

# MSHYB 2026 American Association Rules

1. A full game consists of 5 innings, subject to the time limit described in Rule #35.
2. The strike zone is expanded to include 2 inches on each side of home plate. The strike zone runs from the mid-point of the batter's shins to the top of the batter's shoulders.
3. Players shall pitch the second and fourth innings and a certified manager or coach (a "coach-pitcher") from the team at bat shall pitch the first, third and fifth innings and any extra innings.
4. A player may pitch a maximum of 1 inning in a game and 4 innings in a calendar week (Monday through Sunday). The delivery of a single pitch to a batter constitutes having pitched in an inning.
5. The manager must remove the pitcher when said pitcher reaches the pitch limit for his/her age group as noted below, but the pitcher may remain in the game at another position:

<u>League Age:</u>	<u>Prior to April 19<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>Starting April 19<sup>th</sup></u>
9-10	55 pitches per day	75 pitches per day
6-8	40 pitches per day	50 pitches per day

**Exception:** If a pitcher reaches the pitch limit imposed above for his/her league age while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch to that batter until any one of the following conditions occurs:

- That batter reaches base;
- That batter is put out; or
- The third out is made to complete the half-inning.

The team's manager should indicate that a pitcher has exceeded the pitch limit in this situation by checking the "Allowed Excess Pitches" box in the electronic game recap form.

**NOTE 1:** A pitcher who delivers 41 or more pitches in a day cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of that day.

**NOTE 2:** A catcher who catches 4 or more innings in a day cannot pitch for the remainder of that day. The delivery of a single pitch to a batter while a player is catching constitutes that player having caught an inning.

**NOTE 3:** The pitch count of a pitcher who is eligible under Rule #6 to pitch on back-to-back days is limited on the second day to the pitcher's maximum daily pitch count above minus the number of pitches actually thrown on the first day.

6. The following table indicates the number of calendar days of rest that must be observed based on the number of pitches pitched in a day:

<u>Pitches</u>	<u>Required Calendar Days of Rest</u>
66 or more	4 days of rest
56-65	3 days of rest

41-55  
26-40  
1-25

2 days of rest  
1 day of rest  
0 day of rest

**EXCEPTION:** If a pitcher exceeds a pitch count threshold while facing a batter that results in an additional day of rest being required under this rule and continues to pitch to that batter only until any one of the following conditions occurs:

- That batter reaches base;
- That batter is put out; or
- The third out is made to complete the half-inning;

and the pitcher does not then deliver a pitch to another batter, then the pitcher's rest requirement will be determined as if such pitch count threshold had not been exceeded during that at bat. For this exception to apply, the pitch that causes the pitcher to exceed the threshold may not be the first pitch of that at bat.

The team's manager should indicate that a pitcher has exceeded a pitch count rest threshold in this situation by checking the "Allowed Excess Pitches" box in the electronic game recap form.

**NOTE 4:** After pitching on back-to-back days as permitted under this rule, a pitcher's rest requirement will be based on that pitcher's pitch count on the second day.

**NOTE 5:** No pitcher may pitch on three or more consecutive days regardless of that pitcher's pitch count on the first two days.

7. The pitch count recorder must provide the pitch count for the current inning for any pitcher when requested by either manager or any umpire. However, each manager is responsible for tracking the per-inning and cumulative pitch counts of all pitchers used by both teams and knowing when his/her pitcher must be removed. (See General Rule #53 for a further description of the pitch count recorder and tracking pitch counts.)
8. A violation of the innings or pitch count limits by a player shall result in (a) the ineligibility of that player to pitch in the next game for which he would otherwise be eligible to pitch and (b) the manager being subject to suspension. Additionally, MSHYB reserves the right for its safety committee in its sole discretion to restrict the number of innings pitched by the affected player in subsequent games.
9. If a team's player-pitcher(s) walks or hits by pitch a total of four batters in one inning, a coach-pitcher from the team at bat will then pitch the remainder of the inning. At this point, a player currently on the field, or a player currently on the bench shall play the position of "fielding pitcher" as described in Rule #28. No other defensive change may be made. If a bench player comes into the game, the pitcher must go to the bench.
10. A coach-pitcher shall pitch to his own team from a distance of no less than 40 feet from home plate but is encouraged to pitch from the pitching rubber when appropriate for the batter; however, for games played prior to April 19, the coach-pitcher may pitch from a distance of no less than 30 feet from home plate to batters struggling to make contact but is encouraged to pitch from as close as possible to 40 feet from home plate or from the

pitching rubber when appropriate for the batter.

The coach-pitcher's objective is to throw a pitch the batter can hit. It is the team manager's responsibility to arrange for a coach-pitcher.

11. The coach-pitcher may not coach while on the field.
12. When a coach-pitcher is pitching, the umpire shall call strikes, whether the batter swings or not, and there are strikeouts. Balls are not called and there are no walks. A batter hit by a pitched ball is not entitled to a base.
13. A player removed as a pitcher may not pitch again in that inning and, because a player-pitcher is limited to 1 inning per game, may not pitch in a subsequent inning.
14. Any make-up games or continuations of suspended games shall be played under the ***pitching rules*** prevailing at the time the game was originally scheduled.

**NOTE 6:** In the case of a suspended game, the pitcher who was pitching at the time of the game suspension shall be allowed to continue pitching in the continuation of the suspended game for however many pitches or innings remained in his eligibility from the original suspended game, provided he meets the rest requirements under Rule #6 and has not exceeded his daily pitch count limit or innings limit for the particular week during which the continuation game is played.

15. 10 year olds may not pitch without a waiver from the eligibility committee.
16. The batter will not be permitted to reach first base on a dropped third strike; the batter is out.
17. Per General Rule #44, intentional walks are not permitted.
18. There is no penalty if a pitcher balks; the umpire will issue a warning to the pitcher. However, per General Rule #45, if 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 and any pitch inadvertently thrown will be declared a non-pitch.
19. The infield fly rule does not apply.
20. The maximum advance allowed by a batter and base runner is:
  - (a) One base on any ball batted into the infield.
  - (b) Two bases on any ball batted into the outfield.

**NOTE 7:** To avoid confusion, in order for a batted ball to be considered an outfield hit, the ball itself (regardless of the fielder's position) must be in the outfield when it reaches its point of farthest advance. (See General Rule #41 for clarification of what constitutes the outfield.)

21. A base runner or batter 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 base to which he is entitled. However, if (i) a runner overruns a base without making the turn toward or showing intent to advance to the next base or (ii) a sliding runner over-slides or otherwise loses contact with the base, he may be put out.

22. When a ball is batted to the outfield, the coach-pitcher should go promptly to the first base line and remain there until the play is over and he is handed the ball by the fielding pitcher. When a ball is batted to the infield, the coach-pitcher should take a knee and not raise his glove to receive the ball until the play is over.
23. If a batted ball hits the coach-pitcher, the ball is dead, the play is a “do-over” and the count reverts to no strikes.
24. Bunting is not allowed. If in the umpire's judgment, a batter attempts to bunt, a "no pitch" will be declared and a warning issued. If the batter attempts to bunt again in the same at bat, the pitch will be called a strike.
25. Base stealing is not permitted.
26. A runner's base (i.e., a double-base) shall be used at first base in order to minimize the risk of collision. A base runner or batter may not be put out as a result of a fielder using the runner's portion of the base (i.e., the portion in foul territory) to record the put out.
27. A maximum of 11 players will be used defensively.
  - (a) A maximum of 6 players may be positioned within the infield including the catcher and fielding pitcher.
28. When a coach pitches, one defensive player shall field the pitcher position. The player fielding the position must be positioned within a 10-foot radius of, and even with (or behind), the pitching rubber. No other fielder may be positioned closer to home plate than the fielding pitcher.

**PENALTY:** No batter-runner or baserunner may be put out by a fielder in violation of this rule.

29. All outfielders shall be positioned in fair territory at least 20 feet beyond the back edge of the infield (10 feet on B and C fields which have larger infields) until the pitched ball has reached the batter. Outfielders are not allowed to enter the infield to cover bases for a potential play. The intent of this rule is to teach proper outfield play. This rule does not discourage outfielders from charging toward the infield to field a batted ball or back up an infielder. It is, however, intended to discourage coaching improper outfield play designed to win games at the expense of proper skills training.

**NOTE 8:** An outfielder may field a ball and then retire a runner himself. An outfielder may also participate in a rundown play to retire a runner. This is not the same as “covering” a base and shall not be considered a violation of this rule.

**PENALTY:** In the event of a violation of this rule, the ball shall be declared dead. The runners will be safe at the bases to which they were advancing when the violation

occurred. The next batter in the lineup will be up.

**30.** Defensive substitutions/playing time:

A. Substitutions may be made freely only at the end of any half-inning.

**EXCEPTION:** a pitcher may be replaced at any time.

- If the pitcher is replaced by a player from the bench, the pitcher must go to the bench.
- If the pitcher is replaced by a player from the field, the pitcher may move to any position in the field. The position vacated by the new pitcher may be filled by any player on the field.

B. All players must play at least 4 complete innings in the field (i.e., no player may sit out defensively for more than 1 inning in a game that does not extend to extra innings). If a player arrives any time during the first or second innings of the game, one inning will be deducted from the player's minimum defensive playing time requirements. If a player arrives any time during the third inning of the game, two innings will be deducted from the player's minimum defensive playing time requirements. If a player arrives any time during the fourth inning of the game or later, the manager shall use his/her discretion in determining the player's minimum defensive playing time requirements.

C. The bottom of the last inning will count as an inning in the field whether played or not.

D. Defensive positions are to be rotated during each game.

- No player may play more than one inning as the fielding pitcher while a coach is pitching.

**EXCEPTION:** If a coach is brought in to replace a player-pitcher, any player can take the fielding pitcher position during that inning and it will not count toward the one inning limit.

- All players must play a minimum of 2 complete innings in the infield, of which 1 inning must be in the first 4 innings of the game.
- Playing the catcher position will fulfill only one inning of a player's infield requirements.
- If a team repeatedly does not play the bottom of the last inning and/or if games are repeatedly shortened because the time limit is reached, every effort should be made to assure that the player playing less than 4 innings defensively or less than 2 innings in the infield is rotated.

**PENALTY:** These minimum total and infield innings rules will be enforced by the Officer of the Day, if actual or potential violations are brought to his attention during a game and enforcement is possible. If enforcement during a game is not possible, the player who has violated the rule must start the next game and play any defensive requirement not completed during the previous game and the defensive requirement for the current game

before being removed. A second violation by that team will subject the team manager to suspension.

**NOTE 9:** Defensive line-ups must be exchanged by the coaches before the game. During the game, the opposing team must be told about any defensive changes.

**31.** For games played prior to April 19, the defensive team may position one coach in the outfield to offer limited coaching between plays, but the coach may not enter the infield to coach or coach during a play.

**32.** Batting order:

A. All players present at a game shall be in the batting order throughout the entire game. A permanent batting order shall be established for the first six scheduled games and be given to the player agent prior to or at the preseason coaches' meeting, and such batting order shall be continuous. (For example, if the 8th batter records the last out of a game, the next game shall begin with the 9th batter leading off in the first inning and the team batting order shall continue.) Each team has the option to change its batting order once during the regular season starting with (and given to the player agent prior to) the seventh scheduled game. The new permanent, continuous batting order will remain in effect for the remainder of the season (including playoffs, subject to the reset option in Note 10).

**Note 10:** During the playoffs, each team reaching the semi-final round has the option to reset its batting order for the semi-final game to begin with the first batter in its batting order established for its seventh scheduled game; no other changes may be made. The batting order then becomes continuous for teams reaching the championship game. Teams not electing this reset option for their semi-final game shall maintain their continuous batting order for the semi-final game and, if applicable, the championship game.

B. A player arriving late to a game and missing a turn at bat will bat the next time the scheduled spot in the order comes up.

C. Newly rostered players shall be added to the end of the permanent batting order.

D. Players called up for a game will bat in the last position for that game (i.e., following the last rostered batter scheduled to bat in that game).

E. When a suspended game is resumed, the batting order will continue with the next batter based on the suspended game and not the previously completed game. After the suspended game is completed, in the next regularly scheduled game, the batting order will then continue with the regular order based on the previous regularly scheduled game.

F. It is the responsibility of each team manager to verify that the permanent batting order is carried over from the last game played. The opposing team manager may choose to verify that the permanent batting order is being adhered to by reviewing the game recap sheets. This must be done prior to the start of the game and must

not delay the start of the game in any way.

- 33.** For the first 4 innings of the game, a half-inning will conclude (a) after 3 outs have been made or (b) after 5 runs have been scored in the half-inning. In the 5th inning, a half-inning will conclude (a) after 3 outs have been made or (b) after 8 runs have scored in the half-inning. In games that extend to extra innings, a half-inning will conclude only after 3 outs have been made, i.e., there will be no limit on the number of runs that can score in extra innings.

**NOTE 11:** If the Officer of the Day or umpires have determined for whatever reason that the game will not continue to the 5th inning, the limit of 5 runs per half-inning is still applicable, i.e., the 8-run limit is not to be interpreted as being applicable to the “last” inning of the game per se – only to the 5th inning.

**EXCEPTIONS:** During the first 5 innings, in the event of a home run hit over the fence, the batter and all runners on base shall score, regardless of how many runs have already been scored in the half-inning. During the first 5 innings, in the event of a ground rule double, any runners who started the at-bat on second or third base shall score, regardless of how many runs have already been scored in the half-inning.

- 34.** Rule #33 is not a “Mercy Rule” and games should continue regardless of the score.
- 35.** No inning may start after one hour and thirty minutes from the actual starting time. If the game is not yet an official game (4 innings or 3 and 1/2 innings if the home team is leading) when the time limit is reached, the game will continue until it is an official game, regardless of the time limit.

**EXCEPTION:** If a game is tied at the end of the inning that is in progress when the time limit is reached, the Officer of the Day shall determine if play shall continue at that time or if the game shall be suspended. (See General Rule #27.)

**NOTE 12:** There will not be time limits in the playoffs.

- 36.** A Reduced Injury Factor (RIF) training ball shall be used during all practices and games.
- 37.** On field D, any batted ball that crosses the outfield fence while in fair territory and strikes the tree in left field shall be ruled a home run no matter where the ball ends up on the ground.