

Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council (GRACEAC) Baseball & Softball

5th/6th & 7th/8th Grade Leagues

GRACEAC Website – www.graceac.com

GRACEAC Hotline – (616) 456-9563

GRACEAC Twitter - @graceacsports

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Thursday, March 21, 2019

BASEBALL & SOFTBALL LEAGUE ORGANIZATION

1. The baseball and softball leagues shall consist of Catholic/Christian parish school teams that are members of the Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council (GRACEAC). Players must be enrolled in a GRACEAC School or organization, or be a member of a Catholic Parish.
2. Invitational and league playoffs will follow all regular season game rules except where noted.
3. All other GRACEAC Handbook rules and regulations apply. (* denotes reference to the GRACEAC Handbook – available from ADs and school principals)
4. All other game rules will be according to the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) Rules for Junior Highs for 7th/8th grade. Rules for 5th/6th grade will be according to Little League Rules.
5. Each participating school must have a roster complete with players' names, birth dates, and grades; uniform colors; head coach's name, address phone numbers and email (if available); school name and team nickname. This roster must be signed by the school principal and submitted by the athletic director to the league president one week prior to the first game.
6. The team playing as the home team for each contest will bring all players to the center of the diamond and lead the group in prayer.
7. Opposing teams and coaches will meet immediately following the game at home plate to shake hands in demonstration of good sportsmanship.

MERGERS

8. Any school requesting a merger should do so any time after February 27th by referring to the following guidelines:

- a. Schools shall not practice together prior to approval of their merger request by the league president. Violations shall be reported to the league president.
- b. A principal or athletic director may request a merger. Coaches must seek approval through their school principal or athletic director for a merger request. Coaches may not request a merger.

Practice

9. Practices may begin on the Monday during the week of March 13th (* Rule P).

10. All teams are limited, per week, to:

Pre-Season: 8 hours - 4 practices

Season: 6 hours - 3 practices

Practice time shall be limited to two (2) hours per day. Coaches are encouraged to cut time for practice and number of practices when there is an opportunity. (* Rule G)

GAME ELIGIBILITY AND MINIMUM PLAYING TIME

11. To ensure total participation, it shall be mandatory that each student athlete participate the minimum time per game of two full innings (6 outs) in the field (with free substitutions) and one at bat.
12. When a player becomes injured during the course of a game and is deemed unable to continue, the minimum playing time for that player is not required.
13. Any time a player is injured and returns to play, the playing time minimum must be met.
14. It is the responsibility of the coach to make sure that each student athlete meets the required minimum playing time.

GAME RULES

PRE-GAME

15. At least 10 minutes before the scheduled starting time, each team shall supply the other team the first name, last name, and uniform number of each player who may participate. The list shall be in the correct batting order. If a player is absent at the start of the game, please leave them out of the batting order. When they arrive, they will be added to the bottom of the batting order. If a player is not present when it is their turn to bat, they will be called out. (If a player is injured, and cannot continue to play, they will not be called out when their spot in the batting order comes up. If the injured player misses a turn at bat, they cannot return to the game.)

16. There will be a coaches' meeting prior to each game at home plate with both head coaches and the umpires. This coaches' meeting will stress sportsmanship and leadership as well as rule review (ground rules, batting line-ups, etc.). A pregame coin toss will determine the home team. The home team AND visiting team will supply a new baseball/softball – the home team will ALSO supply one good used baseball/softball. For softball, only optic yellow, red stringed ball of .47 core shall be used.

17. An 11-inch size softball will be used at the 5th/6th grade level and a 12-inch size softball at the 7th/8th level. Optic yellow with red stitches may be used. COR of .47 shall be the legal ball.

18. Softball - Modified or fast pitch style will be allowed at either level.

19. Forfeit time is scheduled start time plus ten minutes.

20. Infield practice for both teams is allowed prior to the game. Limit for this is 5 minutes.

21. Scorekeepers from each team shall meet after each half-inning to agree on the score. ~~Home team shall keep the official scorebook AND~~ The head umpire shall keep the official starting time, for the purpose of enforcing the time limit.

22. Games may begin with a minimum of eight players.

23. Pitchers will be given 8 pitches to warm up for pre-game. Between innings, they are allowed one minute to throw five warm up pitches. Replacement pitchers are allowed one minute to throw eight warm up pitches.

IN-GAME RULES

24. Each game shall consist of:

a. 5th/6th grade – 6 innings or 75 minutes (no new inning will start after 75 minutes; drop dead time of 85 minutes at the next dead ball – score will be as of the last full inning played)

b. 7th/8th grade – 7 innings or 90 minutes (no new inning will start after 90 minutes; drop dead time of 100 minutes at the next dead ball – score will be as of the last full inning played)

c. Doubleheaders will use these same time limits.

Note: For both levels, if a game goes into extra innings, within the time limit, the “Kansas City” rule will be used. That is, the player who batted last in the previous inning will be put at second base to start the next inning of extra innings.

25. Ties will not be played out in the regular season, unless within the time limit.

26. Run limit: There shall be a 5 run per inning limit for 5th/6th grade, regardless of inning. No run limit for 7th/8th. (See Rule 30 for “Mercy Rule”)

27. Courtesy runners will be allowed (but not required) for pitchers and catchers (regardless of the number of outs). The player who made the last out will be the designated runner. (This will allow the catcher to put on the gear, and will allow the pitcher to rest).

28. 5th/6th grade must use the rocket rule for batting order. 7th/8th grade has the option of rocket rule or 9 player batting order. If a team uses a 9 player batting order, a player may sub in a batting position for an at bat. The original player may sub back into their original batting order spot only. Each player shall have at least one bat per game and shall play in the field a minimum of 2 innings (6 outs) per game.

29. Hitters start with a 0 and 0 count.

30. Bunting is allowed in 5th/6th & 7th/8th grade levels.

31. If a batter is hit by a pitch, the batter will be awarded a base only if the umpire determines that the batter made an attempt to avoid being hit. This is an umpire's judgment and cannot be appealed.

32. The over throw rule that will be followed is as follows: At the time of the release of the throw, the runner is awarded the base that they were running to plus one. This applies to infield and outfield throws. If the ball remains in the field of play, the runner(s) advance at their own peril.

33. Maximum innings for pitchers (one pitch is considered an inning):

a. 5th/6th Grade: 3 innings PER GAME

-Each player is limited to playing 3 innings in any one position for a game, including pitchers.

b. 7th/8th Grade: 4 innings PER GAME

c. 6 innings PER DAY (when double-headers are played). 10 innings PER WEEK (a WEEK is defined as starting on Sunday, and ending on Saturday)

d. Once removed from the mound, a player may not return to pitch in the same game.

e. Effective starting the 2017 season, there will also be a pitch count limit in addition to the inning limit. The pitcher can throw until whichever limit he reaches first, pitch count or inning limit. The maximum pitches thrown in the 5th/6th grade league will be 85 per game, and 7th/8th grade will be 95 per game. We will also be using the chart at the following link - <http://m.mlb.com/pitchsmart/pitching-guidelines> - to assure pitchers are given the correct amount of rest in between pitching. The coaches will be responsible to adhering to the rest days, pitch count, etc. Opposing coaches are also encouraged to keep track of the pitch count, and should confirm with the other team in between each half inning how many pitches have been thrown.

34. Mound visits: This rule applies per inning. You get one free mound visit per inning. Each mound visit that follows the first visit in that same inning must result in a pitching change.

35. The infield fly rule will be followed.

36. For 7/8th grade level **only** - Dropped Third Strike Rule: The batter becomes a runner when the third strike called by the umpire is not caught, providing (1) first base is unoccupied or (2) first base is occupied with two out. Note: A batter forfeits their opportunity to advance to first base when **she the batter** enters the dugout or other dead ball areas.

37. 5th/6th grade teams may place 10 players on field while on defense, but 4 must be in the outfield.

38. The “Mercy Rule” (the game is done at this point) will take effect as follows:

a. 7th/8th grade – When one team is ahead by 15 or more runs after four innings, or up by 10 runs after five innings.

b. 5th/6th grade – When one team is ahead by 15 or more runs after five innings.

39. Stealing will be allowed as follows:

a. 5th/6th grade baseball & softball – The runner must maintain contact with the base until the ball crosses home plate. Once the ball crosses the plate, the runner may attempt to steal. If a runner leaves early, he will be called out.

b. 7th/8th grade baseball – Leading off and steals are allowed.

c. 7th/8th grade softball – Steals are allowed. Runner must remain in contact with the base until the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand.

d. **All levels, but above rules must be followed** - Steals of home and squeeze plays are allowed.

40. Intentional walks:

a. 5th/6th grade – Not allowed.

b. 7th/8th grade – Batter will be waved to first base after umpire is alerted. (No pitches necessary)

41. Postseason (5/6 & 7/8 grade): Higher seeds are automatically the home team, thus no need for pregame coin toss to determine. Also, time limit is still enforced, except for tie games.

42. Balk Rule – (7/8 grade baseball only): One warning per team, then each violation committed after warning is rule enforcement.

UNIFORMS & EQUIPMENT

43. No jewelry may be worn during a game. Any “unforgiving” material (i.e. plastic or metal) may not be worn during games.

44. Uniforms of all team members should be of the same color and style. Caps and shoes are required. When a player wears a helmet, it replaces the cap as mandatory equipment. If the pitcher’s undershirt is exposed, it cannot be white or gray. Coaches will be responsible for the uniform compliance of all their players.

45. Metal spikes may be worn at the 7/8th grade only. No metal cleats in 5/6th grade level.

46. Warm-up catchers (under the age of 18) must wear protective helmet and masks.

47. Players must wear protective helmets when acting as baserunners, batters, or while on the field as a coach.

48. Bat diameter:

a. 5th/6th grade baseball – Effective starting the 2018 season, all bats must have the USA baseball approved stamp. If bat does not have this stamp, it is illegal.

b. 7th/8th grade baseball – BBCOR bats will continue to be legal, as well as bats with the USA baseball approved stamp.

c. 5th/6th & 7th/8th grade **baseball softball** – Bats must have USA softball or ASA stamp

Coaching Guidelines

49. The head coach is responsible for the conduct and behavior of substitutes, disqualified squad members, spectators, and all other bench personnel. Only players and coaches may be on the field during pre-game warm-ups and games.

50. Bench personnel shall not:

a. Disrespectfully address an official.

b. Incite undesirable crowd reactions.

51. Any coach or player ejected from a game will automatically sit out the next scheduled game.

PLAYER SAFETY

52. Runners must slide or avoid contact on tag plays at all bases with the exception of first base. Feet first and head first slides are legal. Violation will result in automatic out – no warning given. Intentional violent contact will result in ejection.

53. Each team will receive one warning for a thrown bat. The next occurrence for that team will result in the player being called out.

54. No player shall attempt a fake tag. A fake tag will be considered an obstruction. The umpire shall signal a delayed dead ball. The runner can be awarded the next base if the umpire determines the fake tag prevented further advancement. If so determined that player may only be awarded the next base. The penalty for doing a fake tag can be ejection from the game.

55. Ejected players will be removed from the lineup, including the rocket batting rule line up. Their place in the batting order will not be an out. Instead that player will be skipped over. Ejected player, except for unsportsmanslike behavior, may play the next game. Coaches and student/athletes removed from a game for unsportsmanslike behavior shall miss the next game.

56. An unconscious or apparently unconscious player will be removed from the game by the coach. The player may not return to any game or practice, without written authorization from a physician (M.D. or D.O.). This authorization must be given to:

- a. The game official prior to the player's return, if for the same game.
- b. The school Athletic Director before practicing or playing again.

57. A player who is bleeding, has an open wound, or has an excessive amount of blood on their uniform must leave the game. The game official will stop the game and allow the coach one full minute to bring in a substitution. The affected player must sit out until the next time stoppage before returning to the game. Excessive bleeding or an excessive amount of blood is any amount on the uniform or skin that can be transferred to a teammate, opponent, or official. The player may not return until the bleeding has stopped, and if necessary, the affected area covered. If the player has an excessive amount of blood on their uniform, the uniform must be changed. Coaches are encouraged to have extra uniforms, socks, etc. for a player to change into. Inexpensive numbered T-shirts can be used for this purpose, as long as they are of a similar color as the game jersey.

FIELD DIMENSIONS

58. Pitching distances are as follows:

- a. 40 feet for 5th/6th grade and 7th/8th grade softball
- b. 46 feet for 5th/6th grade baseball
- c. 54 feet for 7th/8th grade baseball

59. Base path distances are as follows:

- a. 60 feet for 5th/6th grade softball, 7th/8th grade softball, and 5th/6th grade baseball

b. 80 feet for 7th/8th grade

INCLEMENT WEATHER

60. Coaches will be notified of cancelled games due to inclement weather if decided prior to the end of the school day. If school is cancelled, GAMES MAY STILL BE PLAYED. Coaches or athletic directors should call the GRACEAC hotline at (616) 456-9563 for further information regarding game status. If a game is cancelled because of inclement weather, the contest shall be played at a time and place mutually agreed upon by the league president and coaches.

61. If lighting or thunder is seen or heard prior to, or during the game, the game shall stop immediately. This rule is not up to discussion. All coaches, players and officials are to seek immediate cover in a building. If no building is available, then the game is cancelled/postponed, and coaches, players and officials shall leave the area. If shelter is available play may not resume until a full 30 minutes has passed from the last seen or heard lightning or thunder. If the severe weather persists for 45 minutes or longer, the game is cancelled. If the game has been played for **four three** innings or more for 5/6th grade and **five four** innings or more for 7/8th grade it will be determined to be a complete game. Otherwise all attempts will be made to reschedule the game and it will be played at the same point it was postponed. Both coaches shall agree on the status of the scorebook. **If two or more games are scheduled for that day, the delayed game cannot go past the start time of the following game. Coaches are encouraged make effort to get playing time covered in the next game if canceled or shortened and playing time requirements are not met.**

62. Coaches, parents, and officials are encouraged to use GRACEAC's new alert system via text and email. To register for text messages to your cell phone, simply text "hotline" to 84483. Standard text messaging rates may apply. You can register to receive email alerts online by clicking [here](#). To discontinue alerts, simply respond to a RainedOut.com text or email with "STOP". These alerts will automatically be posted on our Twitter account as well, so we urge you to follow us @graceacsports.

Rules revised 3-21-19. Rules are in effect as written. CC