



AUCKLAND BASEBALL ASSOCIATION

Technical Norms – Season 2023/2024

ALL GRADES

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Section 1 - Technical Norms - Junior Grades



ABA Technical Norms Regular Season

MINOR, INTERMEDIATE, JUNIOR & SENIOR LEAGUE OFFICIAL GRADE RULES 2023/2024 SEASON

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1.0 IMPORTANT NOTES

1.1 Spirit of the Technical Rules

Any dispute or ambiguity in the format or implementation of the rules around Little League baseball will be resolved by way of consideration to the spirit or intention of the rules. The ABA Rules Committee will have the final say in these matters.

1.2 Little League Rules

The ABA follows all rules of Little League International with some additional league specific to make play more fun and balanced. It is the obligation of all Coaches/Managers to research and to understand the [Little League Rules](#) as they apply in all Little League Baseball divisions. Ignorance of the rules by Coaches/Managers detracts from the experience of the game of Baseball that all players deserve.

We encourage parents to be familiar with the basics of Little League baseball. The rulebook is available as a user-friendly mobile app for free in the play store.

The [rulebook app](#) is approved for use in the dugout, as such mobile phones and tablets are allowed on the baseball diamond for the sole purpose of referencing the rules.

1.3 Rule and Regulation Updates

The ABA plays to the most current Little League® Official Regulations, Playing Rules, and Operating Policies. All changes to the rules can be found on the [Little League website](#) and updates will be available for the Little League rules app when the yearly rule changes are approved.

1.4 Cheat Sheets

The ABA Rules committee produces “cheat sheets” as an easy reference to some of the key playing rules. In all cases the Technical Norms overrides the cheat sheet if there is a discrepancy.

2.0 EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS

2.1 Balls

- a. The ABA will supply the clubs Baseballs for all grade play. These will be funded through team fees.
- b. Minor league must use Flexiball.
- c. Majors, Intermediate, Juniors, and Seniors must use league approved balls.
- d. All Little League teams must have at least four new approved regulation balls (2 per team) available to the Umpire for use in the game. Spare suitable balls must also be available, particularly during wet weather and must be the same model of Baseball as noted in the Equipment Standards chart. It is the responsibility of the home team to supply any extra balls required for a game should a ball/s become lost, damaged, wet etc.
- e. The ABA will provide all game balls for ABA championship playoff / final games and all ABA run tournaments.

2.2 Metal Cleats

Local ground rules have precedence and therefore metal cleats may not be allowed on some diamonds.

2.3 Equipment: Refer [Little League Rules](#)

All equipment must comply with the Little League rules.

3.0 DURATION

Grade	Duration	Innings	Mercy Rule	Regulation Game
Minors	2 Hours No New Innings after 1hr 50min	6 innings	15 runs after 4 innings 10 after 5	4 innings
Majors	2 Hours No New Innings after 1hr 50min	6 innings	15 runs after 4 10 after 5	4innings
Intermediate	2 hours 30min No New Innings after 2hrs 20min	7 innings	15 runs after 4 10 after 5	5innings
Junior	2 hours 30min No New Innings after 2hrs 20min	7 innings	15 runs after 4 10 after 5	5innings
Senior	2hours 30min No New Innings after 2hrs 20min	7 innings	15 runs after 4 10 after 5	5 innings

Note: No New Innings times ONLY apply if the duration of a regulation game will be completed at the end of the current innings

4.0 PLAYING THE GAME

4.1 Lineup sheets

- a. All teams MUST have their line-ups 30 minutes before game time, the responsibility is on the Manager / Head Coach of the team. Line-ups to be given to the scorer on the day. The line-up sheets must be signed by the team Manager / Head Coach.
- b. Each Manager / Head Coach shall supply the umpire with 3 copies of his team line-up at the pre-game meeting held 5 minutes before the commencement of the game. The line-up shall show the names of all starting players, starting fielding position and the players' uniform numbers. The copies are to be distributed as follows:

Copy 1	WHITE	- Retained by the umpire
Copy 2	YELLOW	- Scorer
Copy 3	PINK	- Opposition coach/manager
Copy 4	BLUE	- Returned to the coach/manager whose team the sheet belongs to
- c. All players must be on the Teams official roster sheet as held by the association.
- d. Breaches will incur judicial penalties.
- e. Mandatory Play Minor, Intermediate & Senior League – Refer [Little League Rules](#).
- f. A player from one age group or division is not allowed to play in any other team in the same age group or division. If found guilty of breaking this rule, the team will forfeit that game and the coach will receive an automatic 1 game suspension which is not appealable.
- g. **Minors and T-Ball only.**
 - Teams must NOT write a player's name on the lineup card should such player not be present at the start of play. However, should a player arrive at a game after the plate

meeting, the player/s can be added to the substitute list.

- The late arriving player must be announced to the umpire in charge, added to the team sheet, the scorers advised and then the player is eligible to enter the game as a substitute player but must meet the minimum play requirements.

h. **Major/Intermediate/Junior/Senior.**

- The full team roster (or such reduced list of players that the coach desires) is allowed on the lineup card at the start of the game, whether all such players are present at the start of the game or not. However, a player cannot be added after the plate meeting.
- Any player on the lineup card must play in the game and meet the minimum play requirements.

4.2 Minimum Player Numbers

- a. A game can commence as an official game if there are a minimum of 8 eligible players for each team. The 9th player will incur an automatic out each time through the lineup should the 9th spot remain vacant. If eight (8) eligible players at game commencement cannot take the field the team short of players must forfeit that game. Refer to grade specific line-up rules for later arriving players.
- b. A game may **NOT** begin with 7 players.

4.3 Team Warm-Up

- a. The team nominated first in the fixture book may choose which dugout they prefer for all ABA Regular season and playoff games.
- b. The home team will have the last use of diamond for the purpose of a warm-up and must be given a minimum of 5 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the game on the diamond. They will remain on the diamond to commence the game.
- c. If any team cannot field 8 eligible players by 10 minutes after the scheduled starting time that team forfeits the game.

4.4 The Pitcher

- a. All players in all grades (including Adult baseball) must strictly adhere to the [Pitch Smart](#) guidelines and the [Little League Pitching Rules](#). If ever Pitch Smart and Little League are in conflict the ABA will follow whichever is the lesser number. It is important to recognize that the Pitch Smart numbers **are not a target, they are the absolute maximum allowed**.
- b. Minor League only - any pitcher who hits 3 batters in one innings must leave the mound and be replaced as pitcher.

4.5 Courtesy Runner

The optional courtesy runner rule for the pitcher and/or the catcher when there are two outs has NOT been adopted by the ABA.

Courtesy Runners are **NOT** permitted.

4.6 Inning Run Rules

Minors - Four (4) runs by the offensive team will constitute an inning. The play, which scores the fourth (4) run, should be played to completion, however, only four runs count. This applies to the first 4 innings only.

Majors - Five (5) runs by the offensive team will constitute an inning. The play, which scores the fifth (5) run, should be played to completion, however, only five runs count. This applies to the first 4 innings only.

Intermediate/Junior/Senior – Six (6) runs by the offensive team will constitute an inning the play that scores the sixth (6) run will be played to completion and ALL runs resulting from that play will count. This applies to the first 5 innings only.

4.7 Tiebreakers – Little League

- a. All LL grades (**except minors**) - If games are tied and time is up and the home team has completed, they're at bat and scores are still tied, then the game will continue into extra innings to obtain a win/loss result.
- b. Where extra innings are required and any "extra inning" is about to commence, the Team at bat shall commence the TOP of the inning with a runner on second base.
- c. The batter who hits first in an inning shall continue to be the batter who would have normally led off the inning.
- d. The runner on second shall be the batter, (or substitute batter), immediately preceding the batter who leads off the inning.

4.8 Minors - Ball 4 and Hitting Off the Tee

- a. When a pitched fourth ball (or Intentional walk) is called by the umpire the umpire will place a tee on home plate and the batter has a free swing to put the ball in play. The ball is deemed to have been put in play if it travels in the air or on the ground 2 meters into fair territory in any direction.
- b. If the ball comes to rest within 2 meters the play is called dead, and the umpire will place the ball on the tee and the batter has another swing. This is repeated until such time as the ball is put in play.
- c. Once the ball is in play normal baseball little league rules apply.
- d. The batter hitting off a tee and any runner on base may only advance two bases maximum.

The purpose of this rule is to ensure more game play occurs at this level rather than limited action as a result of batters walking regularly. This will in turn provide more enjoyment for all players. As pitchers become more experienced the use of the tee will logically reduce.

4.9 Continuous Batting Order - Minors Only

Minor league teams must follow a continuous batting order that will include all players on the team roster present for the game, batting in order. Regardless of substitutions and re-entries, each batter must bat in his/her original position in the batting order.

4.10 Adverse Playing Conditions

- a. All games are scheduled for play. Play will not commence if the ground controller or council deem the ground unfit for play.
- b. If a game commences, but it is abandoned before the completion of required regulation innings then it shall be declared **"NO GAME"**.
- c. If 4 innings have been completed the score will stand as completed.
- d. If the game is tied after 4 innings the score shall revert to the previous innings where the scores were uneven. The team leading at that time shall be awarded the win.
- e. If the ground controller has declared the ground playable and further bad weather occurs, the decision to commence play will be left to the opposing coaches and if no decision can be reached, the umpire will adjudicate on whether the game is to commence.
- f. Any postponed, cancelled or incomplete games stopped for any reason will be re-scheduled (where possible) by the ABA Competition Committee. Coaches/clubs should advise the ABA Secretary of all postponed, cancelled or incomplete games. For games ultimately unable to be played/rescheduled and played, the Competition Committee will determine the outcome, with all such decisions requiring ratification by the ABA Executive Board.
- g. For rescheduled games by the Competition Committee, if the rescheduled game was stopped having played less than 3 full innings (18 total outs) the game and all stats will be voided. If 18 or more outs have been recorded the game will resume from that exact point (including pitching count on the batter).

- h. In the event that no semi-final or final game has completed due to weather conditions and in the event that a substitute day has not been scheduled, the highest qualifying team remaining if both the semi-finals have been played will be declared the winner. If only one or no semi-finals have been played, then the winner of the competition rounds will be declared the winner.
- i. The Competition Committee may change the venue if the ground allocated for the semi-final or final is deemed unplayable.
- j. The Competition Committee will attempt to reschedule a time for any wash out semi-finals or finals.

4.11 Results

- a. Scorekeepers will compare scorebooks at the end of each game and confirm the final score. It is the responsibility of the home team to have the game entered into the official Scoring System (My Ball Club) within 7 days of the scheduled game. Failure to do this may result in a fine or forfeiture of the game.
- b. It is required that all Minor League 10U / Major League 12U coaches/manager supply by 5.00pm of the Monday following each game their game results. They must upload their game results into the ABA online scoring portal. Photographs of both home and away lineup sheets (and scoresheets if available) must also be uploaded. The sheets must show the full team lineup for the game, include the final score, and be signed. (Although non-competitive, the Competition Committee requires this information to allow them to properly structure grade tournaments).
- c. All Teams are required to maintain copies of all lineup sheets and scoresheets for the duration of the season.

5.0 COACHES AND MANAGERS

5.1 Coach Requirements

Any person performing coaching duties in an ABA competition is encouraged to acquire a coaching accreditation as required for that level of play and is required to be [Police Vetted](#) and must observe the [Coaches Code of Conduct](#).

5.2 Coach Attire

- a. The manager and coaches are to be neatly dressed in a manner reflecting the image of the team.
- b. Uniform choices for all grades 16U down to 8U must be one of the following options, whichever option is chosen must be worn by all coaches on the day, no mixed dress.
OPTION 1: Baseball Pants (Including Belt) / Club Shirt / Club Cap / Closed Footwear.
OPTION 2: Black Drill/Cargo/Sports Short / Club Polo Shirt / Club Cap / Closed Footwear.
Shorts to be plain except for the club logo only.

6.0 UMPIRES

- a. Umpires are the responsibility of the team designated as the "Home" team in the ABA draw. Failure of the home team to supply an umpire can result in forfeiture of the game by the home team.
- b. Club based umpires are encouraged to attend training courses and seek NZBUA accreditation.
- c. The umpire will clarify the "ground rules" at the pre-game meeting with the managers.
- d. The umpire is required to use the [ABA Ejection Report](#) and [ABA Ejection Form](#) for any ejection.

7.0 LOCAL LEAGUE APPROVED RULES:

Minor League 10U / Major League 12U ONLY:

- a. All batters start with a count of 1 Strike / 1 Ball.
- b. Pitchers are to pitch in no more than 2 innings / or past the approved age pitch count, whichever comes first in any game.

Minor League 10U Only:

- a. Base runners may not advance on either a passed ball or wild pitch.

Minor League / Major League / Intermediate League / Junior League / Senior League:

- a. Females Only in all Little League age grades may after dispensation has been applied for and given may play one extra year down in a grade. Dispensations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and will focus mainly on the safety of the player concerned.

Note: These rules have been put in place to enhance the playing experience for all players / coaches / volunteers as well as speed up the game.

Section 2 – Important Rule Changes from 2022 onwards

2. ADULT & 19U GRADES

Rule Change	Applicable Grades	Handbook Reference
<p>Line-up Cards – Divisional (Adopted Rule)</p> <p>Teams may NOT write a player's name on the line-up card should such a player not be present at the start of play. However, should a player arrive at a game after the Coaches meeting, the player/s can be added to the substitute list.</p> <p>The late arriving player must be announced to the umpire in charge, added to the team sheet, the scorers advised and then the player is eligible to enter the game as a substitute player.</p>	Divisional	Section 4.3
<p>Line-up Cards – Premier, Reserve & 19U (Adopted Rule)</p> <p>The full team roster (or such reduced list of players that the coach desires) is allowed on the lineup card at the start of the game, whether all such players are present at the start of the game or not. However, a player cannot be added after the plate meeting.</p>	Premier, Reserve & 19U	Section 4.3
<p>Re-scheduling of Incomplete Games</p> <p>Any incomplete games stopped early due to rain or bad light will be re-scheduled (where possible) by the ABA Competition Committee. Coaches/clubs should advise the ABA Secretary of all incomplete / no games. For games ultimately unable to be played/rescheduled and played, the Competition Committee will determine the outcome, with all such decisions requiring ratification by the ABA Executive Board.</p>	All Grades	Section 5.2

Section 3 - Technical Norms - Adult Grades (and 19U)



ABA Technical Norms

MEN'S PREMIER, PREMIER RESERVE, 19U and DIVISIONAL 1 & 2

Regular Season

OFFICIAL GRADE RULES 2023 / 2024 SEASON

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2.0 THE PLAYING FIELD – PG 13

3.0 EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORM – PG 13

4.0 GAME PRELIMANARIES – PG 16

5.0 PLAYING THE GAMES – PG 20

6.0 IMPROPER PLAY, ILLEGAL ACTION, MISCODUCT AND PROTESTS – PG 23

7.0 UMPIRES – PG 25

1.0 OBJECTIVE OF THE GAME

Refer [OBR 2023](#)

1.1 Spirit of the Technical Rules

Any dispute or ambiguity in the format or implementation of the new rules around Premier/Reserve eligibility will be resolved by way of consideration to the spirit or intention of the rules. The ABA Rules Committee will have the final say in these matters.

1.2 Competition Levels

Adult Grade divisions will consist of the following levels.

Grade Name:

Premier

Premier Reserve

Divisional 1

Divisional 2

19U

1.3 Rules of Participation

- a. Clubs are entitled to have any one of these teams (Premier, Premier Reserve, 19s&U or Divisional 1 and 2) as stand-alone.
- b. All Junior players are subject to age grade pitching restrictions and carry these junior grade pitching restrictions through to all Adult Baseball games.
- c. Any notified breach of the pitching restrictions will result in sanction from the ABA Judicial Panel.
- d. That single-day loans of Divisional players between Divisional teams and clubs are approved during the regular season under the conditions that:
 - i. the receiving team's line-up would otherwise be less than 9 players.
 - ii. the receiving team's line-up does not exceed 9 players as a result.
 - iii. the total number of loan players in the receiving team's line-up does not exceed two.
 - iv. the loaned player(s) play in the outfield corners and bat bottom of the order for the receiving team.
 - v. the loaned players must be registered in the same or lower grade (i.e., Division 1 teams cannot loan players to Division 2 teams)
 - vi. the specific players lent are at the complete discretion of the loaning team manager except that the same player cannot be lent more than twice in a season.
 - vii. the loan should be a one-day release i.e., the loaned player(s) cannot also play for their own team(s) on the same day (unless the request is made after they already have, and no other loan players are practical given the circumstances)
 - viii. the loaned player(s) do not gain any post-season eligibility for such games.

1.4 Import Players Rules

Refer to Auckland Baseball Associations Governance Manual

2.0 THE PLAYING FIELD

All equipment must comply with [OBR 2023](#).

2.1 The Field

Division	Base Paths	Pitching Distance	Centerfield	L and R field lines	Bases
Senior	90ft (27.43m)	60ft 6in (18.44m)	400ft (121.92)	320ft (97.53m)	Removable/Fixed

3.0 EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS

Refer [OBR 2023](#)

3.1 Balls

- a. The Grade's official baseball is specified by the Grade Competition Committee.
- b. Only Grade sanctioned balls are to be used.
- c. Each team shall provide three (3) new balls (Premier/Reserve Grade) for each game and (2) two new balls for each 19U and Divisional Grade game. Spare balls will be the responsibility of the home club and must be the same model as advised in the equipment chart for each grade.
- d. Baseballs can be obtained through the ABA.

3.2 Equipment Standards

- a. All game bats must be wood or wood composite for Premier/Premier Reserve/19U.
- b. All Wood Composite bats must have the BBCOR stamp.
- c. NO two-piece bats.
- d. 19U - Exception - Female players may use BBCOR metal & metal composite bats.
- e. Divisional Grade - BBCOR bats, wood, or wood composite bats
- f. BBCOR metal/metal composite bats are not approved for Premier Reserve, and Premier grades.
- g. Metal cleats are allowed (subject to local ground rules). Field equipment for all competition games is to include home plate (white), bases (3 each, white and fixed), pitcher's rubber (white), back stop of suitable construction and material, outfield fence or netting (installed in a manner that provides for players' safety).
- h. Benches for the dugout area are to be provided.
- i. A table and chair(s) are to be provided to the scorekeeper(s).
- j. Each team must have a basic First Aid kit available at all games.
- k. All equipment should be in good repair and used in a manner specified by the manufacturer.

3.3 Catchers

- a. All catchers must wear full Baseball protective gear, even when warming up pitchers.
- b. All catchers working in the bullpen must wear a mask.
- c. Junior aged catchers playing in any adult grade and all 19U players must always have a throat guard extension on their helmet or mask.

3.4 Batting Helmets

- a. Batting helmets are mandatory.
- b. All Helmets must comply with the NOCSAE standard. Compliance verification is generally available on a Manufactures website.
- c. Should there be any dispute as to a helmet complying with the prescribed NOCSAE standard, said helmet must be removed from the game and replaced by a helmet that complies.
- d. Two (2) eared helmets are recommended.
- e. Single eared helmets may only be worn by players aged 20+
- f. Should there be a dispute as to the age of a player wearing a single-eared helmet, a player must at the time be able to provide a suitable form of photo ID (e.g., NZDL) to prove age. If no ID is available to verify age, the player in question must wear a 2 eared helmet for the remainder of the game.
- g. Any runner deliberately discarding or carrying a helmet will be ejected.
- h. Any player refusing to wear a helmet will be ejected from the game.
- i. A runner or batter may be allowed to remove their helmet only momentarily and only when the ball is not in active play.
- j. All coaches must wear a skull cap style helmet or approved batting helmet whilst on the field at first or third base. Any coaches not wearing an approved helmet will be removed from the playing field until such time as she / he wears one.
- k. All headgear must be worn as designed.

3.5 Protectors

- a. All players must wear athletic supporters (also known as groin protector, box or cup).

3.6 Jewellery

Refer [OBR 2023](#)

3.7 Equipment Standards

Grade	Ball	Bat (Maximums)	Bat Standards	Helmets Batting	Helmets Catching	Shoes	Catcher Equipment
Premier	Brett BR100	36" inches long 2 5/8" barrel	Wood Wood composite	NOCSAE standard cert. 2 Ear Helmets +(Players aged 20+ may wear an approved single ear helmet)	Catchers can wear Hockey style mask or skull cap and mask with NOCSAE cert. Throat guard mandatory for junior players	Metal or Rubber Cleats (Local ground rules take precedence)	Helmet or Skull cap with mask Leg Guards Chest Protector Protective cup. Refer rule 3.3(c).
Premier Reserve	Brett BR100	36" inches long 2 5/8" barrel	Wood Wood composite	NOCSAE standard cert. 2 Ear Helmets + Players aged 20+ may wear an approved single ear helmet	Catchers can wear Hockey style mask or skull cap and mask with NOCSAE cert. Throat guard mandatory for junior players	Metal or Rubber Cleats (Local ground rules take precedence)	Helmet or Skull cap with mask Leg Guards Chest Protector Protective cup. Refer rule 3.3 (c).
19U	Brett BR100	34" inches long -3 length to weight ratio 2 5/8" barrel or wood	Wood Wood Composite	NOCSAE standard cert. 2 Ear Helmets only	Catchers may wear Hockey style mask or skull cap and mask with NOCSAE standard cert. Throat guard mandatory	Metal cleat Rubber Cleat (Local ground rules have precedence)	Helmet or skull cap Leg Guards Chest Protector Protective cup. Approved throat guard.
Division 1 and 2	Brett BR230	34" inches long -3 length to weight ratio 2 5/8" barrel	BBCOR Wood Wood Composite	NOCSAE standard cert. 2 Ear Helmets only	Catchers can wear Hockey style mask or skull cap and mask with NOCSAE cert. Throat guard mandatory	Metal or Rubber Cleat (Local ground rules take precedence)	Helmet or Skull cap with mask Leg guards Chest Protector Protective cup. Refer rule 3.3(C).

3.8 Uniform (also refer to the ABA Governance manual)

- a. All teams must have matching, professional quality, and style uniforms, comprising of caps, tops, pants, leggings/socks, and cleats (minimum).
- b. Alternative uniform may also be advised (home and away).
- c. All players' uniforms shall carry some visible unique identifying number clearly displayed and visible on the back of the jersey.
- d. Player's names are optional, however must be consistent within each team.
- e. The team's name and a small player number may also be added to the front.
- f. There will be no signage, logos, or information on the pants.
- g. T-shirts are forbidden for players in all adult grades.
- h. Coaches/Managers must wear team attire when on the playing field. Coaches/Managers not in uniform cannot make trips to the mound, coach baselines or question umpires calls. The umpire can eject any manager, coach, or player in accordance with this rule.
- i. While participating in a Grade game a player must wear a uniform (no shorts) that is reasonably consistent with that worn by his teammates. If for any reason a player cannot be reasonably uniformed for a game, he must receive permission from both the manager of the opposition team and head umpire, prior to the start of the game.
- j. Teams turning out in non-registered uniform or any part there-of, will forfeit the game and be subject to a fine or penalty as determined by the ABA.

4.0 GAME PRELIMANARIES

Refer [OBR 2023](#)

4.1 Team Warm-Ups

- a. The draw will designate home and away teams.
- b. 20 minutes before the scheduled starting time of a game, the visiting team will commence their entitled seven (7) minutes warm up on the playing diamond.
- c. 12 minutes before the scheduled starting time of the game the home team will commence their entitled seven minute warm up.
- d. The remaining five minutes will allow the ground crew to finalise ground preparation.
- e. The supervision of the warmup before the game will be the responsibility of the team managers. The official time is to be kept by the head umpire.

4.2 Team Composition, Requirements, Restrictions, Team Line Up

- a. Any person performing coaching duties in ABA is encouraged to acquire a coaching accreditation as required for that level of play and is required to observe the ABA Coaches Code of Conduct enclosed with this document.
- b. A game can only commence as an official game if there are a minimum of EIGHT (8) eligible players for each team. If eight (8) eligible players at game commencement cannot take the field the team short of players must forfeit that game. A friendly game may still be played.
- c. All teams MUST have their line-ups 30 minutes before game time, the responsibility is on

the Manager / Head Coach of the team. Line-ups to be given to the scorer on the day. All line-ups must be signed by the Manager / Head Coach.

- d. Each Manager / Head Coach shall supply the umpire with 3 copies of his team line-up at the pre-game meeting held 5 minutes before the commencement of the game. The line-up shall show the names of all starting players, starting fielding position and the players' uniform numbers. The copies are to be distributed as follows:

Copy 1 WHITE – Retained by the umpire

Copy 2 YELLOW - Scorer

Copy 3 PINK – Opposition coach / manager.

Copy 4 BLUE – Returned to the coach/manager whose team the sheet belongs to.

4.3 Line-up Card Grade Rules

a. Divisional only.

- Teams may NOT write a player's name on the lineup card should such a player not be present at the start of play. However, should a player arrive at a game after the plate meeting, the player/s can be added to the substitute list.
- The late arriving player must be announced to the umpire in charge, added to the team sheet, the scorers advised and then the player is eligible to enter the game as a substitute player but must meet the minimum play requirements.

b. Premier, Reserve and 19U.

- The full team roster (or such reduced list of players that the coach desires) is allowed on the lineup card at the start of the game, whether all such players are present at the start of the game or not. However, a player cannot be added after the plate meeting.
- All players must be on the Teams official roster sheet as held by the association.

4.4 DH Rule - Premier, Premier Reserve and 19U only

- A Designated Hitter is permissible for the **pitcher only** – refer [OBR 2023](#) rules.

4.5 DH Rule - Divisional 1 and 2 only

- a. A Designated Hitter (1 per line-up) is NOT restricted to the pitching position and may be used for a positional player.
- b. The DH must be selected prior to the game, and that selected hitter must come to bat at least one time. A team that chooses not to select a DH prior to a game is barred from using a DH for the rest of that game. A player who enters the game in place of the DH -- either as a pinch- hitter or a pinch-runner -- becomes the DH in his team's line-up thereafter.
- c. If the player serving as DH comes into the game on defense, they will continue to bat in the same line-up spot. The (10th player on the line-up) will go and the line-up shrinks to 9 players.

4.6 3 Batter Minimum for Pitchers – 19U, Premier, Reserve, Divisional 1

This rule is in place for all adult grades – details refer [OBR 2023](#) 5.10G - A pitcher is required to pitch to a minimum of 3 consecutive batters.

This rule does not apply to Divisional 2.

4.7 Visits to the Mound requiring a Pitcher's Removal from the Game

- a. Manager or Coach Visits are Trips (as well as Visits), if 2 Trips in 1 innings, then pitcher must be changed.

4.8 Limitation on the Number of Mound Visits per Game

- a. Maximum of 5 Visits by any player, manager, or coach. (1 extra free visit per tie breaker extra innings).

4.9 Playing Conditions

- a. In the event of rain prior to scheduled game time, it is the responsibility of the managers of the scheduled teams to determine field condition and possible cancellation of game at least 1 hour before scheduled game time. It is the home team manager's responsibility to notify the head of umpires as soon as possible.
- b. Play will not commence if the ground controller or council deem the ground unfit for play.
- c. If the ground controller has declared the ground playable and further bad weather occurs, the decision to commence play will be left to the umpire.
- d. The draw committee may change the venue, if the ground allocated for a final is deemed unplayable.
- e. The draw committee will allocate a spare weekend for any wash out final.

4.10 The Batter's Box Rule

- a. The batter shall keep at least one foot in the batter's box throughout the batter's time at bat, unless one of the following exceptions applies, in which case the batter may leave the batter's box but not the dirt area surrounding home plate:
 - b. The batter swings at a pitch.
 - c. The batter is forced out of the batter's box by a pitch.
 - d. A member of either team requests and is granted "Time."
 - e. A defensive player attempts a play on a runner at any base.
 - f. The batter feints a bunt.
 - g. A wild pitch or passed ball occurs.
 - h. The pitcher leaves the dirt area of the pitching mound after receiving the ball; or
 - i. The catcher leaves the catcher's box to give defensive signals.
 - j. If the batter intentionally leaves the batter's box and delays play, and none of the exceptions listed in Rule I.(i) through(viii) applies, the umpire shall issue a warning to the batter for the batter's first violation of this Rule in a game. For a batter's second or subsequent violations of this Rule in a game, the umpire will give a strike against the batter. If no batters' boxes are laid down, it will be solely at the judgement of the umpire.
- k. The batter may leave the batter's box and the dirt area surrounding home plate when "Time" is called for the purpose of:
 - i. making a substitution; or
 - ii. a conference by either team.

4.11 Re-Entry Rule - Divisional Grades

Divisional 1 and 2

- a. A player in the starting lineup who has been removed for a substitute may re-enter the game in the same position in the batting order.
- b. A starting player re-entering the lineup may not pitch if re-entered.
- c. A starting player may only be re-entered ONCE.
- d. A substitute player can only enter a game once, unless they are being used as an injury replacement.

4.12 Speed Up Catcher Rule

- a. Available for use in all adult grades.
- b. Speed up rule - For the catcher with two outs. The runner will either be the last recorded out or any player on the bench who is not currently in the game.

4.13 Concussion Protocols

- a. If a medical professional, Umpire in Chief, the player's coach, the player's manager, or the player's parent has determined a player sustains a possible concussion, the player must be, at a minimum, removed from the game and/or practice for the remainder of that day. Such a player may be replaced.
- b. Please refer to the Governance Manual and Baseball New Zealand's Concussion Protocols regarding assessing/treating the affected player and the path and requirements to be followed for the player to be eligible to play in future games.

4.14 Blood Contingencies

- a. Should at any time, a player sustains an injury which produces blood on their person, the following contingencies are to apply.
- b. The player is to be removed from the field of play.
- c. The player is to be replaced by a courtesy runner or fielder:
- d. The player may re-enter the game in the same batting position, or any fielding position, only after the injury has been treated and dressed.
- e. The player who acts as a courtesy player may permanently enter.

4.15 The Junior Pitcher - Pitching Restrictions for All Juniors Playing Adult Baseball - Refer Junior Technical Norms

Any Junior pitcher playing above his grade can only pitch his grade limit, e.g., if a pitcher's approved grade is Senior league and has dispensation to play 19U or higher, his pitching restriction will be to the Senior League grade. The junior will also carry over his pitch count to the following day if he/she pitched in the junior grade. Please refer to the Pitch Smart USA chart.

Pitch Smart USA - Pitch Count Limits and Required Rest							
Age	Daily max (pitches in a game)	0 Days Rest	1 Days Rest	2 Days Rest	3 Days Rest	4 Days Rest	5 Days Rest
7-8	50	1-20	21-35	36-50	N/A	N/A	N/A
9-10	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
11-12	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
13-14	95	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
15-16	95	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+	N/A
17-18	105	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-80	81+	N/A
19-22	120	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-80	81-105	106+

4.16 No Foreign Substances

Under the new guidelines, any pitcher, fielder, manager, coach, club personnel, club committee member / volunteer who possesses or applies foreign substances in violation of the rules will be ejected from the game and automatically suspended in accordance with the rules and past precedent. Umpires may perform checks at any time.

Rule 3.01 states that “no player shall intentionally discolor or damage the ball by rubbing it with soil, rosin, paraffin, liquorice, sandpaper, emery paper or other foreign substance.” Rule 6.02(c) expands on that rule by stating, among other things, that a pitcher may not “apply a foreign substance of any kind to the ball;” “deface the ball in any manner;” throw a shine ball, spit ball, mud ball or emery ball; “have on his person, or in his possession, any foreign substance;” or “attach anything to his hand, any finger or either wrist (e.g., Band-Aid, tape, Super Glue, bracelet, etc.).

5.0 PLAYING THE GAME

Refer [OBR 2023](#)

5.1 Commencement

- The scheduled playing dates of games for the season shall be determined prior to opening day of the season. It is the responsibility of the ABA to communicate game and start times to all participants. (Including information to umpires and scorekeepers).
- All participants are encouraged to be present no later than ½ hour before any game.

5.2 Duration - Premier/Premier Reserve/19U

- All regular season weekend Premier Grade / 19U games will be scheduled for nine (9) innings.
- All regular season weekend Premier Reserve, and Divisional games will be scheduled for seven (7) innings.
- All regular season weeknight games seven (7) innings.
- Regular season Reserve grade / Divisional games have a 2hour 30min time limit. NNI 2hr 20min, 19U are a 9 innings game or NNI after 2hr 50min, whichever comes first.
- Regular season games must be played to 5 innings to be considered complete.
- Regular season and playoff rounds (excluding the Championship final game) shall use the same duration and innings limits for both Reserve and Premier grades.
- Championship finals games shall be 7 innings for Reserve grade.
- Championship finals games shall be 9 innings Premier and 19U.
- Premier semi-final and final games shall be 9 innings and have no time limit.
- All Grade Championship games must be played to 5 innings to be considered complete.

- k. The umpires may suspend, cancel, or call a game if, in their opinion, the safety of the players is compromised due to rain or field conditions.
- l. Any incomplete games stopped early due to rain or bad light will be re-scheduled (where possible) by the ABA Competition Committee. Coaches/clubs should advise the ABA Secretary of all incomplete / no games. For games ultimately unable to be played/rescheduled and played, the Competition Committee will determine the outcome, with all such decisions requiring ratification by the ABA Executive Board.
- e. For rescheduled games by the Competition Committee, if the rescheduled game was stopped having played less than 3 full innings (18 total outs) the game and all stats will be voided. If 18 or more outs have been recorded the game will resume from that exact point (including pitching count on the batter). Also rosters (players) / positions must be the same as at the point of stoppage. If a team is unable to field the same rostered player/s, permission for any player/s added must be given by the opposing Manager / Head Coach prior to game commencing.
- m. The ABA Executive can declare games cancelled or called-off in progress due to rain or a draw.
- n. The umpires may suspend, cancel, or call a game if, in their opinion, the safety of the players is compromised due to rain, darkness, or any other event that may require the game to be stopped. If an earlier scheduled game proceeds past the scheduled start time of the following game in order to complete the game, then the umpire of the following game shall announce the new starting time for that game, a minimum of 30 min from the completion of the first game.
- o. Only the Premier and 19U grades will play extra inning tiebreakers to obtain a result in Regular season play. Refer ABA 5.6
- p. Tied games (DRAWS) are accepted in Reserves, Division 1 and 2 with points shared.

5.3 Scheduling of Games

- a. Scheduling of games for all grades will be decided by the Competition Committee and released upon confirmation of teams entered.
- b. Should double headers be scheduled, the Competition Committee will advise the duration, innings limits, mercy rule etc.
- c. Time limits may be issued for Premier games at the discretion of the Competition Committee. This may be advised on a case-by-case basis.

5.4 Mercy Rule

- **PREMIER and 19U** - If a team is ahead by 15 or more runs after five (5) equal innings, or 10 or more runs after seven (7) equal innings, then the game shall be considered complete.
- **RESERVE** - If a team is ahead by 15 or more runs after four (4) equal innings or 10 or more runs after (5) equal innings then the game shall be considered complete.
- **DIVISIONAL 1** – If a team is ahead by 15 or more runs after four (4) equal innings or 10 or more runs after (5) equal innings then the game shall be considered complete.
- **DIVISIONAL 2** – If a team is ahead by 10 or more runs after (5) equal innings then the game shall be considered complete.

5.5 Inning Run Limit - Divisional 2 Only

- a. RUN LIMIT: Games will be played with a five (5) run limit per inning for innings 1-6.
- b. The play, which scores the fifth run, should be played to completion, however, only five

runs count.

- c. There is NO run limit on the 7th inning.
- d. The side is considered retired at the end of five runs or three outs whichever occurs first. Any half inning which ends because of the five runs, shall be counted as three consecutive outs.

5.6 Tiebreakers

Regular season - Premier and 19U

- a. If games are tied and time is up and the home team has completed their half inning and scores are still tied, then the game will continue into extra innings to obtain a win/loss result.
- b. Where extra innings are required and any "extra inning" is about to commence, the Team at bat shall commence the top of the inning with a runner on first and second base.
- c. The batter who leads off an inning shall continue to be the batter who would lead off the inning in the absence of this extra-innings rule.
- d. The runner on first base shall be the player (or a substitute for such player) in the batting order immediately preceding the batter who leads off the inning. The runner on second base shall be the player (or a substitute for such player) in the batting order immediately preceding the runner on first base. By way of example, if the #5 hitter in the batting order is due to lead off the 11th inning, the #3 player in the batting order (or a pinch-runner for such player) shall begin the inning on second base and the #4 player in the batting order (or a pinch-runner for such player) shall begin the inning on first base.
- e. Any runner or batter removed from the game for a substitute shall be ineligible to return to the game as would be the case with any substituted player pursuant to the Official Baseball Rules.
- f. For purposes of this Regulation, any "extra inning" is defined as the eighth inning or later in a seven-inning game, or the tenth inning or later in a nine-inning game.
- g. **There are NO tiebreakers in regular season play in Reserves, Division 1 and Division 2.**

5.7 Postseason Tiebreakers - All adult grades

Tiebreakers will be used in all post season games to obtain a result.

5.8 Divisional Grade - Game Duration and Results

- a. All regular Divisional grade regular season weekend Grade games will be scheduled for seven
- b. (7) innings or 2hr 30min (NNI after 2h 20min)
- c. If the game is still tied at the end of the 7th inning, then the game will be declared a tie.
- d. The first game of a Divisional grade double header will be scheduled for seven (7) innings.
- e. A game will be called for time if the next inning has not begun, and the time limit has been reached.
- f. Regular season games must be played to 5 innings to be considered complete.
- g. Regular season and playoff games (excluding the Championship final) shall use regular season duration and innings limits.
- h. Both Division 1 and 2 Championship finals shall be schedules 7 innings games

- i. All Grade Championship final games must be played to 5 innings unless the mercy rule applies.
- j. The umpires may suspend, cancel, or call a game if, in their opinion, the safety of the players is compromised due to rain or field conditions.
- k. Any incomplete games stopped early due to rain or bad light will be re-scheduled (where possible) by the ABA Competition Committee. Coaches/clubs should advise the ABA Secretary of all incomplete / no games. For games ultimately unable to be played/rescheduled and played, the Competition Committee will determine the outcome, with all such decisions requiring ratification by the ABA Executive Board.
- l. For rescheduled games by the Competition Committee, if the rescheduled game was stopped having played less than 3 full innings (18 total outs) the game and all stats will be voided. If 18 or more outs have been recorded the game will resume from that exact point (including pitching count on the batter)
- m. The umpires may suspend, cancel, or call a game if, in their opinion, the safety of the players is compromised due to rain, darkness, or any other event that may require the game to be stopped.
- n. If an earlier scheduled game proceeds past the scheduled start time of the following game in order to complete the game, then the umpire of the following game shall announce the new starting time for that game, a minimum of 30 min from the completion of the first game.
- o. Field closures, Makeup games, Suspended games – refer Ops manual page16, 20 d-g.

5.9 Results

- a. In the first instance, it is the responsibility of the home team/club to upload the results for all their scheduled home games.
- b. It is required that Divisional team coaches/manager supply by 5.00pm of the Monday following each game their game results. They must upload their game results into the ABA online scoring portal. Photographs of both home and away lineup sheets (and scoresheets if available) must also be uploaded. The sheets must show the full team lineup for the game, include the final score, and be signed. Failure to supply correct data will result in the following sanctions.
- c. First Offence: The offending club will automatically be fined \$50.00 by the ABA.
- d. Second and continued offences: This will result in the offending club being fined \$100.00 and the game being forfeited if they are the winning team.
- e. Pitch Count numbers are required to be submitted with the game result info for all Junior grade players pitching in the 19U and Divisional grade games.
- f. All teams must maintain copies of all lineup sheets and scoresheets for each game for the duration of the season.
- g. The Divisional Committee shall keep a results table which will be published regularly via an online forum.

5.10 Game Duration and Regulations – 19U and Adult Baseball

Grade	Duration	Innings	Mercy Rule	Run Rule	Regulation game	Tiebreaker (OBR)	Draws	Re-entry
Premier	No time limit	9 innings	15/5 10/7	NO	5 innings	Yes Refer section 5.6	No	No
Premier Reserve	2hours 30min, NNI 2 hrs 20min	7 innings	15/4 10/5	NO	5 innings	No (Postseason only)	Yes	No
19U	NNI after 2 hours 50min.	9 innings	15/4 10/5	NO	5 innings	Yes Refer Section 5.6	No	No
Divisional 1	2hours 30min. NNI 2 hours 20 mins	7 innings	15/4 10/5	NO	5 innings	No (Postseason only)	Yes	Yes (Starting players only)
Divisional 2	2hours 30min NNI 2 hours 20 mins	7 innings	10/5	YES 5 runs. (Innings 1-6 only)	5 innings	No (Postseason only)	Yes	Yes (Starting players only)

Note: No New Innings times ONLY apply if the duration of a regulation game will be completed at the end of the current innings.

6.0 IMPROPER PLAY, ILLEGAL ACTION, AND MISCONDUCT

Refer [OBR 2023](#)

6.1 Collision Rule

Baseball New Zealand and the Auckland Baseball Association is concerned about unnecessary and violent collisions primarily with the catcher at home plate, and with infielders at all bases. **The intent of this rule is to encourage base runners and defensive players to avoid such collisions whenever possible.**

- When there is a collision between a runner and a fielder who clearly is in possession of the ball, **or in the act of fielding the ball**, the umpire shall judge:
- Whether the collision by the runner was avoidable (could the runner have reached the plate without colliding) or unavoidable (the runner's path to the plate was blocked).
- Whether the runner actually was attempting to reach the plate or attempting to dislodge the ball from the fielder; or
- Whether the runner was using flagrant contact to maliciously dislodge the ball.

6.2 Penalty

- a. If the runner attempts to dislodge the ball, the runner shall be declared out even if the fielder loses possession of the ball. The ball is dead, and all other base runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.
- b. If the fielder blocks the path of the base runner to the plate, the runner MAY make contact, slide into, or collide with a fielder if the runner is making a legitimate attempt to reach the plate.
- c. If the flagrant or malicious contact by the runner was before the runner's touching the plate, the runner shall be declared out and ejected from the contest. The ball shall be declared dead immediately. All other base runners shall return to the bases they occupied at the time of the interference.
- d. If the contact was after a preceding runner had touched home plate, the preceding runner will be ruled safe, the ball becomes dead immediately and all other base runners will return to the base they had last touched prior to the contact.
- e. If the runner is safe and the collision is malicious, the runner shall be ruled safe and ejected from the game.
- f. If the defensive player blocks the plate or base line clearly without possession of the ball, obstruction shall be called. The umpire shall point and call, "That's obstruction." The umpire shall let the play continue until all play has ceased, call time and award any bases that are justified in the Official Rules of Baseball. The obstructed runner is awarded at least one base beyond the base last touched legally before the obstruction.
- g. If the base runner collides flagrantly, the runner shall be declared safe on the obstruction, but will be ejected from the contest. The ball is dead.
- h. If the runner's path to the base is blocked and all stipulations above are fulfilled, it is considered unavoidable contact.

6.3 Protest Procedure for Protest

- a. Time is called.
- b. A protest is declared by the Manager / Coach to the Umpire stating the rule number in question. (This must happen before the next pitch, play or attempted play following the disputed ruling). The Manager / Coach has no longer than 5 minutes to announce the rule number (Current fee for all adult grades is \$50, this fee will be invoiced to the club concerned and must be paid within 7 days).
- c. If the Umpire believes the protest can be resolved reasonably promptly by referring to the OBR, the ABA Technical Norms manual, or any other suitable source of knowledge, then the Umpire may pause the game to try to immediately resolve the protest. The length of time to try and resolve such protest is at the Umpire's discretion, but it should not unduly hold up the game. If the protested rule is clarified and the protesting coach is found to be correct, the \$50 fee will not be invoiced. If the protesting coach is found to be incorrect the \$50 fee will be invoiced as per 6.3b. In either case, the game may then continue.
- d. If the protest is not resolved per c and d above, the Umpire will sign the scorebook noting the rule number the protest relates to, the inning, score, outs, batters count and runners on base at the time of the protest. The Umpire can then recommence the game.
- e. If the protest is not resolved per c and d above then, after the game, the protesting team's Manager/Coach must lodge the protest using the ABA online system, downloading the PDF protest form, then once complete uploading the form via the online portal having completed all sections of the form in detail and answering the required questions on the portal.

- f. Such protest form must be lodged online within 24 hours after the conclusion of the game.
- g. A protest arising from a game ending play must be announced immediately to the umpire and before the umpire leaves the field of play. The Manager / Coach has 5 minutes to announce to the umpire the rule number in question. The umpire will sign the scorebook noting the rule number the protest relates to, the inning, score, outs, batters count and runners on base. The Manager/Coach lodging the protest must then complete section (f) of the Procedure for protest.

6.4 Ending the Game

Refer [OBR 2023](#)* Official Baseball Rules

7.0 UMPIRES

- a. Umpires are the responsibility of the ABA and clubs.
- b. Two (2) umpires are the prescribed minimum requirement for each game of a regular season game. In the event of a double header, the umpires may be the same person(s).
- c. Club based umpires are encouraged to attend training courses and seek NZBUA accreditation.
- d. Official Umpires should be NZBUA certified for the level of Adult Baseball.
- e. Fees for each umpire shall be determined by the ABA. The ABA shall cover the costs of umpires for the 19U, Divisional, Premier Reserves and Premier grades.
- f. The ABA is responsible for payment of the umpires and, in the case of Divisional umpires, will achieve this by (a) not charging clubs for umpiring fees except on a case-by-case basis when ABA umpires are provided and (b) requiring clubs to make payments to the umpires provided by their teams.
- g. The Umpires Association shall supply to the ABA a list of all games covered and to whom payment should be made too.
- h. In the event that an official umpire does not attend by the time set down for the game to commence or being unable to continue to umpire the game, an umpire shall be provided by the home team in the 19U, Premier Reserves, and Premier grade or the team scheduled to do so (as primary responsible) or the home team (as backup only) in the Divisional grades. Failure of the responsible team(s) to supply an umpire will result in forfeiture of their game in the round in question by the responsible team(s).
- i. The umpire will clarify the "ground rules" at the pre-game meeting with the managers.
- j. The umpire has the power to rule on anything not covered by these rules and the Rules of Baseball.
- k. A player or official who refuses to promptly obey the directions of an umpire shall be ejected from the game.
- l. A player if / when ejected from a game must stand down from all Baseball until the Judicial process has been completed and has received notification from the Association that they are free to play or that their standdown period is now over. I.E. If a 19U player is ejected from a 19U game, if that player also plays in any other grades (16U, Reserve, Premier, Divisional) they may not take the diamond.
- m. (See ABA Ejection Form on the ABA website).

Note: Ejection means that the person ejected must leave the vicinity of the playing field. They must not be within eyeshot of the playing field or players, and they must not have any more involvement in the game. The use of portable communication devices to relay messages / information to those remaining on the field is strictly forbidden and not within the spirit of the game.