



## **UNIFIED RULES OF THE BMBL**

**UPDATED March 29, 2023**

In 2022, the BMBL consolidated rules across the 18+ Division, 28+ Boston Division, and 38+ Masters Division, to bring more clarity and consistency to players, managers, and umpires. Specific age divisional rules are noted in the appropriate sections.

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## UNIFIED RULES OF THE BOSTON METRO BASEBALL LEAGUE

### 0.00 General

- Default is the Major League Baseball rulebook for current season.
- BMBL is NOT adopting the MLB Mound Visit Count rule.
- BMBL is NOT adopting the MLB mandatory 3-batter rule for relief pitchers.
- BMBL is NOT adopting the MLB extra innings rule (ghost runner on second).
- Other BMBL rule exceptions, described below, override MLB rules.

### 1.00 ELIGIBILITY AND ROSTERS

#### 1.01 Player Eligibility

- (a) 18+: turn 18 years of age (or 17 with parental approval) prior to playing in a game. Each team may have up to two (2) players who are 17 years of age in any given season.
- (b) 28+: turn 28 years of age on or prior to December 31 of the calendar year.
- (c) 38+: turn 38 years of age on or prior to December 31 of the calendar year.
- (d) Any exceptions must receive a special approval from the League President.

#### 1.02 Deadlines and Waivers

- (a) Teams must pay their annual fee in full by the deadline set by the League President. Failure to do so could result in games being removed from the schedule and/or forfeited.
- (b) Preliminary rosters, with complete addresses and date of birth, must be entered into 400Hitter by Opening Day.
- (c) It is permissible for a player to participate in a game before the player's information is entered into 400Hitter if player information is entered before the team's next game.
- (d) Players are not permitted to participate in league games unless they have completed the online waiver form.

### 2.00 EQUIPMENT

#### 2.01 Baseballs

- (a) Teams will use the official league approved Diamond D1 Pro baseballs.
- (b) The designated home team is responsible for supplying the game balls, regardless of where the game is played.

## 2.02 Helmets

- (a) All batters and runners must wear helmets with at least one ear flap facing the pitcher for both at bats and on base. There is no exception to this rule.
- (b) Full double-ear flap helmets are encouraged for at-bats and are encouraged for the bases.
- (c) Catchers must wear a helmet underneath their mask.
- (d) Base coaches are encouraged to wear helmets while on the field of play.

## 2.03 Bats

- (a) Only MLB-style, wood bats are allowed.
- (b) Wood composite bats are allowed but must meet the BBCOR (Batted Ball Coefficient of Restitution) standard and be properly marked with the BBCOR logo (ex. Baum Bats). The League Board reserves the right to examine and approve other standards as they become available.

## 3.00 GAME FORMAT AND POSTPONEMENT

### 3.01 Lineup

- (a) Batting lineup. Each manager can bat as many players as he desires, with a minimum of nine.
- (b) Eight players. Teams can play an official game with eight players and bat only eight players if that is all they have in uniform at the game.
  - (i) An OUT is recorded each time the 9<sup>th</sup> position comes to the plate. It will be recorded as a strikeout for recordkeeping purposes.
- (c) Less than 8 players before a game. If a team has less than eight players, the game is declared a forfeit and the forfeiting team must pay all umpire fees. This call shall be made no later than 15 minutes after the scheduled start time.
- (d) Games cannot be rescheduled because a team does not have enough players unless the postponement meets the criteria of rule 3.10.
- (e) Less than 8 players during a game. If, during the game, only 8 players are available and one player is removed for any reason (injury, ejection, etc.), the game will be forfeited at that time.
- (f) Extra hitter. A manager may add batters to the bottom of the lineup at any time.
  - (i) **18+ Division Note:** An extra hitter is treated as a 10th defensive player and can be substituted in the same manner that any defensive players may swap defensive positions at any time. For example, the shortstop and extra hitter can swap positions at any time.

(g) Reentry. If a batter is pinch hit or run for (except under courtesy runner rule), the player may not re-enter the game as a hitter.

(i) **18+ Division Exception:** Starter Re-entry rule: Any of the players in the starting lineup may re-enter the lineup after they have been removed, provided that the substituted player has completed at least one plate appearance since the player's entry and provided further that said starting player re-enters and occupies the same spot in the batting order as indicated in the starting lineup. The starting player may re-enter only once. If he is removed again after re-entering, he is permanently removed from the game.

(h) Free defensive substitution. Defense is independent of the offensive lineup. Players on the bench and players in the field may freely switch defensive positions without impacting the batting order. The 18+ division does not utilize free defensive substitution and is exempt from rule 3.01 (h).

(i) Designated Hitter (**18+ Division Only**). A team may use one (1) Designated Hitter to hit for a pitcher consistent with Major League Baseball rules. Alternatively, a team may use one (1) Designated Hitter to hit in the place of ANY positioned player (not just a pitcher). If the pitcher/player that the Designated Hitter is hitting for switches positions, the Designated Hitter is lost.

(j) Alternating batters. An A/B batting system can be used for any batting position desired. The "A" hitter bats during the first time through the lineup, with the "B" batter hitting the second time through the order, continuing in alternating fashion until the game is complete. Once a team declares the use of this A/B system, it must continue using it for the remainder of the game in the batting slots for which it was designated. Hitters in an A/B position may be pinch hit for, just as any other player. A/B slots may only be added on the initial lineup card. Additional batters can be added to the lineup as A/B or single hitters.

(k) Injury replacement. If a batter is forced to leave a game for any reason, a reserve player, who has not previously entered the game as a hitter, must hit in that batter's place. If there are no reserves who can replace the individual, the spot is skipped and all hitters below that position move up. The hitting team will be docked an out the first time through the order but will not be assessed any further penalty. For instances other than injury or emergency, forfeit rules apply.

### **3.02 Additional Rules of Play**

(a) No Player while pitching may wear white or gray sleeves, nor may a pitcher wear a batting glove or wristband while pitching.

(b) If the pitcher is removed, he may re-enter the game only one time during the game but not in the same inning. Only one pitcher per team, per game, can re-enter.

(c) Infielders are not allowed to decoy a throw or catch. If a decoy throw or catch is detected, all runners shall be allowed to advance one base beyond the base held after all play stops. If the same fielder decoys twice in the same game, the fielder shall be expelled from the game. Decoying is referred to as a false catch or throw done in an attempt to get the player to slide unnecessarily, where no strategic value is gained.

(d) Players shall not intentionally collide with any other players. If a runner intentionally collides with a fielder, the runner will be called out and may, at the umpire's discretion, be expelled from the game. All runners must either slide or give up their right to a base if the defensive player has possession of the ball, is in the act of receiving the ball, or is about to immediately receive the ball. If a defensive player is not in the possession of the ball, is not in the act of receiving the ball, or is not about to immediately receive the ball so that he is able to record an out, he cannot block the base or be in the base path so as to impede the base runner's right to that base. Under such circumstances, the defensive player shall be responsible to avoid collision. If a collision does occur under these circumstances, the runner will always be considered safe and the obstruction rule shall be enforced. The defensive player may be ejected from the game (if the action is intentional, he must be ejected), and will be suspended from league play if the obstruction is judged to be flagrant.

### 3.03 Courtesy Runners

28+ and 38+ Divisions:

- (a) **The 18+ Division does not utilize a courtesy runner and is exempt from rules 3.03 B-H.**
- (b) Each team is allowed to designate two courtesy runners.
- (c) Players needing courtesy runners must have their manager notify the opposing manager before game time.
- (d) If not so notified, the opposing manager may deny the request.
- (e) The player to make the last batted out must be the courtesy runner. If no out has been recorded, the last hitter in the lineup will be deemed the courtesy runner.
- (f) If a player is legitimately hurt during the game and his team has already used two courtesy runners, then the team is allowed a third courtesy runner.
- (g) Pitchers and catchers may be skipped over as courtesy runners. If players are removed from those positions, they become eligible to serve as a courtesy runner.
- (h) The catcher may be provided with a courtesy runner (per rule 3.02d) once the 2<sup>nd</sup> out of the inning has been recorded. Failure to declare this at the first instance removes the option for the rest of the game.

### 3.04 Intentional Walks

- (a) Intentional Walks - A batter is entitled to take first base after the opposing manager notifies the umpire. There is no limit to the amount of intentional walks. You may intentionally walk the same batter multiple times.

### 3.05 Game Length

- (a) All games are 7 innings. See 3.06 for guidelines on shortened games.
- (b) If the game is tied after 7 innings, then extra innings are played (Subject to curfew below).
- (c) No inning shall start 2 hours and 50 minutes after the first pitch of game during the regular season.
- (d) Both teams can agree to play beyond this curfew if no other teams are waiting to use the field, if there is no risk of darkness, and with umpire consent.
- (e) Games will be deemed final on account of Mercy Rule with a team maintaining a 12-run lead after 5 innings, or a 10-run lead after 6 innings. **This rule is not in effect during the playoffs.**
- (f) All league playoff games will be played to completion. Any playoff game shortened due to weather or curfew will be continued prior to the next scheduled game. Managers shall use their best efforts to keep the lineup intact when the game continues.

### 3.06 Called Games

Games called on account of inclement weather, darkness, light failure, or curfew will be considered complete if:

- (a) Four (4) innings have been completed.
- (b) The home team has scored more runs in three (3) or three and a fraction (3+) half innings than the visiting team has scored in four (4) completed half innings.
- (c) If the home team scores one or more runs in its half of the fourth inning to tie the score.
- (d) If the game is called before it is considered a regulation game, it shall be declared “no game” and made up at a later date - for playoff games, refer to rule 3.05(f).

### 3.07 Suspended Games

If the game is called while an inning is in progress after it is considered a regulation game and before it is completed, the game becomes a “Suspended Game” in each of the following situations:

- (a) The visiting team has scored one (1) or more runs in the incomplete inning to tie the score and the home team has not scored.
- (b) The visiting team has scored one (1) or more runs in the incomplete inning to take the lead and the home team has not tied the score or retaken the lead.

Rules 3.07a and 3.07b only apply if the two teams have another game scheduled, where the current game could be resumed and completed without incurring additional permit cost. If they do not, the score will revert to the last completed inning and the game will be ruled complete. The league reserves the right to require the game’s completion at its discretion.

### 3.08 Rainout/Poor Field Condition Notification

- (a) The home team manager must notify the Umpire-in-Chief, the opposing manager, and the league office of any cancellation due to field conditions a minimum of 60 minutes before game time.
- (b) If the designated home team is playing at a field where the away team is the permit-holder, the designated home team is still responsible for coordinating cancellation or postponement planning.
- (c) Teams will have 2 weeks to schedule a makeup game. After 2 weeks, the League reserves the right to place the game on the schedule at its discretion. The home team will be responsible for permit fees.
- (d) If postponement is required once at the field, the following procedure is required: 1. Home Team manager determines if a game is to begin. 2. Once a game begins, umpires have the authority to call off a game due to inclement weather or poor field conditions.
- (e) **Game cancellations for Boston night fields must be made by 4:30 PM** on the day of the game. Otherwise, Boston will charge the full \$150 fee which is the responsibility of the home team.



### **3.09 Scheduling**

- (a) Season start date, number of games, and matchups will be determined by each division's Commissioner after consulting with their respective team managers.
- (b) Based on a combination of scheduling and permitting, some teams may play designated home games at the away team's home field.

### **3.10 Moving a Game**

- (a) 18+ and 28+ Boston Division:

A team may reschedule one regular season game based on reasons other than weather without the game being deemed a forfeit, if the manager rescheduling the game notifies the League Commissioner, the opposing team's manager, and the Umpire Assignor at least four (4) days before the regular season scheduled game. Four days is defined as 96 hours prior to the scheduled start time of the game.

- (i) A non-returned phone message, text, or email will not constitute notification.
- (ii) If the ROAD team requests the change, it will be responsible for any immediate and future permit costs related to this game incurred by the HOME team.

- (b) **The 38+ division does not allow non-weather game moves and is exempt from 3.10 (a).**

- (c) Please see rule *6.01 Forfeits* for a schedule of point deductions and umpire fees associated with rule 3.10 (a).

### **3.11 Permits**

(a) Home teams are responsible for obtaining and paying for their own field permits.

(i) The home team must ensure a minimum playing window of two hours, thirty minutes.

(b) Team requiring assistance with obtaining permits may contact the League to purchase any available league permits, at the team's sole expense.

(c) 18+ division games will take place on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, with Wednesdays and Saturdays being used at the Commissioner's discretion.

(d) 28+ division games will take place on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, other days may be used for makeups with the agreement of both managers.

(e) 38+ games will take place on Mondays, with Wednesdays and Fridays used for makeups and postseason games.

(f) Makeup scheduling will follow the process laid out in rule 3.08c.

(g) If teams do not provide permits for night fields, the league will provide one at your cost. To avoid conflicts with your personal preferences, please provide ample weeknight permit options for your team.

(h) For games scheduled on permitted fields supplied by the league, the home team will be solely responsible for the cost.

(i) The league will reimburse home teams up to \$155 for each permitted playoff game (this includes play-in games).

## **4.00 UMPIRES**

### **4.01 Umpire Fees**

(a) Umpire fees are \$90 per umpire per game.

### **4.02 Payment Conditions**

(a) Home team is responsible for paying the home plate umpire, the away team shall pay the base umpire.

(b) Umpire fees are to be paid IN CASH prior to the start of the game.

(c) If there is only one umpire who shows up for a game, they are to be paid 1 ½ fee (\$150 for 7 innings). Teams should notify the Umpire-In-Chief and the league commissioner if only one umpire shows up.

(d) Once an umpire shows up at the field within 60 minutes of game time, they must be paid, even if the game is called before a single pitch is thrown.

(e) If the game is postponed by rain or field conditions within 60 minutes of game time, each umpire is due a ½ fee.

(f) Umpires are due fees for forfeits. Please see 6.01 (d) forfeits for the schedule of fees due.

(g) If a suspended regular-season game is resumed immediately before another scheduled game (per rule 3.07), the umpires shall be paid, upfront, \$15 per inning needed up to 3 full innings (extra innings are exempt). In the event a playoff game is suspended (per rule 3.05f) and requires up to 4 full innings to complete, the umpires shall be paid \$15 per inning needed. If more than 4 innings are needed, a full fee will be paid to each umpire.

## **5.00 PLAYOFFS AND TIEBREAKERS**

### **5.01 League Standings**

a) Final league standings will be determined by the following point system:

- 2 points for a win
- 1 point for a tie
- -2 points for a forfeit

(b) Games previously cancelled and not rescheduled do not earn points for either team.

### **5.02 18+ Division Team Playoff Qualification**

(a) 6 total teams will qualify for the playoffs based on highest point total.

(b) The teams with the top 3 records will automatically make the playoffs as the No. 1-3 seeds and receive first round byes.

(c) Seeds No. 4-6 will be wild cards and will be seeded based off total points.

(d) Seeds No. 5 and 6 will face off in a one-game play-in. The winner of that game advances to play a second one-game play-in against the 4 seed. The winner of that game advances to the semifinals as the No. 4 seed.

(e) In the semifinals, the No. 1 seed will face the play-in winner, the No. 2 seed will face the No. 3 seed. Both series will be best 3 out of 5. The winners will advance to the finals. The higher seed will have home field advantage. That series will also be best 3 out of 5 with the higher seed being the home team for games 1, 3, and 5. The lower seed will be the home team for games 2 and 4.

### **5.03 28+ Boston Division Team Playoff Qualification**

(a) 8 teams will qualify for the playoffs based on highest point total.

(b) If a single division, the division winner shall be the #1 seed, with seeds 2-8 based on total points.

(c) If two divisions, the division winners will lock in the 1 and 2 seeds. The runners-up in each division will be seeds 3 and 4, based on total points. The next four teams with the highest point totals make the playoffs, regardless of division.

(d) First round will be best 2 out of 3, with seeds 1 vs 8, 2 vs 7, 3 vs 6, 4 vs 5. The higher seed will be the home team for games 1 and 3; the lower seed will be the home team for game 2.

(e) We will reseed after each round of playoffs so the highest seed will play the lowest seed after the completion of each round.

(f) Semifinals and Finals will be best 3-out-of-5, with the higher seed being the home team for games 1, 3, and 5. The lower seed will be the home team for games 2 and 4.

#### **5.04 38+ Masters Division Team Playoff Qualification**

(a) The top 8 teams make the postseason

(i) #1 plays #8; #2 plays #7; #3 plays #6; #4 plays #5

(b) We will reseed after each round of playoffs so the highest seed will play the lowest seed after the completion of each round.

(c) First round and semifinals will be best 2-out-of-3, with the higher seed being the home team for games 1 and 3; the lower seed will be the home team for game 2.

(d) The Masters Finals will be best 3-out-of-5, with the higher seed being the home team for games 1, 3, and 5. The lower seed will be the home team for games 2 and 4.

## 5.05 Playoff Tiebreakers (All Divisions)

In the event of a tie for playoff spots, the following procedures, in the order they are listed, will be used to break the tie:

### (a) Two Teams:

1. Head-to-head record.
2. Fewest runs allowed in head-to-head games.
3. Fewest runs allowed against all teams – if teams have played an uneven number of games, then average runs allowed will be used.
4. If still not solved, a coin flip will be used to break the tie

### (b) Three or More Teams:

1. Combined winning percentage vs. the other tied teams.
2. Runs allowed vs. the other tied teams – if teams have played an uneven number of games, then average runs allowed will be used.
3. Runs allowed (all games) – if teams have played an uneven number of games, then average runs allowed will be used.
4. After the winner(s) is determined in any given tiebreaking step, rule 5.05 (a) or 5.0 (b) will be reapplied to all remaining teams until a clear order is determined. Four-way tie example:

**Step 1 tie breaker round using 5.05 (b).** Teams A and B win and advance. Teams C and D have rules reapplied as Step 2.

- Team A - .667 winning percentage vs teams B, C and D.
- Team B - .667 winning percentage vs teams A, C and D.
- Team C - .333 winning percentage vs teams A, B and D.
- Team D - .250 winning percentage vs teams B, C and D.

### **Step 2 tie breaker using 5.05 (a)**

- Team A (2-1) takes top seed over Team B (1-2) with a better head-to-head record.
- Team D (2-1) takes top seed over Team C (1-2) with a better head-to-head record.

## 5.06 Player Playoff Eligibility

(a) To be playoff eligible, a player must play in 50% of their scheduled games by either batting, pitching, pinch running, or playing a full inning of defense (Managers must mark defensive substitution in their scorebooks and check the “game played box” in 400Hitter).

(b) A player not meeting these criteria may also become eligible by pitching a number of innings equal to the team’s total number of scheduled games, regardless of the number of games they play (Example: a team is scheduled to play 22 games, making the number to reach 22, even if they only play 20 due to rain, etc.).

(c) The team’s designated manager is automatically eligible for postseason play. This designation cannot be used for assistant managers or passed on to other players.

(d) A player on Full-time Active Military Duty may receive credit for games missed due to service with prior permission from the League President.

(e) There are no exceptions to the games played/innings pitched rule.

(f) If a player who is not eligible for the playoffs is found to have participated in a playoff game, that player shall be suspended for the remainder of the playoffs. In addition, the player designated as manager shall be suspended for two games for the first offense, with subsequent offenses resulting in additional penalties at the discretion of the League President. Any playoff games won by the team who employed the ineligible player in which the ineligible player participated either as a batter or fielder shall be forfeited to the opposing team.

(g) A player can switch teams midseason, provided they are in good financial standing with the team they are leaving. They would get credit for 50% of the games played for their prior team, rounded up if they played an odd number of games, up to a maximum of 4 games of credit.

Example: a player who played 8 games with their prior team would bring 4 games of credit with them, meaning they would need to play the following with their NEW team to be eligible:

- 8 games (18+ 24-game season)
- 7 games (28+ 22-game season)
- 5 games (38+ 18-game season)

## 6.00 GENERAL LEAGUE RULES

### 6.01 Forfeits

- (a) If a team forfeits 3 or more games in a season, they are ineligible for the playoffs.
- (b) The winning team in a forfeit is allowed to give a 1-game credit for everyone on the Active roster and 4 innings to any pitcher (limit once per season per team); 400hitter must be updated accordingly. If the game is forfeited before first pitch, the losing team will not be allowed to give any member of their roster game credit. If play has commenced, players appearing for the losing team will receive playoff credit.
- (c) A forfeit will be declared and a loss with negative two (-2) points will be assessed to the forfeiting team in the following circumstances:
- (i) A team fails to show up for a scheduled league game; or
  - (ii) A team fails to field a team of eight (8) or more players at the start of the game; or
  - (iii) A team is left with only seven (7) or fewer players as a result of an ejection or ejections.
  - (iv) A team fails to provide sufficient notice of intent to move a game due to an anticipated shortage of players per Rule 3.10.
  - (v) A forfeit for any reason other than those stated above will result in a forfeit loss for the forfeiting team but no point penalty will be assessed.
- (d) Umpire fees and point deduction for the forfeiting team is outlined in the below table.

Timeframe	Related Rule	Umpire Fees Due	Points
48-96 hours before game time	6.01 (c) (iv)	-----	0
24-48 hours before game time	6.01 (c) (iv)	50% per ump to league	-2
Less than 24 hours before game time	6.01 (c) (i)	100% to each umpire	-2
During a game for injury	6.01 (c) (v)	-----	0
During a game for ejection(s)	6.01 (c) (iii)	-----	-2

### 6.02 Use of Field Prior To the Game

- (a) The home team shall have use of the field for pregame warm-up 30 minutes prior to the start of the game for a period of not more than 15 minutes, provided that the home team has the required number of players for an official game to begin. The away team shall have use of the field for the final 15 minutes before game time, provided the visiting team has the required number of players for an official game to begin.

### 6.03 Protests

- (a) All protests are first brought to the Division Commissioner within 24 hours of the game's completion.



(b) The Commissioner's ruling can be appealed to the League President. If the President's ruling is appealed, then the President will then appoint a 3-member, Independent Appeals Board to hear the protest and vote. The decision of the Independent Appeals Board is final.

#### **6.04 Score Reporting and 400Hitter**

(a) Winning manager MUST report scores after each game on 400Hitter and write a summary if desired (losing manager may also enter the score if desired).

(b) Stats must be entered into 400Hitter in a timely fashion and no later than 7 days (defined as 168 hours) after a game. **Failure to do so will result in loss of playoff eligibility for ALL players for that game.**

(c) The winning team is responsible for writing the game summary on 400Hitter, but if no summary is entered by the winning team, the losing team can enter a summary.

#### **6.05. Statistics**

(a) BMBL uses the rules for statistics as defined by Major League Baseball.

(b) Due to the seven-inning length of BMBL games, there are certain inning exceptions for pitchers.

(i) Wins for Starting Pitchers. A starting pitcher must pitch at least (4) four complete innings to qualify for a Win. All other MLB rules around Wins are in effect.

(ii) Saves for Relief Pitchers. All MLB Save rules are in effect. Innings Exception: No matter the score, a relief pitcher shall be awarded a Save when the relief pitcher (a) finishes the game that is won by the relief pitcher's team; (b) is not the winning pitcher; and (c) pitches at least two innings.

#### **6.06 Ejections and Discipline**

(a) Any player ejected from a game will face an automatic 1-game suspension as well as additional discipline as laid out in the [Unified BMBL Code of Conduct](#).

(b) This rule does not apply to players acting in a managerial capacity, but any ejection will be evaluated by the Division Commissioner.

(c) For all other matters involving discipline, please refer to the [Unified BMBL Code of Conduct](#).

#### **6.07 Jersey Return**

(a) If a team pays for jerseys, and a player leaves before the end of the season, the player must return the jersey to the team manager before they will be declared eligible to join another team.

## **7.00 APPENDIX RULE UPDATE HISTORY**

### **2023 Season**

- 3.02c. Clarifies the definition of a decoy
- 3.05f. Adds language for lineups when continuing a suspended game
- 4.02g Suspended game umpire rates – updated to clear up confusion about 3.5 innings vs 4
- 5.03 28+ playoff structure (1 division, no play-in)
- 5.06g players switching teams mid-season – includes examples
- 6.01b clarifies playoff credit for forfeiting teams. If game is forfeited before first pitch, NO credit. If game has started, players on forfeiting team will receive credit
- 6.07a Jersey Return for players who switch teams

### **2022 Season**

- Changes were made to unify rules across age divisions.