

# *Parochial Athletic League Baseball*

## **BASEBALL RULES, 2008**

**The mission of Parochial Athletic League (PAL) Baseball is to provide youth with an opportunity to play top-quality baseball at the highest level of competition, while maintaining the strong values of a Catholic sports environment of good sportsmanship, fair play, honesty, integrity, and Christian fellowship.**

PAL Baseball will be coordinated by an Executive Committee with individuals from different parishes who will serve on an annual basis (February through July). Except where indicated, the Nebraska High School Federation of Baseball Rules apply.

### **1. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY:**

All players must attend the parish's Catholic school, attend the parish's CCD/PRE program, or belong as a parishioner at that parish. Players from other Catholic parishes may participate on another parish's team provided that their parish/school does not have a baseball team in the league or one at that particular grade level. Players who are playing on select baseball teams are eligible. Although the league is intended for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade players, 6<sup>th</sup> grade players are eligible to participate. The league Executive Committee must approve non-qualifying players prior to the start of the season.

**For post-season tournament play, a player must play in at least 50 percent of his team's games (injuries are the exception).** Teams may be asked to provide a scorebook to prove the eligibility of a player in question, so please keep a clear and accurate scorebook.

Non-Catholic teams and players may also apply for membership to PAL Baseball provided they are representing a recognized religious institution or another approved organization and agree to strictly adhere to all league rules.

### **2. ROSTERS:**

Player rosters must be submitted to PAL Baseball no later than March 31. Rosters must include each player's first and last name, grade in school, and parish/school. Rosters must denote players who do not attend the team's parish or school. The league Executive Committee must approve non-qualifying players prior to the start of the season. Rosters may be adjusted through June 1.

**Schools with more than one team may list a maximum of three players on both rosters only to provide additional players to avoid forfeits in emergency situations.** In such instances, the rosters must denote which team is the player's primary team. However, 8<sup>th</sup> grade players cannot be cross-listed on 7<sup>th</sup> grade rosters as backups. This rule is in place only to help the league avoid forfeits; players are not allowed to play for two teams for strategic reasons. A player may pitch only for his primary PAL team.

### **3. LEAGUE FEES:**

League fees are used to cover expenses incurred in reserving and scheduling fields, scheduling umpires, purchasing trophies, and handling league administrative expenses. League fees are due by March 31 and are as follows:

- **\$250 annual league fee + \$30 USSSA sanction fee (\$280 total)**
- **\$50 forfeit fee** (returned at the end of the season for teams that do not forfeit)
- **\$125 one-time league fee** for each new parish/church/organization joining the league. This fee has been assessed to every parish/church/organization upon joining PAL Baseball to help sustain the league funds.
- **Umpire fees** for 2008 are **\$21/team for games with one umpire** and **\$32/team for games with two umpires.**

#### 4. SCHEDULE/LEAGUE PLAY:

The league shall develop the season schedule based on the number of teams and composition of teams registered each season. League games will begin in mid-April and conclude play around July 1, with the League Championship Tournament completed by mid-July. All teams must submit requests to the league for off-days due to graduations, confirmation, parish festivals, soccer conflicts, school activities, or other baseball tournaments. Requests for no-play dates must be in writing and submitted by February 28. The league does not allow teams to casually reschedule games throughout the season. Weather cancellations and emergency situations are the exception. Teams that are unable to play scheduled games either: 1) will be required to pay league rescheduling fees and arrange with the opposing coach and the league to reschedule the game, or 2) will be assessed a forfeit and lose their forfeit fees. The league reserves the right to remove from the league teams that have more than one forfeit. Please make every effort to gather your no-play dates prior to the season so that we can maintain the integrity of the league schedule and avoid wasting money on re-scheduling fees. See Forfeits (#15) for more information.

Depending on the number of teams each season, PAL Baseball may be divided into two or three divisions. The parish/school shall make the initial request for placement into a division, but the league will have the final determination on placement of teams. In 2008, the league consists of an American Division, comprised of 8<sup>th</sup> grade teams, predominantly 8<sup>th</sup> grade teams, or mixed 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade teams seeking the highest level of competition, and the National Division, comprised of 7<sup>th</sup> grade teams, predominantly 7<sup>th</sup> grade teams, or mixed 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade teams.

In 2008, teams are scheduled to play each divisional opponent twice (except for Boys Town, which plays each National Division opponent once and concludes its season May 10). Teams are expected to make up rainouts in order to maintain the balanced schedule. **For this season, in the event of a rainout, coaches have one week to find a date to make up the game. If teams do not reach an agreement, the league will reschedule the game on an open date for both teams. Rescheduled games will be subject to regular league rules regarding forfeits and rescheduling fees.**

#### 5. GAMES:

A complete game is 7 innings or a two-hour time limit. The two-hour time limit begins with the first pitch of the game. **Unless tied, no new innings shall be started after 1:55 from the first pitch of the game.**

**New in 2008: if a regular season game is tied after 7 innings or after the time limit has expired, the "California" tie-breaker rule will go into effect. Each half inning will begin with the batting team putting the batter who made the last out on second base and one out to begin the half inning. This applies only to regular season games.**

Tied games played beyond the two-hour time limit continue at the discretion of umpires; however, no game can exceed two hours and 30 minutes. A tie will be declared if after two hours and 30 minutes of play, the game is still tied after the completion of the inning.

**In case of adverse weather, 4 complete innings shall constitute a full game.** If adverse weather ends the game prior to the completion of 4 innings, the rescheduled game will be re-started unless both coaches agree to continue from the point of delay. In the event that weather ends a game in a tie after 4 innings of play, the game will be continued from the point of delay if it is able to be rescheduled.

**In the event a team is ahead by 10 runs after 5 innings of play or 15 runs after 4 innings of play, the game shall be considered a full game. Please review the time limit and run rules during the pre-game meeting with umpires.**

## 6. USE OF PITCHERS:

Coaches are strongly encouraged to develop a number of pitchers for use throughout the course of a season.

**Coaches must adhere to the following pitching restrictions to protect pitchers from overuse or injury.**

- a. Pitchers cannot pitch more than 12 innings in a three-day period.
- b. Pitchers cannot pitch more than 7 innings in one game or day.
- c. Any pitcher who pitches more than 4 innings in one game must have one day of rest before pitching.
- d. Pitchers who pitch 1/3 or 2/3 of an inning shall be credited for only 1/3 or 2/3 of an inning pitched.
- e. Relief pitchers coming in to pitch due to an injury to the pitcher may have up to 12 warm-up throws.

Teams are expected to keep a proper scorebook logging innings pitched and must submit innings pitched with their game scores. In the event that a team is found violating the pitching restrictions, the following steps will be taken:

- a. First violation – a warning to the head coach
- b. Second violation – forfeiture of the game in question and a one-game suspension of the head coach

**Please remember that the purpose of this rule is to protect pitchers' arms, not to generate protests or encourage opposing coaches to seek forfeit wins. Your continued honesty and cooperation is appreciated.**

## 7. PLAYER SUBSTITUTIONS:

- a. **Teams may elect to bat 9, 10, or 11 players (1 extra hitter and/or 1 designated hitter, further defined below), or a team may elect to bat its entire lineup.** Should one team (or both) elect to bat its entire lineup, it may substitute freely for any position except pitcher. However, the batting order must be maintained – under no circumstance may players be rotated through the batting order. The opposing coach is NOT obligated to bat his entire lineup and may still choose to bat the regular 9-man lineup and adhere to regular high school baseball substitution rules. If a team chooses to bat its entire lineup, it may not switch to a 9-man lineup midway through the game.
- b. **Teams that are not batting their entire lineup must follow high school substitution rules.** Starting players may withdraw and re-enter the game once, provided that each returning starter replaces the player who substituted for him and occupies the original spot in the batting order. A substitute that is withdrawn may not re-enter the game. In the event of an injury when no other players are available, the short-handed team will take an automatic out at the vacated spot in the batting order.

Each team may elect to use an extra hitter (EH) and/or a designated hitter (DH). The EH does not play in the field but is treated like a 10<sup>th</sup> position. Therefore, the EH may switch positions with other players (at which point another player becomes the EH) without penalty.

The DH is to be used as in Nebraska High School baseball, college baseball, and Major League Baseball. The DH bats in place of a fielder in the batting order. The player who starts as the DH **may not** play in the field without forfeiting the DH spot. If the DH player is moved into the field, no other individual may become the DH. The fielder for whom the DH was hitting may not hit in the game, unless the team elects to forfeit the DH position for the remainder of the game.

- c. **Teams that are batting their entire lineup may rotate players freely in the field but must report pitching changes to the opposing team.** Under no circumstances can the batting order change. In the event of an injury or a player leaving the game early, the vacated spot in the batting order becomes an automatic out.
- d. Teams may play with 8 players in the lineup, however the 9<sup>th</sup> position in the batting lineup will be an automatic out whenever that position comes to bat. Teams may enter a 9<sup>th</sup> player into the lineup at any time during the game provided a 9<sup>th</sup> player is available.
- e. **Teams may use a courtesy runner (CR) for the catcher and/or the pitcher whenever either reaches base.** If a team is not batting its entire lineup, the courtesy runner must be a substitute player who is not currently in the batting or fielding lineup. If a team is batting its entire lineup or has used all of its reserve players, the last batter making an out

shall be the CR.

- f. The **starting pitcher** may return **once** as a pitcher. All other pitchers may not re-enter as pitcher but may play other positions prior to, and after, their pitching appearance.

## 8. FIELD DIMENSIONS:

Bases shall be at 84 feet. The pitching mound/pitcher's plate shall be at 55 feet. **Both coaches shall meet with the umpire prior to the game to discuss any ground rules for each field.**

**For fields with bases drilled at 80 feet:** Some fields, such as the smaller fields at Al Veys #1 (Red), RCBSA, Westgate #3, and Papio Bay #3, have bases set at 80 feet. The bases should be removed, and portable bases should be inserted at 84 feet unless both coaches agree to play at 80 feet prior to the game.

**For high school fields and other fields with bases set at 90 feet:** High school fields and other large fields such as Skutt, St. Albert, Roncalli, Prep, Bowling Green, Carter Lake, Gross and Westgate #2 shall use 90-foot bases to prevent damage to grass infields. For fields with 90-foot bases without a grass infield, such as Al Veys #2 (Green), the bases should be removed, and portable bases should be inserted at 84 feet unless both coaches agree to play at 90 feet prior to the game.

**Pitching rubber:** Some fields with grass infields do not permit the use of a pitching plate at 55 feet; in this event, the pitcher's distance may be moved to 60 feet, 6 inches. This did not come into play in 2006 or 2007, as all of our field providers accommodated the 55-foot rubber.

## 9. BALKS AND INTENTIONAL WALKS:

Balks should be discussed during the pre-game coaches' meeting with the umpires. With a variety of umpires and a wide range of pitchers' experience levels, this has been a source of confusion in the past. The league recommendation is one warning per team, but coaches should spell this out during the pre-game meeting.

Coaches may issue an intentional walk verbally without having the pitcher throw four balls to the hitter. This should also be discussed with umpires prior to the game.

## 10. SLIDE RULE:

A runner coming to the plate when a play is going to be made **MUST SLIDE** if the catcher or defensive player has the ball or is awaiting the ball on a throw at the plate. A runner who initiates contact in any form other than a slide toward the plate may be ruled out, and/or ejected from the game if the contact is ruled malicious. The catcher or any player making the play must have the ball or be attempting to catch the ball to be in the baseline, with a penalty of interference for obstructing the baseline without the ball. Defensive players may not intentionally block any base when a runner is attempting to slide. Runners (at ALL bases) must make every attempt to avoid collisions with the defensive player.

## 11. EQUIPMENT:

Hitters must wear an approved batting helmet with a face guard in 2008. Teams were given a year to come into compliance with this rule.

Players may wear **rubber/plastic-cleated baseball shoes or steel/metal baseball cleats**. Although steel/metal cleats are permitted, coaches should go to great lengths to strongly caution and teach players not to slide into fielders or catchers in order to avoid injuries. Catchers or other players who are warming up a pitcher, are required to wear a facemask and catcher's helmet.

All players must wear a protective cup.

**Bats may be of wooden or aluminum composition. Aluminum bats must have a leather or rubber grip. Bats may not be more than 8.5 ounces lighter than the length of the bat (-8.5). Example: 31-inch length, 23-ounce weight. The barrel of the bat may not exceed 2¾ inches in diameter. This is a safety measure put in due to two particularly serious injuries sustained in this league that were partially attributed to high bat speed. (The length/weight differential is -3 at the high school level.)**

## **12. DETERMINATION OF HOME TEAMS & CANCELLATION/FIELD RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The home team will be listed last (second) on the schedule and will bat during the bottom of each inning. The HOME TEAM IS RESPONSIBLE for the following:

- Checking field conditions 2½ hours before the game. In the event that the field is not playable, the home team should call the other team and the umpires. **Call Metro Umpires (Denny Jones) at 733-1948 to cancel umpires, or if no umpire has appeared for the game.**
- In addition, the home team shall supply all bases and the pitcher's plate and be responsible for preparing the field for play.

In some instances, a team may be listed as the home team at another school's regular field, or another party may be responsible for checking the field. Please consult the field grid for an outline of responsibilities for checking field conditions.

**It is the responsibility of each team to take care of the facilities we use. Please avoid soft toss off fences where soft toss is prohibited and clean the dugouts thoroughly following each game. Please make this a priority, as the league has lost use of a field due to failure to clean up the dugouts during prior seasons.**

## **13. CONDUCT:**

All players, coaches, and fans are expected and required to observe the guidelines of good sportsmanship. Players and coaches are strictly prohibited from profanity, cursing, arguing, or being verbally abusive towards umpires, other players, or other coaches. **No profanity, verbal abuse, fighting, condescending actions, or intimidation is permitted.** Any coach, player, or fan who has been ejected for excessive profanity, verbal abuse, malicious arguing, demonstrative un-sportsmanlike conduct, or fighting shall receive disciplinary action as determined by the league, extending from a one-game suspension to permanent removal from the league.

## **14. PROTESTS:**

Protests must be made in writing to the PAL Baseball Executive Committee. All protests must be received within 72 hours from the date of the protested incident. A non-refundable \$20 fee must accompany each protest. Generally, judgment calls by the umpires do NOT merit protest review; however, in extreme circumstances the league may consider reviewing a judgment call. The reason for the protest must be noted with the umpire at the time of the incident and must be noted in the official scorebook.

## **15. FORFEITS:**

Since all teams are given ample opportunity to give the league no-play dates, the first forfeit will result in the league cashing the team's \$50 forfeit check, and that school must submit a new \$50 forfeit check to the league within 72 hours. A second forfeit again will cost the team \$50, with review of its continued eligibility for the remainder of the season. Teams are expected to play games as scheduled unless weather conditions make the fields unplayable. Teams are also expected to play make-up games as rescheduled by the league. The league is assessed rescheduling fees by the umpires for each schedule change; these fees will be taken from teams' forfeit checks in the event of non-weather-related cancellations or changes that have not been approved by the league.

## **16. UNIFORMS:**

Matching team uniforms are required at all times. The minimum uniform requirement shall require each player to wear a matching jersey with numbers on the back, and a matching cap. Uniform numbers on the back must be at least 6 inches in height. Uniform numbers on the front of jerseys are optional and may be of any size. Coaches are required to at least wear a matching team cap. Coaches' team shirts, jerseys, and pants are optional.

## **17. USE OF ILLEGAL PLAYER(S):**

Unauthorized players shall not be permitted to play on PAL teams. In the event an illegal player is used during a game, the opposing coach should immediately notify the illegal player's coach and request proof of eligibility. If the scorebook verifies that the player is an illegal player, the opposing coach shall notify the league, which shall take appropriate actions based upon the use of an illegal player. This may range from a warning, to a replay of the game, to a forfeit. If a team is unable to field 8 players for a game, both coaches may agree before the game to permit the use of an unauthorized player in order to complete the game. If both coaches agree to the use of an unauthorized player, the game will count in the standings.

## **18. INSURANCE:**

**All teams shall carry their own liability insurance.** Medical/health insurance for personal injury and medical needs is the sole responsibility of each parent/guardian. The league, its directors, and coaches are not liable for any injury, damage, or personal loss incurred as a result of participation in Parochial Athletic League Baseball.

**Members of the Executive Committee of the Parochial Athletic League are not responsible nor liable for injuries, damages, or losses by players, coaches, umpires or fans. Players, coaches, and fans participate at their own risk, with the understanding that injuries can and do occur at athletic events and endeavors. Participating schools, parishes, and teams are responsible for their own liability, health, medical, and property insurance and are strongly urged to have all players and parents sign waivers/statements of understanding prior to the season.**