the catcher and/or infielders, at the mound or either of the baselines and such a meeting will count as a visit to the mound. A pitcher must be removed from the game upon his/her second visit from either the manager or a coach in an inning, or third visit from either the manager or a coach in the game.
  - Offensive timeouts are limited to one per inning and must take place halfway between home plate and third base.
  - Base coaches shall remain within the base coaches' boxes at all times, unless it is necessary to avoid being hit by a batted ball.
  - Base coaches shall talk to members of their own team only.
  - The manager and the coaches shall not attempt to impact the flow of play in any way, including attempting to influence an umpire in the process of making a call. Prohibited behavior includes making gestures that signal a runner is safe or out, and orally anticipating an umpire's decision by saying the runner is safe or out or by calling a pitch a ball or strike.
  - Managers and coaches violating the above rules are subject to removal from the field.
  - Only the manager – and no coach or Chain Manager – may discuss a rule interpretation with an umpire.
- 14.** The scorebook shall be the sole responsibility of one of the coaches authorized to be in the dugout. During the game, the scorebook shall remain in the dugout or with the third base coach.
- 15.** All coaches and managers must wear proper attire. Bathing suits and sleeveless shirts are not permitted.
- 16.** All team managers require approval of the MSHYB President with the advice and consent of the Board.

## **PLAYERS**

17. Player Roster Eligibility: Players of the following status are eligible to be rostered in each league. (See Rule #23 for player call-up eligibility rules.)
- **NORTHERN LEAGUE:** 10, 11 and 12 year olds only.
  - **SOUTHERN LEAGUE:** 10, 11 and 12 year olds, plus 9 year olds who are in 4th grade.
  - **GULF COAST LEAGUE:** 9, 10, and 11 year olds, plus 8 year olds who are in 3rd grade. 12 year olds with Eligibility Committee approval.
  - **INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE:** 8, 9 and 10 year olds, plus 7 year olds who are in 2nd grade. 11 year olds with Eligibility Committee approval.
  - **AMERICAN ASSOCIATION:** 6, 7, 8 and 9 year olds. 10 year olds with Eligibility Committee approval.
  - **ATLANTIC COAST LEAGUE:** 6, 7 and 8 year olds. 9 year olds with Eligibility Committee approval.

18. **Mandatory Player Minimum:** Except in the Atlantic Coast League, a team must meet the mandatory player minimum of having at least 9 players (either rostered players or call-ups) present by the end of the Grace Period (defined in Rule #22 below) in order to play. However, a team that fields at least 9 players to start the game may finish that game with 8 players.

**PENALTY:** A violation of this rule will result in a forfeit by the violating team and may result in the suspension of the team's manager, subject to Board discretion.

**NOTE 1:** In the case of a game whose start time is delayed under this rule, the game's time limit will begin with the game's actual start time and not the beginning of the Grace Period.

19. **Game Roster Size Requirement:** In order to promote balanced line-up sizes between opposing teams, MSHYB has a minimum game roster size requirement for each league. For the 2026 season:
- The minimum game roster size for Northern League teams, Southern League teams and Gulf Coast League teams is 9.
  - The minimum game roster size for International League teams and American Association teams is 10.
  - The minimum roster requirement does not apply to Atlantic Coast League teams.

20. **Playoff game roster size requirement:** For the 2026 season, the minimum playoff game roster size for all teams is the same as the regular season minimum game roster size under Rule #19.

21. Except in the Atlantic Coast League, a team should have at least its minimum game roster size (either rostered players or call-ups) present by no later than the end of the Grace Period (defined in Rule #22 below).

**PENALTY:** While a team may play a game as long as it meets the mandatory player minimum requirements described in Rule #18, violations of the minimum game roster size provisions described in Rule #19 or Rule #20 shall be brought to the attention of the Board

and repeated violations may result in the suspension of the team's manager, subject to Board discretion.

22. The Grace Period shall be a 15-minute period, timed by the umpire, which begins at the later of (a) the scheduled starting time and (b) such time as the umpire is prepared to start and deems the designated field available for play. The umpire shall be notified of a potential violation of Rule #18 or Rule #21 as soon as either manager becomes aware of it.
23. Except in the Atlantic Coast League, if a team will not have its full roster of players present at a game, the team must call up players temporarily for that game to reach at least the minimum game roster size for its league described in Rule #19 and, at its option, may call up players temporarily for that game to reach its full roster size, subject to the following restrictions:
- In the Northern League, Southern League, Gulf Coast League and International League, call-ups must come from lower-level teams within the same chain:
    - 10, 11 and 12 year old players, plus 9 year old players in 4th grade rostered on a Southern League team, may be called up to the Northern League.
    - 9, 10, 11 and 12 year old players, plus 8 year old players in 3rd grade rostered on a Gulf Coast League team, may be called up to the Southern League.
    - 8, 9, 10 and 11 year old players, plus 7 year old players in 2nd grade rostered on an International League team, may be called up to the Gulf Coast League.
    - 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 year old players may be called up to the International League.
  - For call-ups to the American Association, because Atlantic Coast League teams are not affiliated with the chains, an American Association team may call up any player from any team in the Atlantic Coast League.
  - No rostered player may play fewer innings, or bat fewer times, than the player who is called up. The call-up must bat last in the batting order for that day.
  - No player called up may pitch (except for a player called up from a non-player-pitching league to a player-pitching league, subject to all other restrictions on using call-ups).
  - The same player may not be called up by the same team for more than 2 consecutive games in which that team uses call-ups.
  - The mandatory minimum innings/infield playing rules apply to all call-ups.
  - During the regular season, a team may use call-ups up to but not beyond its approved roster size.
  - During the playoffs, a team may use call-ups up to but not beyond its minimum playoff game roster size, except in the Northern League, Southern League and Gulf Coast League, where teams may use call-ups up a roster size of 10.
  - **THE MOST IMPORTANT FUNCTION OF THIS RECOMMENDATION IS TO GIVE CHILDREN ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO PLAY AND TO TEST THEMSELVES AGAINST STRONGER COMPETITION. ALL MANAGERS AND CHAIN MANAGERS ARE URGED TO MAKE MAXIMUM USE OF SUCH OPPORTUNITIES.**
  - For player borrowing rules in the Atlantic Coast League, see Atlantic Coast League Rule #24.
24. If a player is lost for the season, the chain manager must inform the Player Agent immediately, who will determine, in consultation with the Board, if a player from a lower

level in the chain will be promoted to fill the roster spot. A team losing a player for the season will still be subject to the minimum game roster size requirement (Rule #19) and must call-up a player(s) to bring the team to the minimum game roster size described in Rule #19 unless there is a scheduling conflict within the chain that prevents a call-up. Managers violating this rule may be suspended, subject to Board discretion.

25. If a player misses more than 2 games or 50% of cumulative practices to date, the manager must report the absences to the chain manager and to the Player Agent. The player may be subject to suspension, depending upon the total number of and the reasons for the absences.
26. If disciplinary action is to be taken by a team manager, coach or a chain manager, then the chain manager and the Player Agent must be informed by the team manager. If disciplinary action is to be taken immediately prior to or during a game, the opposing manager must be notified and every effort should be made to inform the League Commissioner (if any), the Player Agent, and/or the Officer of the Day.

## **GAME SUSPENSION**

27. At the end of the game time limit, the inning that is in progress shall be the last inning of the game and the team that is ahead at the completion of that inning will be declared the winner. If, at the completion of that inning, there is a tie, the umpires shall consult with the Officer of the Day, who shall determine if play shall continue or if the game shall be suspended. Suspended games will be rescheduled by the applicable MSHYB official (normally 30 minutes prior to the next scheduled game between the two teams or as otherwise posted). The suspended game shall continue until one team is ahead at the end of an inning.
  - The following provisions are applicable for this rule only:
    - (a) A new inning shall be deemed to be in progress at the exact moment that the third out is made in the previous inning.
    - (b) All games affected by this rule that are not tied shall be considered official games, regardless of the number of innings played.
28. For the purposes of the time limit, the “actual starting time” shall be used and not the scheduled starting time, although the actual and scheduled times may be the same.
29. “Actual starting time” is defined as the scheduled starting time except for when:
  - The designated playing field is not available.
  - The umpire is not yet at the playing field.
  - The Officer of the Day, the umpire or an MSHYB official designates a change in the scheduled starting time.
30. All games that are not yet official games and that are stopped because of rain, lightning, darkness, field conditions, etc. shall be suspended regardless of the inning. If a game is suspended and less than one inning has been played, every effort will be made by the MSHYB game scheduler to reschedule that game in a separate time slot so that it may be played to 6 innings (5 innings in the American Association) or appropriate cumulative time limit (as determined at the time by the MSHYB game scheduler). The game will be resumed from the point it was suspended. If a game is suspended after completion of

one inning, the Board will use its discretion to determine if the game will be played to 6 innings or appropriate time limit (as determined at the time by the MSHYB game scheduler), or if the game will be played only until it is an official game (4 innings or 3 and ½ innings if the home team is leading).

- League specific rules limiting the number of runs that can be scored in an inning do not change due to a game suspension.
- *In the playoffs*, when a game is suspended before it is official and then resumed on a different day, the intention is to play 6 innings (5 innings in the American Association or 5 innings in the Northern League when the 10-run rule is imposed). When the game is resumed and is official (4 innings or 3 and ½ innings if the home team is leading), and is *again* stopped because of darkness, weather or field conditions and cannot be resumed on that day, the game is over. When a playoff game has become official and is then suspended, the game is over except in the case of (a) a tie game or (b) a league championship game, where the intention is to resume the game on a different day and play it to 6 innings (5 innings in the American Association or 5 innings in the Northern League when the 10-run rule is imposed).

31. The only person who will determine when any game will start or stop is the Officer of the Day, provided however, that in the event of thunder and/or lightning, any umpire or coach shall stop play and clear the field immediately, without first consulting with the Officer of the Day. Once the players are safely sheltered, the Officer of the Day shall make the appropriate decision as to when and whether play will be resumed. In the event of any other unsafe situation (e.g., wind, rain, field conditions, darkness, etc.), any umpire or coach shall bring it immediately to the attention of the Officer of the Day, who shall make the appropriate decision as to whether play will continue. **THERE IS TO BE NO DEVIATION FROM THIS POLICY.**

- **AT THE FIRST INDICATION OF APPROACHING LIGHTNING AND/OR THUNDER, THE PLAYERS MUST LEAVE THE FIELD IMMEDIATELY AND NOT BE PERMITTED TO RETURN UNTIL A MINIMUM OF 30 MINUTES HAVE ELAPSED.**

## **PLAYING RULES**

32. Pitchers are limited to 7 warm-up pitches when first entering the game and 5 warm-up pitches between subsequent innings.
33. There shall be no practice (e.g., "warm-ups", "taking infield", etc.) on the playing field after the scheduled starting time of a game, except during the permitted warm-up throws of the pitcher.
34. The batter shall not be permitted to reach first base on a dropped third strike.
35. Teams may use player base coaches from their own team or any higher league team in their chain. If other chain players are used, they must wear the uniform shirt of their team. Two adult base coaches are permitted in all leagues. The adult base coaches must be one of the assigned coaches for that particular team or, in their absence, another certified coach from that team's chain. At all times during the game, there must be a certified coach in the dugout area with the responsibility of maintaining decorum and safety.

36. Batters, runners, and player base coaches must wear protective helmets.
37. No pinch running is allowed, notwithstanding anything contained in the Official Rules that may indicate otherwise.
38. "Courtesy" runners may not be used except for (a) an injured player, or (b) at the option of the offensive team's manager, in the event there are two outs, for the player who is scheduled to play (and who then must play) catcher the next inning. The intent of this rule is to let the catcher prepare to play defense. If a "courtesy" runner is used, it must be the last player retired from play whether by scoring or by being put out.

**NOTE 2:** Use of a courtesy runner to replace an injured batter shall be permitted only once per game per such injured player.

39. No headfirst slides are permitted, except when returning to a base.

**PENALTY:** The runner is out and the ball is dead.

40. A runner approaching any base is not required to slide. However, a runner is out when such runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder who is in the process of making a natural and immediate play involving the ball **AND** such runner makes contact with the fielder. However, a fielder who, when not in possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any runner is subject to being called for obstruction (see Official Rules, definition of Obstruction). Such play shall be determined by the judgment of the umpire.
41. For any league where there are limits on the number of bases that runners may advance after a batter hits the ball, "Outfield" is defined as the outside edge of the infield cut, where the grass begins.
42. For any league where there are limits on the number of bases that runners may advance after a batter hits the ball, a runner attempting to advance beyond the base to which he is limited may not be put out if he makes the turn toward and shows intent to advance to the next base. The umpire will call time and the runner will return to the last base to which he is entitled. However, if the runner over-slides a base or overruns a base without making the turn toward or showing intent to advance to the next base, he may be put out.
43. Hit Batsman Rule: The league limits for hit batters are as follows:
  - (a) American Association: 3 in one inning, or 4 in the course of a single game.
  - (b) All Other Leagues: 3 in the course of a single game.
  - The first violation of the Hit Batsmen Rule during the regular season will result in the player being removed as pitcher for the rest of the game.
  - A second violation of the Hit Batsmen Rule by the same pitcher at any time during the remainder of the regular season will result in (a) the player being removed as pitcher for the rest of the game and (b) the loss of the player's eligibility to pitch in the next game in which he or she would have been eligible to pitch (whether such next game is a regular season game or a playoff game).
  - A third violation of the Hit Batsmen Rule by the same pitcher at any time during the remainder of the regular season will result in (a) the player being removed as pitcher

for the rest of the game and (b) the loss of the player's eligibility to pitch for the remainder of the season, including the playoffs.

- Any pitcher who has not lost the eligibility to pitch for the remainder of the season as a result of committing three violations of the Hit Batsman Rule during the regular season will enter the playoffs as though he or she has no violations of the Hit Batsman Rule, with the penalties for violating the Hit Batsman Rule during the playoffs determined only by violations occurring during the playoffs. For clarity, irrespective of this playoff rule, if a pitcher commits a second violation of the Hit Batsman Rule during the regular season and the next game in which he or she would have been eligible to pitch is a playoff game, the player will be ineligible to pitch in such playoff game, after which the player will continue in the playoffs as though he or she has no violations of the Hit Batsman Rule as above.

**44.** Intentional Walk Rule:

- In the Northern League, Southern League and Gulf Coast League, a pitcher must throw 4 balls to intentionally walk a batter. The pitches will count in pitch count totals, and players on base may steal (subject to the league-specific stealing rules).
- Intentional walks are not permitted in the International League, American Association or Atlantic Coast League.

**45.** Once a player squares to bunt on a particular pitch (or makes a motion that signals an intention to bunt the ball), he is not permitted to pull the bat back and take a swing at the pitch.

**PENALTY:** The offending player will be called out immediately, and the manager will receive a team warning for the remainder of the season. In the event of a second offense by any player on that team during the remainder of the season, the manager will be suspended for the next game. In the event of a third offense by any player on that team, the manager will be suspended for the remainder of the season.

- In the event that the pitcher starts his wind-up, sees the batter square to bunt, and then stops his wind-up, the umpire shall call time out immediately. In the Northern League, the umpire shall call a balk. In the Southern League and Gulf Coast League, the pitcher will be charged with a ball. In the International and American Association leagues, there will be no penalty, and any pitch inadvertently thrown prior to (or despite) the umpire's calling of time will be declared a non-pitch.

**46.** A catcher is required to use a catcher's glove when a player is pitching.

**47.** The area within 10 feet of the backstop must be clear of all players, managers, coaches and spectators. No one is permitted to stand in the line of sight of the pitcher.

**48.** Players are strictly forbidden from swinging a bat at any time other than while in, or just outside, the batter's box either during or immediately prior to starting their at bat. Players may only handle bats immediately prior to heading to the plate for their at bat or during their at bat, or if retrieving the bat of the previous hitter following the completion of the previous at bat.

**49.** The umpire shall charge an out for the following offenses:

- The willful removal of the helmet by the batter or a baserunner while the ball is in play. (For the purpose of this rule, the ball is not in play after a home run, a ground rule double or any similar circumstance when the ball has left the field of play or the umpire has called time-out.) The offending player will be called out.
- After one team warning, the throwing (letting go) of the bat by the batter after a swing. The batter will be called out regardless of the result of the pitch. If the batter puts the ball in play and the throwing of the bat (i) does not result in offensive interference being called, play will continue and any advance by any baserunner(s) and any outs recorded by the defense will stand (except that an additional out may not be recorded on the batter) and (ii) does result in offensive interference being called, the ball shall immediately be declared dead and all baserunners must return to the base occupied when the pitch was thrown.
- After one team warning, if any player (whether on deck or not), in violation of Rule #48 above, swings a bat while awaiting his turn at bat in any area inside or outside the dugout, the umpire will charge the offending player's team with a team out. The batter at the plate will continue to bat.

50. The umpire may eject any player who has thrown equipment.

51. If a manager, coach or player is ejected from a game, they shall leave the field immediately, shall take no further part in that game and may not sit in the dugout or stands. A manager or coach ejected from a game must not be present for the duration of that game at any site where an MSHYB game is being played, including the fields at Pingry School, Hartshorn School and Gero Park. Any manager, coach or player ejected from a game will be suspended, subject to Board discretion, for his team's next game that is actually played and may not be in attendance at the site of the game from which they are suspended.

## **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

52. Prior to each game, each manager must complete a line-up card that includes the names and numbers of each player and coach who are present for that game as well as the batting order for that game.

53. At the conclusion of each game, each team manager must fully complete an online **GAME RECAP** form. This form is to include:

- (a) Winning and losing team names, league and score.
  - (b) Date.
  - (c) Names of all pitchers used by both teams (excluding adults), innings pitched, and pitch count for each pitcher used (based on information from umpire acting as pitch count recorder).
  - (d) Names of any call-ups used by your team.
  - (e) Last batter for each team (*only for leagues utilizing permanent, continuous batting orders*).
- In leagues where players pitch, one of the umpires will be designated the official pitch count recorder and will track the per-inning pitch count of each pitcher used in an inning. In addition, the manager of each team is responsible for tracking the per-inning and cumulative pitch counts of all pitchers used by both teams. At the end of

each half-inning, the umpire acting as pitch count recorder will confirm with both managers the pitch count for each pitcher used in that inning. In the event of a discrepancy, the umpire's determination shall be final. **IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH MANAGER TO RECORD THE PITCH COUNTS FOR EACH PITCHER USED IN A GAME BY BOTH TEAMS ON THE GAME RECAP FORM. IN THE EVENT OF A DISCREPANCY IN THE DATA ENTERED, THE OPPOSING MANAGER'S PITCH COUNT WILL PREVAIL UNLESS THERE IS COMPELLING EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY.**

- **TEAM STANDINGS WILL NOT BE UPDATED UNLESS THIS RECAP FORM IS COMPLETELY FILLED OUT!**

## **PLAYOFFS**

54. Tournament seeding shall be determined solely by the win-loss records of the teams, i.e., irrespective of division standings in leagues that have multiple divisions.
55. During the playoffs the team having the higher seed shall be the home team, except as follows in leagues with a double elimination format:
  - In a losers' bracket game involving teams losing in different rounds of the winners' bracket, the team that enters the losers' bracket following the later round loss will be the home team.
  - The team that reaches Family Day through the winners' bracket will be the home team.
56. Tie breakers for a playoff seed:
  - A. Record in head-to-head competition between the teams involved in the tie.
  - B. Fewest runs allowed between teams tied.
  - C. Fewest runs allowed in all regular season games.
  - D. Coin flip.
57. Playoffs in the Northern, Southern and Gulf Coast Leagues shall be held in the double elimination format, adjusted for the number of teams in the league. All other league playoffs shall be held in the single elimination format.

## **FIELD**

58. After the final game of the day (and, if time permits, after a game that is immediately followed by another game), each team is required to rake one half of the field. After the final game of the day, teams must place the tarps on the pitcher's mound and home plate area on A, B, C and D Fields. After each game, each team is required to remove all trash from the dugout area.

Please see the MSHYB website under "Rules" for the complete coaches' field maintenance daily checklist and policies.

## **BATTING CAGES**

### **59. Game Day Guidelines:**

- Home team gets use of the assigned cage 70 minutes before the scheduled game time, for a total of 30 minutes.
- Visiting team gets use of the assigned cage 40 minutes before game time, for a total of 30 minutes.
- A team must use the cage that is applicable to the field on which it is assigned to play. The two large cages in the front are assigned to the teams playing on B field (left front) and C field (right front) and the two small cages in the back are assigned to the teams playing on A field (first small cage) and D field (rear small cage).
- At all other times, teams must use our batting cage reservation system to reserve a time slot to use a cage. See Rule #61 below.

### **60. Safety Guidelines:**

- In addition to the certified coach who is pitching batting practice, ANOTHER ADULT (not necessarily a certified coach) needs to accompany the team while they are taking batting practice. In the RARE circumstance that no other adult is present (such as an early weekday game), the certified coach who is pitching MUST keep all of the team's bats inside the cage.
- Players MUST BE supervised at all times. They may NOT swing bats outside the cages.
- Players may NOT pitch to batters inside the cages. ONLY CERTIFIED COACHES may pitch to batters.
- Only one pitcher and one batter allowed inside a cage at a time.
- No baseball bags or backpacks allowed inside the cages.
- Players must not throw/kick rocks or climb/stand on the batting cage nets.
- At all times while using the cages, players and coaches must follow MSHYB's health-related safety guidelines, if any, posted to the MSHYB website, including those relating to social distancing and mask-wearing.

### **61. Usage Guidelines:**

- Subject to the game day usage guidelines in Rule #59, teams must use our batting cage reservation system to reserve a time slot to use a cage.
- This reservation requirement also applies on Saturdays and Sundays to the one-hour window between the end of the assigned time for one game's visiting team and the start of the assigned time for the next game's home team.
- Please visit the MSHYB homepage at [www.mshyb.org](http://www.mshyb.org) under "Fields and Cages" to use the batting cage reservation system.

**NOTE: CAGES MAY NOT BE USED BY ANYONE WHO IS BEING PAID TO PROVIDE HITTING INSTRUCTION.** Similarly, our fields may not be used by anyone who is being paid to provide any sort of sports instruction whatsoever.

**NO METAL SPIKES. NO FOOD/BEVERAGES/SEEDS/GUM** inside the cages.

## **PACE OF PLAY**

62. All managers, coaches and umpires must speed up play by adhering to the warm-up pitch limits (Rule #32), expediting any managers' discussions with teams between innings and having their players ready to take their defensive positions as soon as the previous half-inning ends (including use of the catcher "courtesy runner" option whenever possible, subject to the restrictions described in Rule #38).

## **GENERAL GERO PARK RULES & POLICIES**

63. Please see the MSHYB website under "Rules" for the Gero Park Rules & Policies, which will help ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all our players, families, volunteers and visitors.