

MSHYB 2026 Atlantic Coast League Rules

1. A full game consists of 5 innings, subject to the time limit described in Rule #21.
2. Players shall not pitch. A certified manager or coach (a "coach-pitcher") shall pitch to his own team from any distance they feel is appropriate for each batter but in no case less than 23 feet from home plate. 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.
3. Recognizing that this is a developmental league, the coach-pitcher may offer limited coaching to the batter while on the field, as long as the coaching is kept to a reasonable level and does not unduly slow down the pace of play.
4. Batters are allowed 6 total pitches. If, after the 6th pitch, the batter has not put the ball in play, the ball shall be placed on a tee for the batter to hit until the batter puts the ball in play. There are no strikeouts.

EXCEPTION: If a batted ball hits the coach-pitcher, the ball is dead, the play is a "do-over", and the batter gets 6 more pitches.

5. Balls are not called and there are no walks. A batter hit by a pitched ball is not entitled to a base. All pitches are counted against the 6-pitch limit.
6. For a ball batted into fair territory to be considered "in play," it must pass a line to be drawn from the halfway point between home plate and first base to the halfway point between home plate and third base. If the batted ball does not cross this line, it shall be counted as a foul ball and the at bat shall continue.
7. The maximum advance allowed by a batter and base runner is:
 - (a) One base on any ball batted into the infield (regardless of whether the ball is pitched by the coach-pitcher or batted off the tee).
 - (b) One base on any ball batted off the tee into the outfield.
 - (c) Two bases on any ball pitched by the coach-pitcher and batted into the outfield.

NOTE 1: To avoid confusion, 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.)

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.

8. 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 pitcher's helper. 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.

9. 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.
10. Base stealing is not permitted.
11. The infield fly rule does not apply.
12. A runner's base (i.e., a double-base) shall be used at first base 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.
13. A maximum of 11 players will be used defensively.
 - (a) A maximum of 6 players may be positioned within the infield including the fielding pitchers, unless the defensive team only has 7 players in attendance, in which case a maximum of 5 players may be positioned within the infield including the fielding pitchers.
 - (b) No player will be used defensively as a catcher. A certified coach from the defensive team will act as catcher. Such certified coach shall not field the catcher's position other than to catch a thrown ball to attempt to put out a runner attempting to score. The coach may attempt to put out the runner only if the catch is made without undue effort, at a height at or below the coach's shoulders and within the immediate area of home plate.
14. Two defensive players shall field the pitcher position (except a team with 7 defensive players may elect to only have one player field the pitcher position (see Rule #13(a)). The players 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 pitchers.

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

15. 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 2: 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.

16. Defensive substitutions/playing time:

- A. Substitutions may be made freely only at the end of any half-inning.
- B. Defensive playing time should be distributed as equally as possible to all players present at a game. In other words, to the extent practical and taking into consideration late arrivals and early departures, all players should receive the same number of innings in the field and should sit out the same number of innings. No player may sit out more than 1 inning defensively.
- C. Defensive positions are to be rotated during each game.
 - No player may play more than 2 innings as a fielding pitcher.
 - All players must play a minimum of 2 complete innings in the infield.
 - If games are repeatedly shortened because the time limit is reached, every effort should be made to ensure that the player sitting out defensively or playing less than 2 innings in the infield is rotated.

PENALTY: These defensive playing 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 this 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 3: While not mandatory, it is suggested that coaches exchange defensive line-ups before the game.

17. The defensive team may position up to two coaches in the outfield to offer limited coaching between plays, but they may not enter the infield to coach or coach during a play.

18. Batting order:

- A. All players present at a game shall be in the batting order throughout the entire game. If scrimmages are played as part of the pre-season clinics, a permanent batting order will be established for the scrimmages. The permanent batting order may be changed prior to a team's first regular scheduled game and must be given to the player agent at such time, 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.) The batting order used for the first regular scheduled game will remain in effect for the remainder of the season (including playoffs).
- 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 who are borrowed for a game will bat in the last position for that game. (See Rule #24)
- 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.

- 19.** 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 4: 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.

- 20.** Rule #19 is not a “Mercy Rule” and games should continue regardless of the score.
- 21.** 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.)

- 22.** A Cooper training ball or equivalent shall be used during all practices and games.
- 23.** 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.

- 24.** In order to field as close to a full team as possible, teams are encouraged to borrow players from other Atlantic Coast League teams, subject to the following limitations:
- Only to the extent required to reach a roster size of 9.
 - Any given player may only be borrowed by the same team three times per season.
 - No players may be borrowed for any playoff games.
 - Borrowed players will bat last in the game line-up.