

2021 Hampton Athletic Association Mustang Rules



SPORTSMANSHIP

ALL PLAYERS, COACHES AND PARENTS WILL BE EXPECTED TO BEHAVE IN A SPORTSMANLIKE MANNER AT ALL TIMES. PARENTS AND COACHES ARE REMINDED THAT THIS IS A YOUTH LEAGUE GAME AND ALL INVOLVED SHOULD ACT IN A RESPONSIBLE AND SPORTSMANLIKE MANNER. THE INTENTIONS OF THIS LEAGUE IS TO BE INSTRUCTIO N A L AND FUN FOR EVERYONE.

ANY PLAYER, COACH, PARENT OR FAN WHOSE CONDUCT IS UNBECOMING OR ABUSIVE WILL, AT A MINIMUM, BE WARNED AND MAY BE REMOVED FROM THE PLAYING FIELD AND/OR STANDS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE UMPIRES, COMMISSIONER, AND/OR HAA'S BOARD. SUCH CONDUCT AND ANY RULE INFRACTIONS WILL BE SUBJECT TO HAA'S PROGRESSIVE ACTION CONDUCT VIOLATION POLICY.

The following rules shall be followed for the entire season, regular season and playoffs.

MANAGER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Each team is limited to only (1) Manager, (2) Coaches and (1) Scorekeeper in the dugout. NO EXCEPTIONS. Also, as a courtesy to fans, please try to avoid standing in the sight lines of the bleachers.

It is the team manager's responsibility to control his/her team, coaches and fans. Conduct violations will be subject to HAA's Progressive Action Conduct Violation Policy.

Home Team Manager

1. Responsible for calling off the game due to inclement weather. The visiting team manager should be notified immediately so that his/her players can be contacted. **With this call, an agreed upon reschedule date must be decided on and confirmed with the commissioner. Additionally, the manager must contact the umpires and the concession coordinator to notify them of the cancellation. TO AVOID ADDITIONAL UMP FEES, NO GAMES SHOULD BE PLAYED WHEN THERE IS A HIGH LIKELIHOOD OF INCLEMENT WEATHER CANCELLATION.**
2. Responsible for field preparation prior to the game. This includes lining the field and batter's boxes, and attaching the bases.
3. Having batting order and position assignments for each inning, determined prior to the start of the game.
4. Supply two (2) new baseballs to be used as game balls.
5. Responsible for cleaning dugout used by his/her team following the game.
6. Tracking pitch count for his/her own players
7. Entering the final score into online system
8. The home team is responsible for paying the umpires.

Visiting Team Manager

1. Having batting order and position assignment for each inning, determined prior to the start of the game.
2. Tracking pitch count for his/her own players.
3. The Home team scorebook will be the book of record. It is the responsibility of the visiting team to ensure scorebooks match at the completion of each ½ inning.

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4. Responsible for field maintenance following the game.
5. Responsible for cleaning dugout used by his/her team following the game.

Notwithstanding the rules above, there is a common courtesy that should be extended whereas the away team should help out the home team if enough bodies/coaches are available in order to facilitate an on time start and to ensure each team gets adequate warm up time. For example, if the home team is short staffed with 1 or 2 coaches, the away team should step up and help out with field setup and lend as many helping hands as they can in that situation.

BOTH teams should help postgame to rake fields, move mounds, etc.

GENERAL GROUND RULES

1. Lightning and/or the approach of a dangerous storm will immediately suspend play. This is at the discretion of the umpire or either manager and should be in accordance with the current HAA Thunder and Lightning Policy. Any offending parties of the above approved rule shall be subject to a hearing by the HAA Officers and respective League Commissioner to determine any disciplinary action to be taken. This rule has been adopted to protect you and your children from a very unpredictable, lethal weather condition. Please help the league to enforce this rule.
2. Only the manager is permitted to call time and discuss a rules interpretation with an umpire. Managers are not permitted to go onto the field to discuss a judgment call with an umpire. Non-managers including the base coaches are NOT ALLOWED to discuss rules interpretations with the umpire and are NOT ALLOWED to discuss or comment on a judgment call. Any Manager, Coach, Asst Coach, Parent, Player, or Spectator commenting on or reacting to umpire calls from behind the back stop area will be asked to go to the dugout and if they continue to make such comments they will be required to leave the game. Violations of this rule will be subject to HAA's Progressive Action Conduct Violation Policy.
3. Discussion of a rule violation or rule interpretation during a game can be made with the commissioner and the team manager only. All decisions of the commissioner shall be final.
4. All umpiring decisions regarding judgment are FINAL and cannot be appealed.
5. Practice in fair territory on the infield is prohibited prior to games. Teams may use the batting cages (if applicable and limited to 1 per team), outfield and foul territory adjacent to the dugout to warm-up. Any warm-up activities should not interfere with the grounds crew.
6. The distance between all bases will be 60 feet.

GAME PLAY RULES

1. Six (6) innings will constitute a complete game. If the game is tied after six innings, extra innings will be played to determine the outcome, time permitting. Four (4) innings (3½ innings if the home team is ahead) shall constitute a complete game in the event of inclement weather or darkness. If a game is suspended before the completion of four (4) innings (3½ innings if the home team is ahead), the game will be resumed at the point it was suspended at a time and place to be determined by HAA. This rule applies to all games in the regular season. Playoff and Championship games will be played in their entirety, at least six (6) full innings. Suspended play in Playoff and Championship games will resume with a "where you left off" format.

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2. All games must begin promptly at the scheduled start time. INCLEMENT WEATHER IS THE ONLY EXCEPTION. There is a 2 hour time limit. No new inning will be started after 1 hour and 45 minutes. If a game approaches the time limit and the umpire deems the next new inning the last, then unlimited runs will be allowed for each team regardless of inning. The game may still be shortened by inclement weather or darkness. If the game is called in the middle of an inning then the final game score will be the score at the end of the last full inning completed. For playoff round games, there will be no time limit. We are on a tight schedule with field times. Hampton Township has an ordinance stating that our lights MUST be off by 11:00pm.
3. For the first five (5) innings, the inning will continue until three (3) outs are made or five (5) runs are scored. If the final play of the inning exceeds the five (5) runs, only the 5th run will be posted to the inning tally.
4. For the sixth inning (and any extra innings) there is no limit on the number of runs that may be scored and the fielding team must get three (3) outs.
5. Mercy Rule – games will be stopped if a team is leading by fifteen (15) or more runs after the completion of four (4) innings, or by ten (10) or more runs after the completion of five (5) innings. However, if a team has officially lost due to the mercy rule, and if the managers of both teams agree, the teams may continue playing through the normal end of 6 innings or until the time limit is reached. Any change in score from continuation of play will not be reflected in the official score. This entire Mercy Rule does not apply to the playoffs.
6. Games consist of ten (10) players in the field per team, with a continuous batting order of all rostered players present at the start of the game. The infield will be restricted to a pitcher, catcher and a maximum of 4 infielders. The outfield will consist of a maximum of four (4) outfielders.
7. Only eight (8) players are required to start the game, eight (8) to finish. If a player gets injured and has to leave the game, he will be permitted to re-enter the game at any point. An out will not be recorded for the missed at bat nor will an out be recorded for each subsequent at bat for the injured player.
8. In the event a player is unable to finish the game due to injury/illness, the player's spot in the batting order will be skipped (no automatic out will be recorded).
9. If a team knows in advance that it will be unable to field ten (10) players, substitute players may be called up from the Pinto league. Teams must follow the HAA Call-Up Rules. Regular team members should receive priority treatment in assigning positions. **Call-ups must bat last and may not pitch.** No team is permitted to call or show up for a game with their own call-up player.
10. Teams must be ready to play at the scheduled game time. If the team does not have eight (8) players at the scheduled time, a ten (10) minute grace period will be provided. If the team does not have eight (8) players available after the 10 minute grace period, the HAA Call-Up Rules will apply. If the conditions of the Call-Up rules cannot be met, then the game is subject to forfeiture. Forfeited games will be entered as a score of 10-0. Managers will try their best to play a game.
11. A continuous batting order of all players who will be playing in the game is required (i.e. a player not playing in the field is required in the batting order). There shall be unlimited free substitution during the game at all defensive positions (except a pitcher may not return to pitch in the same game once removed). Players arriving after the game has started will be added to the end of the batting order.
12. Once all players on a team have batted, the continuous batting order is set. Any player batting out of order will be deemed out. One pitch to an incorrect batter constitutes batting out of order. If a player arrives late at any point in the game, they will be inserted at the end of the batting order.
13. If a player has to leave the game early for any reason, their spot in the batting order will be skipped and it will **not** be considered an out.

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14. No player may sit the bench more than two (2) innings per game, unless due to injury/illness or parent's request. A player may play no more than three (3) innings at any one position. Each player must play at least two (2) innings in the infield. Playing as a pitcher or catcher counts as playing an infield position. Inning requirements are not applicable for extra-inning games, however by the completion of the 6th inning, all requirements must have been met. The preceding rule may be waived as a result of injury/illness or parental request. If this situation occurs, the coach MUST notify the opposing coach AND commissioner immediately. After the coaches agree on the situation, a group text/email will be sent to the commissioner to explain. If the coaches cannot come to an agreement, the commissioner must make the final call. FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR PLAYERS, COACHES ARE ENCOURAGED TO MOVE PLAYERS AROUND.
15. No metal spikes or street shoes are permitted to be worn during a game. Molded rubber cleats or sneakers are the only allowable shoes.
16. Catchers must wear protective equipment at all times. This includes wearing a protective cup.

FIELDING

1. Players must raise their hand when the ball goes under the outfield fence or behind a sign. It is a ground rule double.
2. In the event a ball is thrown or kicked out of the field of play, all runners may take one additional base.
3. The infield fly rule does not apply
4. There is no dropped third strike.
5. Defensive players have a responsibility to avoid/minimize contact with a baserunner. All defensive players, including the catcher, shall not block the base/plate. Rather they should straddle the base when making a tag. The first violation will result in a warning to the offending team. The runner will be declared safe on the second occurrence by the same team. Additionally, fielders shall not stand on a base or otherwise impede the progress of a baserunner without possession of the ball. If this occurs, the umpires may declare defensive interference if warranted by the circumstances of the play, even if no contact occurs.

BATTING/RUNNING

1. Only one on deck batter is permitted in the on deck circle. Only the on-deck batter may be in the warm up area. Helmets are not to be removed until the player has completely left the playing field. A second player may warm-up to pitch in the designated area. All other players must remain in the dugout.
2. Only USA Baseball USABat certified bats for little league / pony league are allowed. If the batter is caught at the plate with any unapproved bat, the batter will be out with no warning given.
3. Throwing a bat will result in a player warning. If a player on the same team throws the bat a second time he will be called out and the play is dead. This is to ensure the safety of those in and around the batting box area.
4. Bunting will be permitted, and all bunting rules apply including the third strike foul making the batter out. The catcher does not have to catch the ball. However, no slap bunting will be permitted. If a player squares around to bunt, he must bunt or pull the bat back. If a player attempts to slap bunt, he will immediately be declared out. The play is dead if the ball is hit by the slap swing in fair territory. This is for safety reasons.

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5. No runner advancing to a base shall slide headfirst. No warning will be given. The base runner will be called out. A runner may slide headfirst back to a base.
6. All baserunners shall make every effort to avoid contact with a defensive player. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the baserunner causes an intentional collision with a fielder, the baserunner shall be declared out, and the ball shall be called dead. If a baserunner slides directly to the base to which he is attempting to advance, "intentional contact" will not be declared. A runner may slide (foot first) without penalty, unless intent to break up a play is deemed by the umpire, in which case subsequent runners may be called out. (MLB rule). Baserunners may be called out at umpire's discretion for not sliding on a close play at any base (except 1st).
7. Nothing in the preceding rules is intended to negate the applicability of MLB Rule 7.09(j). (A runner is out if he fails to avoid a fielder who is attempting to field a batted ball, or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball).
8. Leading off is not permitted.
9. Stealing of all bases but home is permitted; however a player cannot leave the base until the ball passes the batter. Each team will be given one warning. On the second occurrence, the runner will be called out. If a runner leaves base early, the play shall continue. At the end of the play, the defensive team has the option of accepting the result of the play or having the runner declared out (or warned) and a "no play" declared.
10. There is no stealing home. A runner originally stationed at third can advance home on the following plays only:
 - When a batted ball is put into play
 - When a batter is awarded first base with the bases loaded (BB, HBP, CI, etc.)
 - When a pickoff attempt is made on a runner at third
11. On a live ball, runners can advance on any pickoff attempt at a runner.
12. At their own risk, runners may advance on overthrows at any base (with the exception of steal attempt overthrows from the catcher to the base the baserunner is advancing to).
13. No stealing of multiple bases continuously. A runner cannot steal second base and then continue on to steal third base. Once a runner has safely reached second base on a steal attempt, the play is dead.
14. Any baserunner who claps, yells, or uses other means to purposefully create distractions or get caught in a rundown will receive a warning for their team. The second and subsequent occurrences will result in an out for that team and offending baserunner. Any other baserunners that advanced from this will be sent back to the base they originally occupied.
15. Delayed steals are not allowed. Runners cannot take off when the ball is in the possession (in the glove) of the Pitcher.
16. Throws to the pitcher from the catcher after a thrown pitch are considered "dead balls" and runners cannot advance unless they have already started their advance prior to the catcher's throw back to the pitcher. A runner must start his steal attempt advance before the catcher is in the action of throwing the ball back to the pitcher, else it is considered a delayed steal. The runner must return to the base he left.
17. Runners cannot advance on overthrows made to a bag while attempting to steal (i.e. if catcher throws the ball into center field on a steal attempt from first base the runner cannot advance).
18. After a walk, the runner to first cannot "steal second base" on same play by continuously running to second as

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“baiting” the pitcher to throw the ball.

19. The batter-runner will be declared out when running the last half of the distance from home base to first base, while the ball is being fielded to first base, he runs outside (to the right of) the three-foot line, or inside (to the left of) the foul line, and in the umpire's judgment in so doing interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base, in which case the ball is also dead; except that he may run outside (to the right of) the three-foot line or inside (to the left of) the foul line to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball. The lines marking the three-foot lane are a part of that lane and a batter-runner is required to have both feet within the three-foot lane or on the lines marking the lane. The batter-runner is permitted to exit the three-foot lane by means of a step, stride, reach or slide in the immediate vicinity of first base for the sole purpose of touching first base.
20. No manager can touch a base-runner while play is live. One (1) warning will be given by the umpire; any other warning will result in the runner being out.
21. To expedite play, a pinch runner may be used for the catcher if he is on base with one (1) outs. The pinch runner must be the last player to make an out. The replaced runner must play the catcher position the next inning in the field.
22. Should a player get injured while on base, the player making the previous out will replace the injured player on base.
23. A designated bat boy/girl should be used to retrieve bats if playing on McCully fields 2 or 3. The bat boy/girl must wear a batting helmet when retrieving bats and must exit the field of play to the dugout after retrieving the bat. Bats can only be retrieved when the play is called “dead”.

PITCHING

1. The pitching distance shall be 46 feet from the rubber to the back of home plate.
2. A player is permitted to pitch up to two (2) consecutive innings in a game. One pitch thrown constitutes an inning pitched. A pitcher removed from the pitching position for any reason during the game may not return to pitch in the same game.
3. A pitcher hitting two (2) batters in one (1) inning or three (3) batters in one (1) game must be replaced immediately. However, if the umpire rules that a batter or batters did not make a sufficient attempt to avoid being hit, the umpire may award first base to the batter without charging the pitcher with a hit batsman, or he may simply call the pitch a ball or a strike.
4. A manager is allowed two (2) trips to the mound per inning per pitcher. Upon making the second trip to the mound in the same inning, the pitcher must be removed. Trips to the mound, before the half-inning, count as a trip. Trips for injuries are not counted towards either total.
5. Pitchers are not permitted to wear wrist bands, sunglasses, jewelry, batting gloves, white fielding gloves or a white long sleeve shirt below the elbow. Wearing a heart-guard is encouraged but not required.
6. Balks will not be enforced.
7. 8/9 year olds / 3rd graders (first year age Mustang Players) are required to pitch and record 3 outs {or concede 5 runs thus ending the inning} by the end of 4th inning. This can be a combination of pitchers.
8. Intentional walks are not allowed.

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9. As recommended by PONY Baseball and MLB Pitch Smart Guidelines, pitchers will be restricted by a pitch count. In addition, a pitcher shall not work more than two (2) innings, regardless of allowable pitch counts. See the HAA Pitch Count Rules for a detailed breakdown to pitch limitations. Pitch count limitations are referenced to the age group at which the player is playing in and **not** the player's age.
10. Coaches must exchange pitch counts following a game. Final pitch counts for each pitcher must be communicated to the approved HAA record system for each season. (Commissioners will advise whether this will be done via email, text, or online through the HAA scoring system)
11. Any violation of pitching eligibility and limitation rules shall result in immediate forfeit of the current game.

PONY league baseball rules and regulations will apply to all playing situations not specifically covered by the rules set forth above.

Age group commissioners may adjust these rules on a season to season basis as long as all Mustang coaches, the VP of Lower Age Baseball, and VP of Rules and Umpires are in agreement to any changes.

50% Rule

Note: HAA Bylaws state that in order for a player to be eligible for the playoffs and/or to be considered for an HAA tournament team, he must attend at least 50% of his team's completed games. Attendance is defined as playing in at least 3 full innings per game. Player or players arriving late, and playing less than 3 innings, will not be credited for the game played. Injuries and/or illnesses will not count against a player's attendance and tournament eligibility, however a Doctor's note must be provided.