

# 2025 Aurora Baseball League Tournament Rules

## 9u, 10u, 11u, 12u, 13u & 14u

### General Rules

1. When not covered by specific Aurora Baseball League (ABL) amendments in this document, High School (NFHS) Rules apply. The ABL reserves the right to modify rules prior to the start of the tournament if any item is misrepresented within this document.
2. All teams are required to have Insurance when they register for the tournament. Insurance is a requirement for participation. Proof of insurance may be requested at any time by a tournament official. A team that is unable to provide documented proof of insurance will forfeit all games, without refund, until they are able to do so.
3. The ABL will provide one new ball per game. Each team will provide one good used game ball; however, more may be required.
4. The ABL will provide one umpire for all pool games (2 umpires for 14u). For all playoff and championship games the ABL will provide two umpires when available.
5. Teams shall be at the field 30 minutes before the scheduled time of the game. Umpires can start games up to 30 minutes early. Unprepared teams risk forfeiture by a 7-0 score. Teams can start a game with a minimum of eight (8) players.
6. In pool play games, the home team shall be declared by flip of a coin. The home team will be responsible for keeping the official score book. For all playoff games, the home team shall be the highest seeded team. If there is a tie for seeding position, a coin flip will determine the home team.
7. There is no infield practice before the start of the game. Teams may take ground balls in foul territory along the 1st and 3rd base lines.
8. All protests shall be made to the umpire before the next pitch. The head umpire for that game shall have the final ruling.
9. Any player, coach, parent, or fan that is ejected from a game by an umpire must leave the field and will not be permitted to play in or be at the field for the team's next game.
10. Any game that is not an official game because of inclement weather or other unforeseen developments shall be a suspended game and shall be resumed from the point of suspension.

### General Guidelines

	9U	10U	11U	12U	13U	14U
Base/Pitching Distance	65/46 ft.	65/46 ft.	70/50 ft.	70/50 ft.	80/54 ft.	90/60.5 ft.
Complete Game (innings)	6	6	6	7	7	7
Official Game (innings)	4	4	4	4	4	4

Pitching (max innings/game)	4	4	4	4	5	5
Mercy Rule (runs - inning)	8 after 5 10 after 4 12 after 3	8 after 5 10 after 4 12 after 3	8 after 5 10 after 4 12 after 3	8 after 5 10 after 4 12 after 3	8 after 5 10 after 4 12 after 3	8 after 5 10 after 4 12 after 3
Stealing	Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Leadoffs	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dropped 3rd Strikes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Headfirst Slide Allowed	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bat Restrictions	None	None	None	None	None	-5
Metal Spikes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

\* only after the ball has crossed home plate

### **Player Roster**

11. Age requirement cutoff date is May 1st. A player's age as of May 1st will dictate which Age Group Division, he will play in. Birth certificates must be available at any time throughout the tournament.
12. Rosters are limited to 15 players. A roster must be turned in to the tournament director prior to the start of a team's first game at [abltournamentdirector@gmail.com](mailto:abltournamentdirector@gmail.com).
13. All players on a team must be from their community and team's regular roster. The ABL reserves the right to refuse entry to non-community affiliated teams. A player cannot be on the roster of two different teams in the same age division. EXCEPTION: 13u and above must be at least 80% community roster.
14. All players must wear matching and numbered uniforms and all lineups must indicate each player's number.

### **Batting/Base-running**

15. The dropped third strike rule shall be in effect in all divisions (except 9U and 10U - batter out, runners may advance).
16. The infield fly rule shall be in effect in all divisions.
17. If a player squares around to bunt, they are NOT allowed to take a full swing. If a player squares to bunt and takes a swing, the batter will immediately be called out. If the ball is put in play, it will be immediately called a dead ball and players return to their original base.

18. All divisions will play with nine position players in the field. Teams have the option to bat 9 players, 10 players (one AH), or their entire roster (roster batting). Teams are required to declare their option during ground rules.
- Roster Batting: All present players bat and can be substituted defensively freely as desired. All batters must remain in the same batting position/order. Any player that shows up late must be placed at the bottom of the order.
  - 10 batter lineup using "AH" or Additional Hitter: Teams may bat 10 players using an additional hitter. The additional hitter is considered a defensive position and therefore that player may be substituted into the field freely. Players not in the original lineup are considered substitutes and may be substituted into the game as desired including for the "AH". The original starter/starters may re-enter the game in the same batting position for their substitute, and that substitute is then out of the game and cannot re-enter.
  - 9 batter lineup: Same as 10 hitter lineup excluding use of "AH"
19. Any attempt to knock down or roll block a defensive player will result in the base runner being called out and ejected from the game. All slides must be legal slides according to NFHS rules or the runner will be called out.
- Head-first slides are NOT allowed in 11u and below and will be an automatic out. Baserunners are permitted to return to the base head-first in a pick-off attempt.
  - Head-first slides ARE allowed in 12U and up.
20. Courtesy runners are allowed for catchers with two outs to speed up the game. The runner must be a player who is not currently in the game. If there are no additional players, the runner will be the player who made the last batted out (last out if roster batting). The runner being substituted for must catch the next inning.
21. If a team is roster batting and the batter due up is unavailable to bat due to injury or illness, the batter will be skipped and no out recorded. The player may NOT return to the game. If the player was ejected or left the game for any reason other than illness or injury an out will be recorded each time that player is due up to bat.
22. Delayed stealing is not allowed in the 9u division.

## **Pitching**

23. Maximum Pitching
- 9U, 10U, 11U, 12U: 4 innings (12 outs) per game
  - 13U, 14U: 5 innings (15 outs) per game
24. The home team is responsible for the official scorebook and tracking innings (outs) pitched per pitcher. If a team is playing 2 games in a day they must share their pitcher inning totals from the previous game with the umpire and opposing team.
25. There are no overall tournament innings pitched limits. Coaches are strongly encouraged, however, to follow MLB Pitch Smart guidelines for pitches thrown. <https://www.mlb.com/pitch-smart/pitching-guidelines>

26. Coaches are responsible for alerting the umpire if they feel a pitching limit is violated or about to be violated. It is strongly encouraged to notify an umpire before the violation occurs (e.g. at the beginning of an inning). If a limit is exceeded, that pitcher must be replaced immediately once the umpire is notified. There is no other consequence to the offending team.
27. When the coach goes to the mound to talk with the same pitcher for the second time in an inning, the pitcher must be removed from pitching but may remain in the game at another position.
28. Once a pitcher is removed from the game as a pitcher, he may NOT re-enter the game as pitcher.
29. For pitching purposes, 3 outs constitute one (1) inning pitched. A new pitcher must pitch to at least one (1) batter unless an injury occurs after he starts throwing warm-up pitches.
30. There are no balks in 9U. In 10U, 11U, and 12U, each pitcher will receive one warning before a balk is called. There are no balk warnings in the 13U and 14U age groups.
31. New pitchers will get 8 warm-up pitches. Returning pitchers will get 5 warm-up pitches.
32. There is a hit-by-pitch limit of three batters per pitcher per game. Once a pitcher hits a third batter in the same game, that pitcher must be removed from pitching immediately.

### **Tournament Format and Scheduling**

- All teams, in all divisions, will reach Sunday's single elimination playoff bracket. Pool game results will determine seeding in brackets based on point system. Point system will score as follows:
  2. Win = 3 points
  3. Tie = 2 points
  4. Loss = 1 point
  5. Forfeit = 0 points
- 6 or more Team Format - two pools of equal number teams. If there are an uneven number of teams, one pool will have one less team than the other. There will be two pool games per team against randomly selected teams in the same pool.
  - a. The top two teams in each pool will advance to the championship bracket on Sunday. The remaining teams will be entered into a consolation game/bracket.
- 5 or less Team Format - all teams will be entered into one pool. There will be three pool games per team against randomly selected opponents.
  - b. 3 teams will advance to the championship bracket.
- The Tournament Director may modify the pool play and playoffs if deemed necessary.

- Any pool game ending in a tie due to the time limit that is an “official game” will stand as a tie. Any playoff game ending in a tie must be played until there is a winner.
- In the event of a tie in team won/loss points, Tie Breaker guidelines are as follows:
  33. Head-to-head record (only if two teams are involved)
  34. Fewest runs allowed
  35. Run differential (max +8/game)
  36. Total runs scored
  37. Coin toss

NOTE - the Tournament Director may adjust these for special considerations like forfeits.

NOTE - if three or more teams are tied in pool play, head-to-head is NOT used to determine the order of finish. Where multiple teams are to be selected, such as a 3-team tie for the pool winner and runner-up, all tied teams shall be ordered per steps #2 - #5 above and the teams selected based on that order (as opposed to choosing one team and then starting the process over or using head-to-head among the remaining teams).

### **Time Limit and Extra Innings**

38. All games must start on time and are limited to a 1 hour 50-minute time limit. No new inning shall begin after the time limit unless to make an "official game".
39. Time shall begin at the conclusion of ground rules. The umpire will announce the time to coaches and the home team will note it in their scorebook.
40. The conclusion of the inning will be the reference point for the time limit.
  - c. Example: If the third out is made in the bottom of the inning before time limit has been reached, one more inning will be allowed.
41. If the home team is in the lead and at bat when time expires, then the home team is declared the winner, and the game is over.
42. Pool games, including consolation games with no advancement, can end in a tie if the time limit has been reached.
  - d. If the game is tied and the time limit has NOT been reached, the game may go into extra innings as needed until the time limit is reached.
  - e. Pool game extra innings will be played under "normal" tournament rules.
43. Playoff games, including consolation games with bracket advancement, except for championship games, will use a "Runner on second" type format if extra innings are needed beyond the time limit.
  - f. If the time limit has NOT been reached and extra innings are needed, they will be played under "normal" tournament rules.
  - g. If the time limit is reached and extra innings are needed, every half inning necessary will begin with a runner on second base.
    - The baserunner will be the player in the batting lineup directly before the first batter due up for that inning.

Example: If the #5 hitter is due up to start the inning, #4 will be on second base.

- There will be NO modification to outs, or the batter's count.
44. Game pitch limits are still in effect for all extra innings.
45. There is no time limit and no "Runner on Second" for championship games.

### **Miscellaneous**

46. The winning team is required to text the game score to the tournament directors (330)998-3525 (Eric Quinn) and (216)509-2525 (Mike Lipson), immediately following the game. The winning team must also provide the game score to a tournament field director. Please include Age Division, Teams, and Score in text message.
47. Profanity by ANY participant (including coaches) is subject to immediate ejection from the tournament.
48. The insurance the ABL carries does not cover outside teams participating in the tournament.
49. The Tournament Director or his appointed representative shall be the sole judge of the field's playing condition and is responsible for deciding for termination of play. In the event of bad weather, the ABL reserves the right to modify the tournament format. In the event the tournament is canceled due to weather and only 1 game is played, refund is 50%. If only 2 games are played, the refund is 0%.
50. Should rain delay the pool play on Friday, or Saturday and force make-up games on Sunday, all playoff bracket games will be cancelled, and we will proceed directly to the championship games with the two top ranked teams. NOTE - Tournament Director discretion applies.
51. If there is visible lightning and/or thunder (including seeing the flash, not necessarily seeing a lightning bolt) before, during, or after a game, players, coaches, and umpires are to leave the playing field immediately and move to a safe location and wait until 20 minutes has elapsed from the time of the last visible lightning and/or thunder.