Sensitivity: General

AUCKLAND
BASEBALL
ASSOCIATION

# TECHNICAL NORMS - ALL GRADES

Rev F

**11 October 2026**



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Revision History

| Revision N° | Prepared By | Description | Issued Date |
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| A | Mark Cooper | Technical Norms – Season 2024 / 2025 | 8/10/2024 |
| B | Mark Cooper | Updated: Senior Grade, Section 5, Sub-section 5.2 (e) and (j) | 12/10/2024 |
| C | Gareth McCloughen | Updated: Junior Grades all ages referenced to LL age charts. 12U, 13U, 14U continual batting order. Closer alignment to LL rules. Reference to Div1 and Div2 updated to Upper Divisional and Lower Divisional. Change references from Sporty system to GameDay. Updated to reference OBR2025 | 26/10/2025 |
| D | Gareth McCloughen | Updated Number innings to constitute a game. 9 innings game, 5 Innings to constitute a game. 7 innings game, 4 Innings to constitute a game. Updated Equipment Bat standards for 19U and Divisional. Removed Section 4.15 Foreign substances as this is covered by OBR. | 29/10/2025 |
| E | Gareth McCloughen | Minor Updates to correct inconsistencies between Tech Norms and Governance Bylaws. 10U/Minors grade name becomes Minors PP40. Use consistent naming for LL grade names. Update for ball 4 coach pitch in Minors PP40. Update to OBR 2026 | 02/10/2026 |
| F | Gareth McCloughen | Updated 19U Big League game length to 7 Innings NNI after 2:20. Mercy rules for 7 innings game | 11/10/26 |

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AUCKLAND BASEBALL ASSOCIATION

# SECTION 1 – TECHNICAL NORMS – JUNIOR GRADES

# REGULAR SEASON

# 1 IMPORTANT NOTES

## 1.1 Spirit of the Technical Rules

a. Disputes or ambiguities in Little League baseball rules will be resolved according to the spirit and intention of the rules. The ABA Competition Committee has the final say.

## 1.2 Little League Rules

a. The ABA follows Little League International rules with additional league-specific rules for fun and balanced play. Coaches/Managers must understand these rules to ensure a positive experience for players. Parents are encouraged to learn the basics of Little League baseball. The rulebook is available as a free mobile app, approved for use in the dugout for referencing rules.

## 1.3 Rules and Regulation Updates

a. The ABA follows the latest Little League® Official Regulations, Playing Rules, and Operating Policies. Rule changes are available on the Little League website and updated in the rules app annually.

## 1.4 Cheat Sheets

a. The ABA Rules Committee provides "cheat sheets" for key rules. In case of discrepancies, the Technical Norms take precedence.

# 2 EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS

## 2.1 Balls

a. The ABA supplies baseballs for all grade play, funded through team fees.

b. Minor League must use Flexiball.

c. Majors, Intermediate, Juniors, and Seniors must use league-approved balls.

d. Majors, Intermediate, Juniors, and Seniors teams must provide at least four new approved regulation balls (two per team) to the umpire. Minors PP40 teams must provide two new approved regulation balls (one per team) to the umpire. Spare balls must be available, especially in wet weather, and must match the model in the Equipment Standards chart. The home team is responsible for extra balls if needed.

e. The ABA provides game balls for championship playoff/final games and all ABA-run tournaments.

## 2.2 Metal Cleats

a. Local ground rules take precedence and metal cleats may be prohibited on some diamonds.

## 2.3 Equipment

a. All equipment must comply with Little League Rules.

# 3 GAME DURATION

| Grade | Duration | Innings | Mercy Rule | Regulation Game |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Minors (PP40) | Length can vary but<br>No new innings after 1hr 50 min | 6 | 4 runs per innings | 4 innings |
| Majors | 2 Hours<br>No new innings after 1hr 50 min | 6 | 15 runs after 4 innings<br>10 runs after 5 innings | 4 innings |
| Intermediates | 2 Hours 30 min<br>No new innings after 2hr 20 min | 7 | 15 runs after 4 innings<br>10 runs after 5 innings | 4 innings |
| Juniors | 2 Hours 30 min<br>No new innings after 2hr 20 min | 7 | 15 runs after 4 innings<br>10 runs after 5 innings | 4 innings |
| Seniors | 2 Hours 30 min<br>No new innings after 2hrs 20 min | 7 | 15 runs after 4 innings<br>10 runs after 5 innings | 4 innings |

# 4 PLAYING THE GAME

## 4.1 Line-up Sheets

a. Teams must submit their line-ups 30 minutes before game time. The Manager/Head Coach is responsible and must sign the line-up sheet, which is given to the scorer.

b. Each Manager/Head Coach must hand in at the plate meeting to the umpire 3 copies of the line-up 5 minutes before the game. The line-up must include all starting players, fielding positions, and uniform numbers. Distribution:

| Copy Colour | Person Retained By |
|---|---|
| White | Umpire Copy |
| Yellow | Scorer Copy |
| Pink | Opposition Coach / Manager Copy |
| Blue | Returned to the team's coach/manager |

c. All players must be on the team's official roster sheet held by the association.

d. Breaches incur judicial penalties.

e. Refer to Little League Rules for Mandatory Play in Minor, Major, Intermediate, Junior and Senior Leagues.

f. Players cannot play in multiple teams within the same age group or division. Violations result in game forfeiture and a non-appealable 1-game suspension for the coach.

g. Minors and T-Ball only:

   i. Do not list absent players on the line-up card. Late arrivals can be added to the lineup if announced to the umpire, added to the team sheet, and scorers informed. They must meet minimum play requirements.

h. Major/Intermediate/Junior/Senior:

   i. The full roster or a reduced list can be listed at the start, regardless of presence. Players cannot be added after the plate meeting.

   ii. All listed players must play and meet minimum play requirements.

## 4.2 Minimum Player Numbers

a. A game can start with a minimum of 8 eligible players per team. If the 9th spot remains vacant, it incurs an automatic out each time through the line-up. Teams with fewer than 8 players at the start must forfeit the game. Refer to grade-specific rules for late arrivals.

b. Teams unable to field 8 eligible players after 10 minutes of the scheduled start time forfeit the game.

c. A game cannot start with only 7 players.

## 4.3 Team Warm-Up

a. The team listed first in the draw chooses their dugout for regular season and playoff games.

b. The home team has the last use of the diamond for warm-up and must have at least 5 minutes before the game's scheduled start. They remain on the diamond to start the game.

## 4.4 The Pitcher

a. All players must strictly follow Pitch Smart guidelines and Little League Pitching Rules. If there is a conflict, the ABA will use the lower number. **Pitch Smart numbers are maximum limits, not targets.**

b. **Minor League only:** Any pitcher who hits 3 batters in one inning must be replaced.

## 4.5 Courtesy Runner

a. The ABA does not allow courtesy runners for the pitcher or catcher when there are two outs. Courtesy runners are not permitted. This is to promote hustle between innings. Coach etc to warm up pitcher if required (wearing appropriate catcher's mask)

## 4.6 Inning Run Rules

a. **Minors:** Four (4) runs constitute an inning. The play that scores the fourth run is completed, but only four runs count.

b. **Majors:** Five (5) runs constitute an inning. The play that scores the fifth run is completed, but only five runs count. This applies to the first 4 innings only.

c. **Intermediate/Junior/Senior:** Six (6) runs constitute an inning. The play that scores the sixth run is completed, and all resulting runs count. This applies to the first 5 innings only.

## 4.7 Tiebreakers – Little League Grades

a. **All LL grades (except minors):** If a game is tied after the home team has completed their at-bat and time is up, the game continues into extra innings to determine a winner.

b. In extra innings, the team at bat starts with a runner on second base.

c. The inning's leadoff batter remains the same as if the game were in regular innings.

d. The runner on second base is the batter (or substitute) immediately preceding the leadoff batter.

## 4.8 Ball 4 – Minors Only

a. NO walk and NO tee. On Ball 4, the batting-team coach immediately takes over pitching to the same batter. Batting team coach should be umpiring from behind the pitcher and be ready to throw the coach pitches to keep the game moving. Coach/parent can rotate through game.

b. Coach pitches/front-tosses from approximately 30 ft. Maximum 3 coach pitches / swings; if no fair ball is put in play by the 3rd, the batter is out. A foul on the 3rd is an out. Coach pitch HBP is re-pitched. Runners do not advance unless the ball is batted. If a batted ball hits the coach: dead ball, batter to 1st and forced runners advance.

c. Little League rules apply once the ball is in play.

## 4.9 Continuous Batting Order – Minors, Majors, Intermediate and Juniors only

a. Minors, Majors, Intermediate and Junior teams must use a continuous batting order, including all players present. Each batter must bat in their original order, regardless of substitutions and re-entries.

## 4.10 Adverse Playing Conditions

a. Games will not commence if the ground controller or council deems the ground unfit.

b. If a game starts but is abandoned before completing the required innings, it is declared "NO GAME."

c. If 4 innings are completed, the score stands.

d. If the game is tied after 4 innings, the score reverts to the last uneven inning, and the leading team wins.

e. If the ground is declared playable but weather worsens, the umpire decides whether to play.

f. Postponed, cancelled, or incomplete games will be rescheduled by the ABA Competition Committee. Coaches/clubs must notify the ABA Secretary of such games. The Competition Committee determines the outcome for games that cannot be rescheduled, with ABA Executive Board ratification.

g. Rescheduled games stopped before 3 innings (18 outs) are voided. If 18 or more outs are recorded, the game resumes from that point with the same rosters and positions. Added players need opposing Manager/Head Coach approval.

h. If no semi-final or final game is completed due to weather and no substitute day is scheduled, the highest qualifying remaining team is declared the winner if both semi-finals were played. If only one or no semi-finals were played, the competition round winner is declared the winner.

i. The Competition Committee may change the venue if the semi-final or final ground is unplayable.

j. The Competition Committee will attempt to reschedule any washed-out semi-finals or finals.

## 4.11 Game Results

a. Scorekeepers must compare scores and confirm the final score after each game. If not live scored, the home team must ensure the game is loaded in the ABA defined Scoring System within 7 days. Both

teams to ensure line ups and game result is loaded to Gameday at the conclusion of the game, or at minimum within 7 days. Failure to do so may result in a fine or forfeiture.

# 5 COACHES AND MANAGERS

## 5.1 Coach Requirements

Coaches in ABA competitions are encouraged to obtain the necessary coaching accreditation, must be Police Vetted, and must observe the Coaches Code of Conduct.

## 5.2 Coach Attire

a. Managers and coaches must dress neatly to reflect the team's image.

b. Uniform choices for all grades (8U to 16U) must be consistent among all coaches on the day. Options:

OPTION 1: Baseball pants (including belt), club shirt, club cap, and closed footwear.

OPTION 2: Black drill/cargo/sports shorts, club polo shirt, club cap, and closed footwear. Shorts must be plain except for the club logo.

# 6 UMPIRES

a. The home team is responsible for providing an umpire; failure to do so can result in forfeiture.

b. Club-based umpires are encouraged to attend training and seek NZBUA accreditation.

c. The umpire will clarify "ground rules" at the pre-game meeting with the managers.

d. The umpire must use the ABA Ejection Report and ABA Ejection Form for any ejections.

# 7 LOCAL LEAGUE APPROVED RULES

Minor League PP40

a. Pitchers may pitch no more than 1 innings or past the approved age pitch count per game. If a team occasionally needs to have a player pitch 2 innings, this is OK on exception

### Major League Only:

b. Pitchers may pitch no more than 2 innings or past the approved age pitch count per game.

### Minor League 10U Only:

c. Base runners cannot advance on passed balls or wild pitches.

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

d. Females in all Little League age grades may play one year down with approved dispensation, reviewed on a case-by-case basis focusing on player safety.

### Note: These rules are designed to enhance the playing experience for all players, coaches, and volunteers.

# SECTION 2 – TECHNICAL NORMS – SENIOR GRADES

# REGULAR SEASON

# 1 OBJECTIVE OF THE GAME

Refer to the OBR 2026

## 1.1 Spirit of the Technical Rules

a. Any disputes or ambiguities in the format or implementation of the rules regarding Premier/Reserve eligibility will be resolved by considering the spirit or intention of the rules.

b. The ABA Competition Committee has the final say in these matters.

## 1.2 Competition Levels

a. Adult Grade divisions consist of the following levels:

   i. Premier

   ii. Premier Reserve

   iii. Divisional Grades

   iv. 19U

## 1.3 Rules of Participation

### Stand-Alone Teams:

a. Clubs are entitled to have teams in any of these divisions as stand-alone entities.

### Pitching Restrictions:

   a. Junior players are subject to age-grade pitching restrictions, which they must follow in all Adult Baseball games.

b. Breaches of pitching restrictions will result in sanctions from the ABA Judicial Panel.

### Single-Day Loans of Divisional Players:

   a. No player may be loaned between clubs

   b. No player may be loaned between teams in the same division, including any grading periods where divisions may be combined

   c. Same day loans of divisional players in an upwards direction (i.e. from a higher-numbered division to a lower-numbered division) are approved under the following specific conditions:

      i. The receiving team would otherwise have fewer than 9 players.

      ii. The receiving team's line-up does not exceed 9 players due to the loan.

      iii. The total number of loan players does not exceed two.

      iv. Loaned players do not pitch.

      v. Loaned players do not gain post-season eligibility from such games.

   d. Same day loans of divisional players in a downwards direction (i.e. from a lower-numbered division to a higher-numbered division) are approved under the following specific conditions:

i. The receiving team would otherwise have fewer than 9 players.

ii. The receiving team's line-up does not exceed 9 players due to the loan.

iii. The total number of loan players does not exceed one.

iv. Loaned players play right-field and bat last.

v. Loaned players do not gain post-season eligibility from such games.

vi. The same player cannot be leant more than twice in a season.

vii. The receiving team is only one division below the loaning team

e. Every instance of a loan player being used must be logged with divisional management

### 1.4 Import Players Rules

Refer to the Auckland Baseball Association's Governance Manual for detailed rules regarding import players.

# 2 THE PLAYING FIELD

All equipment must comply with OBR 2026

### 2.1 The Field

| Division | Base Paths | Pitching Distance | Centerfield | L & R Field Lines | Bases |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Senior | 90ft (27.43m) | 60ft 6 in (18.44m) | 400ft (121.92m) | 320ft (97.53m) | Removable / Fixed |

# 3 EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS

Refer to the OBR 2026

### 3.1 Balls

a. The official baseball for each grade is specified by the Grade Competition Committee.

b. Only sanctioned balls are to be used.

c. Each team must provide three new balls for 19U, Premier/Reserve Grade games and two new balls for Divisional Grade games. Spare balls are the home club's responsibility and must match the specified model.

d. Baseballs can be obtained through the ABA.

## 3.2 Equipment Standards

a. Game bats for Premier and Premier Reserve must be wood or wood composite with a BBCOR stamp; no two-piece bats are allowed.

b. Big League (19U): Players may use bats that are either BBCOR-certified metal or composite, wood, or wood composite.

c. Divisional Grade: Players may use bats that are either BBCOR-certified metal or composite, wood, or wood composite.

d. Metal cleats are allowed, subject to local ground rules.

e. Field equipment must include home plate, bases, pitcher's mound & rubber & backstop.

f. Benches for the dugout and a table and chairs for scorekeepers are required.

g. Each team must have a basic First Aid kit.

h. All equipment must be in good repair and used as specified by the manufacturer.

## 3.3 Catchers

a. Full protective gear is required for all catchers, including when warming up pitchers.

b. Catchers in the bullpen must wear a mask.

c. Junior catchers in any adult grade and all 19U catchers must have a throat guard extension on their helmet or mask.

## 3.4 Batting Helmets

a. Batting helmets are mandatory.

b. Helmets must comply with the NOCSAE standard, verified on the manufacturer's website.

c. Helmets not meeting the NOCSAE standard must be replaced.

d. Two-eared helmets are recommended.

e. C-Flap extensions are allowed.

f. Single-eared helmets are allowed only for players aged 20+.

g. Players wearing single-eared helmets must provide photo ID to verify age; otherwise, they must wear a two-eared helmet.

h. Runners deliberately discarding or carrying helmets will be ejected.

i. Players refusing to wear helmets will be ejected.

j. Helmets may be momentarily removed only when the ball is not in play.

k. Coaches must wear a skull cap or approved helmet at first or third base or be removed from the field.

l. Headgear must be worn as designed.

## 3.5 Protectors

a. All male players must wear athletic supporters (groin protectors).

## 3.6 Jewellery

Refer to OBR 2026 for rules on jewellery.

## 3.7 Equipment Standards

| Grade | Ball | Bat (Max) | Bat Standards | Helmets Batting | Helmets Catching | Shoes | Catcher Equipment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Premier | Brett BR100 | 36"long<br>2 5/8" barrel | Wood<br>Wood composite | NOCSAE standard certified<br>2 Eared Helmets<br>(Players aged 20+ may wear an approved single eared helmet) | Catchers can wear Hockey style mask or skull cap and mask with NOCSAE cert.<br>Throat guard mandatory for Junior players | Metal or rubber cleats<br>Local ground rules take precedence | Helmet or skull cap with mask<br>Leg Guards<br>Chest Protector<br>Protective Cup<br>Refer rule s3.3(c) |
| Premier Reserve | Brett BR100 | 36"long<br>2 5/8" barrel | Wood<br>Wood composite | NOCSAE standard certified<br>2 Eared Helmets<br>(Players aged 20+ may wear an approved single eared helmet) | Catchers can wear Hockey style mask or skull cap and mask with NOCSAE cert.<br>Throat guard mandatory for Junior players | Metal or rubber cleats<br>Local ground rules take precedence | Helmet or skull cap with mask<br>Leg Guards<br>Chest Protector<br>Protective Cup<br>Refer rule s3.3(c) |
| 19U | Brett BR100 | 34" long<br>-3 length to weight ratio<br>2 5/8" barrel or wood | BBCOR<br>Wood<br>Wood composite | NOCSAE standard certified<br>2 Eared Helmets only | Catchers can wear Hockey style mask or skull cap and mask with NOCSAE cert.<br>Throat guard mandatory | Metal or rubber cleats<br>Local ground rules take precedence | Helmet or skull cap with mask<br>Leg Guards<br>Chest Protector<br>Protective Cup<br>Refer rule s3.3(c) |
| Upper and Lower Divisional | Brett BR100 | 34" long<br>-3 length to weight ratio<br>2 5/8" barrel or wood | BBCOR<br>Wood<br>Wood composite | NOCSAE standard certified<br>2 Eared Helmets only | Catchers can wear Hockey style mask or skull cap and mask with NOCSAE cert.<br>Throat guard mandatory | Metal or rubber cleats<br>Local ground rules take precedence | Helmet or skull cap with mask<br>Leg Guards<br>Chest Protector<br>Protective Cup<br>Refer rule s3.3(c) |

### 3.8 Uniform

a. Teams must have matching, professional-quality uniforms comprising caps, tops, pants, leggings/socks, and cleats.

b. Alternative home and away uniforms are allowed but not required.

c. Uniforms must display a unique identifying number on the back.

d. Player names on uniforms are optional.

e. Team name and a small player number may be added to the front.

f. T-shirts are forbidden for players in adult grades.

g. Coaches/Managers must wear team attire when on the field and are not allowed to coach or question umpire calls if not in uniform.

h. Players must wear uniforms consistent with their teammates; permission is needed for exceptions.

i. Teams in non-registered uniforms will forfeit the game and may face fines or penalties.

# 4 GAME PRELIMINARIES

Refer to the OBR 2026

### 4.1 Team Warm-Ups

a. Home and away teams are designated in the draw.

b. Visiting team has a 7-minute warm-up 20 minutes before the game.

c. Home team has a 7-minute warm-up 12 minutes before the game.

d. The remaining 5 minutes are for ground crew preparations.

e. Team managers supervise the warm-up, and the head umpire keeps official time.

### 4.2 Team Composition, Requirements, Restrictions, Team Line Up etc

a. Coaches are encouraged to acquire coaching accreditation and must observe the BNZ Coaches Code of Conduct.

b. Games can only commence with a minimum of 8 eligible players per team. If not, the game is forfeited but can be played as a friendly.

c. Line-ups must be submitted 30 minutes before game time, signed by the Manager/Head Coach.

d. Managers/Head Coaches must supply the umpire with 3 copies of the line-up 5 minutes before the game starts.

e. Line-up card rules differ slightly for Divisional and other grades regarding late-arriving players.

| Copy Colour | Person Retained By |
|---|---|
| White | Umpire Copy |
| Yellow | Scorer Copy |
| Pink | Opposition Coach / Manager Copy |
| Blue | Returned to the Coach Manager whose team the sheet belongs to |

## 4.3 Line-up Card Grade Rules

**Divisional:**

a. Do not list players that aren't present at the start of play.

b. Late-arriving players can be added to the substitute list after the plate meeting if announced to the umpire and added to the team sheet.

c. Scorers must be informed, and the player must meet minimum play requirements.

**Premier, Reserve, and 19U:**

a. The full team roster (or a reduced list) can be listed at the start, even if not all players are present.

b. No players can be added after the plate meeting.

c. All players must be on the team's official roster as held by the association.

## 4.4 Designated Hitter Rules

a. **DH Rule - Premier, Premier Reserve, and 19U**

   i. A Designated Hitter is permissible for the pitcher only, as per OBR 2026 rules.

b. **DH Rule - Divisional**

   i. A Designated Hitter (DH) can be used for any positional player, not just the pitcher.

   ii. The DH must be selected before the game and must bat at least once. If no DH is selected before the game, a DH cannot be used. A player replacing the DH becomes the new DH.

   iii. If the DH enters the game on defence, they continue to bat in the same spot, and the line-up reduces to 9 players.

## 4.5 3 Batter Minimum for Pitchers – 19U, Premier, Reserve, Upper Divisional

a. Pitchers must pitch to a minimum of 3 consecutive batters, except for Lower Divisional, as per OBR 2026 5.10G.

## 4.6 Visits to the Mound Requiring a Pitcher's Removal from the Game

a. If a manager or coach makes 2 trips in 1 inning, the pitcher must be changed.

## 4.7 Limitation on the Number of Mound Visits per Game

a. Maximum of 4 visits per game, with an extra visit allowed in extra innings.

## 4.8 Playing Conditions

a. Managers determine field conditions and possible cancellation due to rain at least 1 hour before game time.

b. The home team manager must notify the head of umpires about cancellations.

c. Play will not commence if the ground controller or council deems the ground unfit.

d. If the ground is declared playable and bad weather occurs later, the umpire decides whether to commence play.

e. The Competition Committee can change the venue or allocate spare weekends for finals if necessary.

## 4.9 The Batter's Box Rule

a. The batter must keep at least one foot in the batter's box unless:

   i. Swinging at a pitch

   ii. Forced out by a pitch

   iii. "Time" is granted

   iv. A defensive play is attempted

   v. Feinting a bunt

   vi. A wild pitch or passed ball occurs

   vii. The pitcher leaves the mound dirt area

   viii. The catcher leaves the box for signals

b. If the batter intentionally leaves the box and delays play without a valid exception, the umpire will issue a warning for the first violation and a strike for subsequent violations.

c. The batter may leave the box and dirt area when "Time" is called for:

   i. Making a substitution

   ii. A team conference

   iii. If no batter's boxes are marked, the umpire's judgment applies.

## 4.10 Re-Entry Rule – Divisional Grades

a. A starting player removed for a substitute can re-enter once but cannot pitch.

b. A substitute player can only enter once unless replacing an injured player.

## 4.11 Speed Up Catcher Rule

a. For catchers with two outs, in the instance it will be a bench player active in the game. If none available, then the last out.

## 4.12 Concussion Protocols

a. If a possible concussion is identified by a medical professional, Umpire in Chief, coach, manager, or parent, the player must be removed from the game/practice for the remainder of the day and may be replaced.

b. Refer to the Governance Manual and Baseball New Zealand's Concussion Protocols for assessment, treatment, and requirements for the player's return to future games.

## 4.13 Blood Contingencies

a. If a player sustains a bleeding injury:

   i. The player must be removed from the field.

   ii. A courtesy runner or fielder replaces the player.

   iii. The injured player may re-enter the game in the same batting or any fielding position once treated and dressed.

   iv. The courtesy player may permanently enter the game.

## 4.14 The Junior Pitcher – Pitching Restrictions for All Juniors Playing Adult Baseball

a. Junior pitchers playing above their grade are restricted to their grade's pitching limits.

b. For example, a Senior League pitcher with dispensation to play 19U or higher must adhere to Senior League limits.

c. Pitch counts from junior games carry over to the following day.

d. Refer to the Junior Technical Norms and Pitch Smart USA chart for details.

| 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+ |

# 5 PLAYING THE GAME

Refer OBR 2026

## 5.1 Commencement

a. The ABA determines and communicates the scheduled playing dates, game times, and start times.

b. Participants are encouraged to be present at least 30 minutes before any game.

## 5.2 Duration – Premier / Reserves / 19U

a. 19U Grade: 7 innings

b. Weekend Premier Grade: 9 innings.

c. Weekend Premier Reserve: 7 innings.

d. Weeknight games: 7 innings.

e. 19U and Reserve games: NNI at 2hr 20min

f. Regular season games: 19U and Reserve games 4 innings to be complete, Premier 5 innings to be complete

g. Playoff rounds (excluding Championship finals): same duration and innings limits as regular season.

h. Championship finals for Reserve grade (if played): 7 innings.

i. Championship finals for 19U: 7 innings.

j. Premier semi-final and final games: 9 innings, no time limit.

k. All Grade Championship games: 4 innings to be complete.

l. Umpires can suspend, cancel, or call a game for player safety due to weather or field conditions.

m. Incomplete games due to weather/light will be rescheduled by the ABA Competition Committee. Unplayable/rescheduled games outcomes determined by the Committee, ratified by the ABA Executive Board.

n. Rescheduled games stopped before 3 full innings (18 outs) are voided. Games stopped after 18 outs resume from the stoppage point, with the same rosters/positions. Added players need approval from the opposing Manager/Head Coach.

o. ABA Executive can declare games cancelled or called off due to rain or a draw.

p. Umpires can suspend, cancel, or call a game for player safety due to weather or other events. New start times for delayed games are announced by the umpire, at least 30 minutes after the previous game's completion.

q. Only Premier and 19U grades play extra inning tiebreakers in regular season (refer to ABA 5.6).

r. Tied games (draws) in Reserves, Upper Divisional, and Lower Divisional share points.

## 5.3 Scheduling of Games

a. The Competition Committee decides the scheduling of games.

b. Duration, innings limits, and mercy rules for double headers are advised by the Competition Committee.

c. Time limits for Premier games may be issued at the Committee's discretion.

## 5.4 Mercy Rule

a. Premier: Game ends if a team is ahead by 15 or more runs after five innings or 10 or more runs after seven innings.

b. 19U/Reserves/Upper Divisional: Game ends if a team is ahead by 15 or more runs after four innings or 10 or more runs after five innings.

c. Lower Divisional: Game ends if a team is ahead by 10 or more runs after five innings.

## 5.5 Inning Run Limit

a. Lower Divisional Five-run limit per inning for innings 1-6. Upper Divisional Seven-run limit per inning for innings 1-6.

b. No run limit on the 7th inning.

## 5.6 Tiebreakers

### 5.6.1 Regular Season – Premier and 19U

a. If tied after the home team's half-inning and time is up, the game continues into extra innings for a win/loss result.

b. Extra innings start with runners on first and second base.

c. The batter who would normally lead off the inning does so.

d. The runner on first is the player immediately preceding the leadoff batter in the order; the runner on second is the player immediately preceding the runner on first.

e. Substituted runners or batters are ineligible to return to the game.

f. "Extra inning" is the eighth inning or later in a seven-inning game, or the tenth inning or later in a nine-inning game.

g. No tiebreakers in regular season play for Reserves, Upper Divisional, and Lower Divisional.

### 5.6.2 Post Season Tiebreakers – All Adult Grades

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

## 5.7 Divisional Grade – Game Duration and Results

a. Regular season weekend games: 7 innings or 2hr 30min (NNI at 2hr 20min).

b. Tied games after 7 innings are declared a tie.

c. The first game of a doubleheader is scheduled for 7 innings.

d. Games will be called if the next inning has not started and the time limit is reached.

e. Regular season games must be played to 4 innings to be considered complete.

f. Playoff games (excluding Championship finals) use regular season duration and innings limits.

g. Upper Divisional and Lower Divisional Championship finals: 7 innings.

h. All Grade Championship final games must be played to 4 innings unless the mercy rule applies.

i. Umpires can suspend, cancel, or call a game for player safety due to weather or field conditions.

j. Incomplete games due to weather/light will be rescheduled by the ABA Competition Committee. Unplayable/rescheduled games outcomes determined by the Committee, ratified by the ABA Executive Board.

k. Rescheduled games stopped before 3 full innings (18 outs) are voided. Games stopped after 18 outs resume from the stoppage point, with the same rosters/positions. Added players need approval from the opposing Manager/Head Coach.

l. Umpires can suspend, cancel, or call a game for player safety due to weather, darkness, or other events. New start times for delayed games are announced by the umpire, at least 30 minutes after the previous game's completion.

m. For field closures, makeup games, and suspended games, refer to the Operations Manual (pages 16, 20 d-g).

## 5.8 Results

a. Scorekeepers must compare scores and confirm the final score after each game. If not live scored, the home team must ensure the game is loaded in the ABA defined Scoring System within 7 days. Both teams to ensure line ups and game result is loaded to Gameday at the conclusion of the game, or at minimum within 7 days. Failure to do so may result in a fine or forfeiture.

b. Failure to supply correct data results in fines and potential forfeiture of games.

    i. First Offence: The offending Club will automatically be fined $50 by the ABA

    ii. Second and Continued Offences: This will result in the offending Club being fined $100 and the game being forfeited if they are the winning team.

## 5.9 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 | 15 runs after 5 innings<br>10 runs after 7 innings | No | 5 innings | Yes<br>Refer Section 5.6 | No | No |
| Premier Reserve | 2 Hours 30 min<br>No new innings after 2hr 20 min | 7 | 15 runs after 4 innings<br>10 runs after 5 innings | No | 4 innings | No<br>Post season only | Yes | No |
| 19U | No new innings after 2hr 20 min | 7 | 15 runs after 4 innings<br>10 runs after 5 innings | No | 4 innings | Yes<br>Refer Section 5.6 | No | No |
| Upper Divisional | 2 Hours 30 min<br>No new innings after 2hr 20 min | 7 | 15 runs after 4 innings<br>10 runs after 5 innings | No | 4 innings | No<br>Post season only | Yes | Yes<br>Starting players only |
| Lower Divisional | 2 Hours 30 min<br>No new innings after 2hrs 20 min | 7 | 10 runs after 5 innings | Yes<br>5 runs for Innings 1 – 6 only | 4 innings | No<br>Post season only | Yes | Yes<br>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 IMPROPER PLAY, ILLEGAL ACTION AND MISCONDUCT

Refer OBR 2026

## 6.1 Collision Rule

Baseball New Zealand and the Auckland Baseball Association is concerned about the 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.**

a. 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:
    i. 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)
    ii. Whether the runner actually was attempting to reach the plate or attempting to dislodge the ball from the fielder, or
    iii. Whether the runner was using flagrant contact to maliciously dislodge the ball.

## 6.2 Penalty

Various penalties based on the nature of the collision:

a. If the runner tries to dislodge the ball, they are declared out, and the ball is dead.
b. If the fielder blocks the runner's path, the runner can make contact if making a legitimate attempt.
c. Malicious contact before touching the plate results in the runner being out and ejected, with the ball declared dead.
d. If contact is after a preceding runner scores, the preceding runner is safe, the ball is dead, and other runners return to their bases.
e. Safe runners involved in malicious collisions are ejected.
f. Obstruction by the fielder without the ball results in a base award.

## 6.3 Protest

a. Procedure of Protest:
    i. Call time.
    ii. Manager/Coach declares the protest to the Umpire, stating the rule number within 5 minutes. A $50 fee will be invoiced if the protest is incorrect and must be paid within 7 days.
    iii. The Umpire may pause the game to resolve the protest using the OBR 2025, ABA Technical Norms manual, or other sources. If the protest is correct, no fee is invoiced. The game continues after resolution.
    iv. If unresolved, the Umpire signs the scorebook noting the protest details (rule number, inning, score, outs, batter's count, and runners on base) and resumes the game.
    v. If still unresolved, the Manager/Coach must lodge the protest online within 24 hours using the ABA system, uploading the completed PDF protest form.

vi. For game-ending plays, the protest must be announced immediately before the Umpire leaves the field. The Umpire signs the scorebook, and the Manager/Coach follows the online protest procedure.

## 6.4 Ending the Game

Refer to OBR 2026

# 7 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, 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:

   i. Not charging Clubs for umpiring fees except on a case-by-case basis when ABA Umpires are provided; and

   ii. Requiring Clubs to make payments to the Umpires provided by their teams.

   iii. The Umpires Association shall supply to the ABA a list of all games covered and to whom payment should be made.

   iv. 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).

   v. The Umpire will clarify the "ground rules" at the pre-game meeting with the Managers.

   vi. The Umpire has the power to rule on anything not covered by these rules and the Rules of Baseball.

   vii. A Player of Official who refuses to promptly obey the directions of an Umpire shall be ejected from the game.

   viii. 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. (See ABA Ejection Form from 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.*