



**Boston Men's Baseball League, MSBL 28+  
Rules & Regulations  
Updated July 2021**

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## **RULES & REGULATIONS FOR THE MSBL**

The Boston MSBL (“MSBL”) is a recreational baseball league for men aged 28 and older. It is part of the Boston Men’s Baseball League (“BMBL”), a non-profit recreational baseball organization centered in Boston, Massachusetts. The MSBL offers ballplayers the opportunity to participate in competitive baseball games from the Spring to the Fall each year. Adult attitudes must always prevail. The league President and his Officers will have the responsibility of upholding this ethic. Anyone who abuses the league's code of conduct (section 8) can be suspended or expelled from the league at the sole discretion of the league officers. League rules are established in the following manner:

- Default is the Major League Baseball rulebook for current season.
- Boston MSBL is NOT adopting the Mound Visits rules of MLB
- Boston MSBL is NOT adopting any temporary MLB rules (i.e. extra innings with a runner on second)
- MSBL National Rules for current season, which override Major League Baseball rules, are printed in the official MSBL Scorebook.
- Boston MSBL Rule exceptions, described below, override Major League and MSBL National rules.

### **1.00 ELIGIBILITY**

#### **1.01 Player Eligibility.**

To be eligible to play in the 28+ MSBL American or National Division, the player must turn 28 by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the season.

### **2.00 EQUIPMENT**

#### **2.01 Baseballs.**

(a) Teams will use the official league approved Diamond D1 Pro baseballs. Old Rawlings Boston MSBL balls are NOT to be used.

(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) All base coaches must wear helmets while on the field of play.

### **2.03 Bats.**

(a) League is for wood bat play only.

(b) Only MLB-style, wood bats are allowed (no composites allowed, e.g., no dipped bats, multi-piece, glued together bats, metal handle/wood barrel bats, or any other combination other than a single piece of 100% natural wood).

### **3.00 GAME FORMAT AND POSTPONEMENT**

#### **3.01 Lineup.**

(a) Each manager can bat as many players as he desires, with a minimum of nine.

(b) Teams can play an official game with 8 players and bat only 8 players if that is all they have in uniform at the game, though the opposing team must still bat a minimum of nine batters if they have more than 8 players in attendance.

(c) If a team has less than 8 players, the game is declared a forfeit and forfeiting team must pay all umpire fees.

(d) Games cannot be re-scheduled because a team does not have enough players.

(e) A borrowed player may be used if both teams agree, in which case the game will count as an official game regardless of which team wins.

(f) A/B batting can be used for ANY batting position if desired. The "A" hitter bats during the first time through the lineup, with the "B" batter hitting during 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 lineup as A/B or single hitters.

#### **3.02 Courtesy Runners.**

(a) Each team is allowed to designate two (2) courtesy runners.

(b) Players needing courtesy runners must have their manager notify the opposing manager before game time.

(c) If not so notified, the opposing manager may deny the request.

(d) The player to make the last batted out must be the courtesy runner, unless they too have a courtesy runner, in which case it is the last batter out player preceding him.

(e) Pitchers and catchers may be skipped over as courtesy runners.

(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) Speed up rule – There is no speed up rule. Catchers and pitchers MUST run unless designated as one of the 2 courtesy runners allowed per 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 amount of intentional walks. You may intentionally walk same batter multiple times.

### **3.03 Game Length.**

(a) MSBL 28+ division: all games are 7 innings.

(b) If 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.

(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 will not take effect during the playoffs.

(f) All league playoff games will be played to completion. Thus, and games shortened due to weather or curfew will be continued prior to the next playoff game.

### **3.04 Called Games.**

Games called on account of rain or darkness 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.

### **3.05 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 one (1) hour 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 to coordinate cancellation or postponement logistics.

(c) Teams will have 2 weeks to reschedule makeup games. League reserves right to reschedule after that. Home team is responsible for permit fees.

### **3.06 Scheduling.**

(a) Each team will play a 22-game schedule consisting of 3 games vs. each divisional opponent, and 2 games vs. each non-divisional opponent.

(b) Based on a combination of scheduling and permitting, some teams may play designated home games at the away team's home field.

### **3.07 Moving a game.**

A team may reschedule one (1) regular season game based on reasons other than weather without the game being deemed a forfeit, as long as 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.

NOTE: A non-returned phone message, text, or email will not constitute notification.

### **3.08 Permits.**

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

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

## **4.00 UMPIRES**

### **4.01 Umpire fees.**

- (a) Home team is responsible for paying home plate umpire, while the away team shall pay the base umpire.
- (b) The umpire fee is \$85.00 for 7 inning games. No additional fee is required for extrainning games.
- (c) Umpire fees are to be paid prior to the start of the game.
- (d) If there is only one umpire that shows up for a game, he is to be paid \$120 for a 7 inning game. The home team should notify the U-I-C if only 1 umpire shows.
- (e) Once an umpire shows up at the field, he must be paid, even if the game is called before a single pitch is thrown, or is later postponed by rain or field conditions.

## **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 Team Playoff Qualification.**

#### **Single Division Alignment**

- (a) If the league uses a single-division alignment, the top 8 teams make the playoffs based on total points
- (b) First round matchups will be best of 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> round best of 3, Finals best of 5
- (c) Highest seed in each series will be the home team for odd-numbered games.

#### **Two Division Alignment**

- (d) If the league uses a two-division alignment, the top four teams from each division make the playoffs, based on total points in their respective divisions.
- (e) Seed 1 vs Seed 4 (Per division, best of 3)
- (f) Seed 2 vs Seed 3 (Per division, best of 3)
- (g) Division Title (best of 5)
- (h) Championship Series (best of 5)
- (i) Highest seed in each series will be the home team for odd-numbered games.
- (j) Championship Series - the team with highest season point total will be the home team.

### **5.03 Playoff Tiebreakers.**

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

(a) Two Teams:

1. Head to head
2. Fewest runs allowed in head to head games
3. Fewest runs allowed against all teams – if teams have played an uneven amount of games then average runs allowed will be used.
4. One game play-off for final playoff spot; to break seeding tie, there will be a coin flip.

(b) Three or More Teams:

1. Runs allowed (all games) – if teams have played an uneven amount of games then average runs allowed will be used.
2. One game play-off for final playoff spot; to break seeding tie, there will be a coin flip.

### **5.04 Playoff Eligibility for Players**

To perform ANY role in the postseason (hit, pitch, play the field, pinch run) a player must:

(a) Have a plate appearance, pitch to a batter, or pinch-run in 50% of the team's games played (in the event of an odd number of games played, we will round down in the player's favor i.e. 21 games/10 to qualify)

(b) Pitched in at least five (5) games during the regular season and thrown at least fifteen (15) innings

(c) Any combination of (a) and (b) equaling 50% of the team's games played

(d) Forfeited games will not count towards the forfeiting team's games played total. The opposing team will receive 1 game credit per rule 6.02b

(e) Non-played innings as a result of Mercy Rule do not count toward a pitcher's inning eligibility.

(f) No Injury Waiver – All players must meet eligibility requirements.

(f) Player Found to be Ineligible for Playoff Participation – 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 Team Manager shall be suspended for one (1) game for the first offense, with subsequent offenses resulting in additional penalties at the discretion of the League Commissioner. Any playoff games won by the team with an ineligible player shall be forfeited to the opposing team.

## **6.00 GENERAL LEAGUE RULES**

### **6.01 Preliminary Rosters and Fees.**

- (a) Preliminary rosters and league fees are due by Opening Day.
- (b) Rosters, with complete addresses and date of birth, must be entered into 400Hitter and/or updated for the current season.
- (c) It is permissible for a player to participate in a game before his information is entered into 400Hitter as long as player information is entered before the next game.
- (d) Players are not permitted to enter a league game until they have completed the online waiver form for the current season, for the team they are playing on.

### **6.02 Forfeits.**

- (a) If a team forfeits 3 or more games in a season, they are ineligible for the playoffs.
- (b) In the event of a forfeit, all members of the winning team will receive credit for 1 game played/pitched. Members of the forfeiting team will receive no credit for a game played/pitched.

### **6.03 Use of the Field Prior to the Game.**

The home team shall have use of the field for pregame warm-up thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of the game for a period of not more than fifteen (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.

### **6.04 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 no later than 7 days after game. Failure to do so will result in loss of 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.



## **7.00 CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **7.01 Prohibited Conduct.**

Players shall conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times. No player shall commit the following:

(a) Lay a hand upon, come in contact with, shove or strike, or threaten an official. Players guilty of such conduct shall be immediately suspended from further participation in the game and shall remain suspended until the Board of Directors concludes their review of the matter. Players guilty of such conduct may be subject to suspension for the remainder of the season or expulsion from the league for life, at the discretion of the Board.

(b) Refuse to abide by an official's decision. Players guilty of such conduct shall be immediately suspended from further participation in the game and shall remain suspended until the Board of Directors concludes their review of the matter. Players guilty of such conduct may be subject to probation or suspension for the remainder of the season, at the discretion of the Board.

(c) Be guilty of objectionable demonstrations of dissent at an official's decision. Players guilty of such conduct may be subject to suspension from further participation in the game, subject to Umpire discretion.

(d) Use unnecessarily rough tactics in the play of the game against the body or person of an opposing player. Players guilty of such conduct shall be immediately suspended from further participation in the game and shall be subject to probation or suspension for the remainder of the season, at the discretion of the Board.

(e) Be guilty of a physical attack as an aggressor upon any player, manager, official, or spectator, before, during, or after a game. Players guilty of such conduct shall be immediately suspended from further participation in the game and shall remain suspended until the Board of Directors concludes their review of the matter. Players guilty of such conduct shall be subject to suspension for the remainder of the season or expulsion from the league for life, at the discretion of the Board.

(f) Be guilty of a verbally abusive attack or abusive gesture toward any player, manager, official, or spectator, before, during, or after a game. Players guilty of such conduct shall be immediately suspended from further participation in the game and shall remain

suspended until the Board of Directors concludes their review of the matter. Players guilty of such conduct shall be subject to suspension for the remainder of the season, at the discretion of the Board.

(g) Smoke on the field of play or in the dugout. Players guilty of such conduct shall be immediately suspended from further participation in the game.

## **7.02 Penalties.**

(a) The Board of Directors may, by vote of the majority of the directors, suspend any player or manager for such a period and upon such terms as it may propose, for the conduct within its opinion is prejudicial to the welfare, interest, reputation, or character of the league.

(b) The Board of Directors shall determine the appropriate action required for violations of the codes of conduct, and shall report their decision to the league commissioner, player and their manager.

(c) A player found in violation of any provision delineated in the codes of conduct, after being placed on probation for the remainder of the season shall be suspended for the remainder of the season.

(d) Any player found in violation of any provisions delineated in the codes of conduct, after being suspended from further participation in a game shall be suspended for the remainder of the season.

(e) For serious offenses involving multiple game suspensions, player penalties are subject to the BMBL umbrella where the Board may apply suspensions across all age divisions. Under this umbrella policy, a player will not be able to play in another age division until the original penalty is served.

(f) Any player who is ejected from a game will receive an automatic suspension as outlined in the schedule below. This penalty is effective beginning with the very next scheduled game. Regular season and post-season will be considered as the same season. Suspensions can carry over from one year to the next.

(a) EXCEPTION: If the player designated at the beginning of the season as the team manager is ejected from a game due to his actions as a manager rather than a player (such as questioning a call on the field), there will be no automatic game suspension. However, the league reserves the right to introduce a suspension or expulsion on the basis of further review.

# of Seasonal Ejections Automatic Game(s)

1st ejection 1 game

2nd ejection 2 games

3rd ejection Suspended for remainder of season, including playoffs

Any player who participates in a league game while under automatic suspension will be subject to additional penalties, and his team will be stripped of any wins gained during the use of an ineligible player.

Manager of ejected player must notify the Commissioner with the player's name who has been ejected. Failure of manager to notify could be subject to additional penalties.

### **7.03 Grievances, Protests, and Appeals.**

(a) Grievances may be filed by an individual player or by the manager of a team provided that a grievance is formally submitted to the Board of Directors in writing. The league commissioner shall adjudicate all such grievances and shall report any action taken to the Board of Directors.

(b) An appeal of any ruling may be filed in writing with the Board of Directors by an individual player or by the manager, provided that the appeal is formally submitted.

#### **MSBL National Rules of Note:**

3.f -- A manager may add batters to the bottom of the lineup at any time but 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.

3.h -- If a player is forced to leave a game due to injury or ejection, a reserve player, not previously entered into the game as a hitter, must hit in the replaced hitter'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 first time this vacated spot comes up in the batting order, an out will be assessed; after that one time, no out will be recorded for skipping the spot.

3.j -- 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.

4.e -- 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.

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

6.b -- If a pitcher hits 4 batters in any game, the pitcher must be removed from the game.

7 -- 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.