

WHITBY MEN'S THREE PITCH LEAGUE RULES
(Updated March 2022)

FOOTWEAR

Metal-tipped cleats are not permitted. Any players found to be wearing metal cleats during a game must be removed from their team's line-up for the rest of that game. Rubber, plastic, or nylon cleats may be worn.

BATS / BALLS / EQUIPMENT

All bats, balls and bases are supplied by the league (one new ball per game). The use of personal bats is not permitted during the regular season or playoffs. This is intended to maintain consistency and fairness for all players and all teams.

BASES

Bases will be 60 feet apart. Home team is responsible for setting out the bases.

Orange Safety Bag at First Base: Defensive player may only touch white portion of the base. Offensive player must touch orange portion of the base if there is a **force play made at first base by any infielder**. If the offensive player touches the white portion of first base on a force play, they will be considered to be in play and may be tagged out by the defensive player.

Home Plate: All plays made at home plate will be a force out. Defensive player cannot tag base runner to make an out. Base runner must have his foot on the ground beyond the scoring line before the defensive player has possession of the ball while touching the plate. If the base runner touches home plate, or crosses in front of the plate in fair territory, he is out.

Commitment Line: The commitment line is a line drawn 20 feet from the back of the home plate and perpendicular to the third base line. Once the base runner has crossed the commitment line, he must continue toward home plate. A base runner cannot be tagged out between the commitment line and home plate. The out must be made at the plate as a force out.

PITCHING

The offensive team will provide its own pitcher. For safety purposes, pitcher must be a minimum of 45 feet from home plate. This will essentially be the second or furthest pitching rubber from home plate as determined by the umpire. **Pitcher must have at least one foot on the pitching rubber when the ball is released.**

BATTING

No player will miss a turn at bat. Batting order must be maintained even if/when players sit out a half-inning while their team is on defense. Batters will have a maximum of three pitches in any at-bat in which to hit a fair ball. If a batter fails to hit a fair ball within those three pitches, he is out and play is dead. Bunting is not allowed; the batter will be out automatically, and dead ball is called.

Batter can hit any pitch that has bounced before home plate. Batted ball is live.

The batter must take a full swing in order to make contact with any pitched ball.

Batters cannot use a deliberate downward motion or a deliberate “chopping” motion (downward, horizontally, or diagonally) to hit the ball – doing so will result in an automatic out and the umpire will rule the play as a dead ball.

A batter is also out when:

- His batted ball is caught in the field of play before it touches the ground.
- He is forced out at any base or tagged out by the defensive team on any baseline between first base and the commitment line.
- His batted ball is touched (accidentally or not) by the pitcher.

If a **batted ball lands on or rolls onto the outfield grass in fair territory**, the batter cannot be thrown out at first base on a force play, whether directly by an outfielder or indirectly via relay throws from outfielders to infielders and then to first base. In such situations, if the batter touches the white portion of first base, with or without the intention of advancing to second base or beyond, they will be considered to be in play and may be tagged out by the defensive player.

If the umpire deems that an outfielder has encroached upon the edge of the infield as a means of preventing a batted ball from safely reaching the outfield grass, the batter will be awarded first base and the play is dead; any runners on base at the time of the pitch will be advanced one base.

OFFENSE

The offensive team will remain at bat until 3 batters have been retired or until a maximum of nine offensive players, in listed sequence on the score sheet, have batted in that half-inning. **No player may bat more than once in a given inning.**

The ninth or last batter is also out as stated above or if the defensive team relays the batted fair ball to home plate for a force out before the ninth or last batter crosses the scoring line. In this specific case of a force out, all runs scored before the force out will count. Offensive team is responsible for announcing any last-batter situation. **If it is not announced before the first pitch is delivered** to the last batter, that batter will be called out automatically and the half-inning will end.

Any runs scored after a batted ball by an unannounced last batter will not count.

HOME RUNS

One out-of-the-park home run will be permitted per half inning. All subsequent out-of-the-park home runs **in that same half inning** will be called **an out and all runners on base at the time of that out will return to the bases they occupied at the time of the pitch**. The only exception to this home run rule occurs when the last batter rule is called for that half inning; in such cases, the last batter can hit an out-of-the-park home run – all baserunners at the time of the pitch also score.

When a home run has been hit, the batter and any baserunners are not required to circle the bases to count their runs; they will all return directly to the dugout area and their respective runs will be entered on their team's scoresheet.

Retrieval of batted balls that land beyond the outfield fence (home runs or outs as per WM3P rules), will be the responsibility of the batting team.

BASE RUNNERS

A base runner may not leave his base until the batter has struck the ball. There must be contact; no anticipation – a runner will be called out if he steps off the base and the batter (a) swings but cleanly misses the ball or (b) does not swing at the pitch. Base stealing is not permitted.

A runner may advance on a fly ball only after he has tagged up. If a defensive player catches a fly ball in the field of play but then carries the ball out-of-play, all base runners will advance one base from the time of the pitch. Players must return to their original base on any unplayable ball. If pitcher interference occurs the batter is out, the play is dead, and base runners return to their original bases.

In the event of an injury, the “last out” player on the score sheet may run for the injured player. No limit to the number of substitute runners. In the spirit of fairness and sportsmanship, such substitutions should be used for the intended purpose of this rule and **not to gain a strategic advantage on the base paths**.

Sliding or diving into any base is not permitted at any time, regardless of whether a base runner is advancing or returning to a base. The baserunner will be called out, recorded as a force out; play will continue until time is called by the umpire.

DEFENSE

There will be a maximum of nine defensive players; a maximum of five may be positioned in the infield (including the catcher) and a maximum of four may be positioned in the outfield. **Infielders cannot encroach on or stand on the edge of the outfield grass when in their defensive positions; the umpire has the discretion to ask any infielder to adjust their defensive position before resuming play.**

Infielders cannot retreat to the outfield grass as a pitch is being delivered or hit; this is considered an illegal defense. The batter will be awarded first base (if the hit results in an out) or the base reached (for a safe hit). All baserunners at the time of an illegal defense ruling will advance according to the base awarded to the batter; any outs made subsequent to illegal defense calls will be overturned.

Fake Tags: Infielders not in possession of the ball but who feign such possession to obstruct, slow, or otherwise affect the progress of any runner approaching a base shall be **immediately ejected from the game**. Such plays are considered dangerous to the safety of baserunners and contrary to the spirit of fair play and sportsmanship. The status of any offending players in terms of remaining in the league from that point forward will be subject to review by league officials.

RULE INTERPRETATIONS

Infield Fly Rule: Runners on first and second or bases full with less than two out. Batter hits pop fly that is caught or touched in fair territory within the infield area (as defined by the umpire). Batter is out. Runners may advance at their own risk.

Out-of-Play Throw: When a ball is overthrown (beyond the out-of-play lines) from the outfield, all runners will be awarded two bases from the base they possessed at the time of the throw by the defensive player. Overthrow from the infield, one base awarded.

For Last-Batter Situations Only: In cases when the ball is **thrown or deflected** out-of-play by the defensive team (e.g.: over the backstop, into the dugout, **out of bounds down the first or third baseline**) on the inning-ending play, the last batter will be awarded a home run and all runners on base at the time of the pitch will also score. **In last-batter situations with less than two out, if the last batter hits a fly ball that is caught by a defensive player then carried out of bounds, the batter is called out but all runners on base at the time of the pitch will score.**

Play Becomes Dead: Play will be considered dead when the umpire calls time out or defensive team throws the ball to the pitcher from the infield (dirt area). A pitcher cannot leave the field of play until he has received the ball from the defensive team and/or the umpire has called time.

UMPIRES and OFFICIALS

All umpire decisions are final when calls are made; **protests are not permitted**. Only the **team captain, co-captain, or a pre-game designate can approach an umpire to ask for clarification of rule interpretations; concerns over ambiguity in any rule can be submitted in writing to league officials for end-of-season review.**

Any abuse of umpires and league officials will not be tolerated and is subject to the following penalties:

- **First recorded offence or ejection = suspension for one game***
- **Second offence or ejection = permanent suspension from the league****

* **A game is defined as a completed week of play; this excludes any rainouts or cancellations**

** **A first ejection remains on the player's record for the entire duration of their time in the league**

GENERAL

A team must field at least seven players. A ten-minute grace period is allowed to field at least seven players or the game will be a default loss. In the event of a double default, both teams will be given a loss in the standings.

Late players can enter a game at any time and must be placed at the bottom of the line-up. Batting order as written on the score sheet must be maintained.

Defensive team is to provide the catcher unless mutually agreed upon by both team captains.

All **regular season** games will be a maximum of nine (9) innings (games may end in a tie). No new inning can begin after 80 minutes from the official start time of the game i.e., no new inning can start after 9:20 p.m. for the early games or after 10:50 p.m. for the late games. The last batter rule applies in every half-inning for regular season games – the use of unlimited batters in the last inning of games is only applicable during the playoff tournament.

FOR PLAYOFFS ONLY

Captains will submit a player roster for their respective team before the deadline for any revisions as set by the league. Players will not be allowed to participate in the playoffs if they have not been registered by the league and its insurers by stated deadline. After the stated deadline, only registered and insured players may continue to play for the rest of the season.

Playoff games will be seven (7) innings. For the seventh inning only, there will be an unlimited number of batters. The defensive team must get three outs and the last batter rule does not apply.

Maximum run differential for round robin games is seven runs. Round robin games may end in a tie. The semi-final games and the championship game will play extra innings in the event of a tie until a winner is determined.

Late entry of players is not permitted during playoff games. All players must be physically present within the playing area (defined as the field of play plus inside or behind the players' dugout area) at the posted start time of the game or their names cannot be listed in the batting orders on the official scoresheet. Players' names cannot be included anywhere in the batting order in anticipation of their arrival by the time of the first pitch. Team captains should review and confirm their batting order prior to the first pitch and inform the umpire of any concerns.

All other regular season rules apply to the playoffs.