



# Rules and Regulations

Updated March 2024

## **Section 1: Equipment and Field Regulations**

1. The Ball: Only clean, unaltered, official white, "8-holed" WIFFLE Baseballs will be used. No tampering with them in any way.
2. The Bat: Only official yellow, current generation WIFFLE 32-inch bats will be used. Bats may not be tampered with in any way and can only have tape on the molded grip handle, also may not cover the bottom knob or hole in any way.
3. Cleats: No metal spiked cleats are allowed on the SWBL Field. Plastic or Rubber spikes only are permitted.
4. Bases and Pitching Rubber: The four bases are spaced 45 feet apart and the Pitcher's rubber 45 feet from the back of home plate.
5. Strikezone: Strikezone is placed behind 2.5 feet behind home plate and measures at 30 inches in length and 20 inches in width, and 12 feet above the ground.
6. Bunt Zone: A semicircle in front of home plate that, if hit into, results in a foul ball.
7. Umpires: Calls will be made by the players in the game. If there is a disagreement, the players can rely on others watching or call a redo. "Ball don't lie".
8. Fees: League fees must be paid to the commissioner before your first game.

## **Section 2: Gameplay**

1. Length: Each game will be five innings in length, with two outs in each half inning.

2. Extra Innings: If the game ends in a tie after the regulation 5 innings, the teams will play one more inning of extras. If the game is still tied after extras then the teams will decide on one pitcher and one hitter to represent their team in a Home Run Derby. The batter will be granted 3 outs to work with. If there is a tie, another player has to hit from the current playing roster.
3. Lineup: 3 players allowed on the field, with at least 4 hitters batting per team. If only 3 batters are in the lineup, an out will be given every time the fourth spot is up to bat.
4. Substitutions: At any point in the game, the captain can make a substitution. The player may always re-enter the game, but not as a returning pitcher.
5. Mercy Inning: 7-Run Rule each inning except for the bottom of the last inning, but all runs will count on home runs to end the inning, up to 10 total.
6. Home Field Advantage Rule: In the 5th inning, only the home team (bottom of inning) is allowed to score as many runs as possible to win the game, if needed. The Mercy Rule per inning, written above, still applies for the bottom of the last inning. If the away team is down by less than 7 runs, they can only score at most seven runs in the last inning. If the away team is down by more than 7 runs, they can score only the amount of runs needed to tie the game. Then the home team only needs to score one run to win the game.
7. Mercy Game: 15 Runs ahead any time after 3 innings. Then finish the inning. If winning team is still up by 12 or more any time after that, the game is over.
8. Time Limit: There is a time limit of forty-five minutes per game. Once that time limit is reached, you complete the current inning as if it were the last.
9. Delay of Game: Due to time constraints, any team that does not field at least 3 players at the scheduled starting time will be penalized one run per 3 minutes against their team, with a minimum of one run.
10. Forfeit: If only one or two players from the team are present after 15 minutes you forfeit, no rescheduling. If you need a game rescheduled, front office must be notified with plenty of time to change the current schedule. Winning team will be given a 5-0 win in the forfeit.
11. Roster Size: Unlimited roster sizes for all franchises.

### **Section 3: Offense**

1. Foul Strike Out: When there are two strikes against the batter and they foul tip the ball into the strike zone, it will be ruled a strikeout.
2. Elbow Blocking: No leaning in to block a pitch from the strikezone. Warnings will be issued, and then strikes will be given.

3. Leadoffs: Runners are not allowed to lead off. Warnings will be issued, and then an out will be given if runner continues to lead off. See Pickoff rule in Section 7.
4. Stealing: The runner may not steal at any time. They may only leave the base when the player at bat makes contact. See pickoff rule in section 7.
5. Bunting: The batter may not square around to bunt. They may slap at the ball as long as it passes the bunt zone. (See section 1.6)
6. Ground Rule Single: If the batter hits the ball under or through the outfield fence, it will be scored as a ground rule single. All runners advance one base.
7. Ground Rule Double: If the batter hits the ball past the foul pole or bounces over the outfield fence, it will be scored as a ground rule double. All runners advance two bases.
8. Batting Out Of Order: If the hitting team bats out of order for just one pitch, that spot in the lineup will be ruled an out, if realized by either playing team. If the inning comes to an end before anything is realized, the stats will stay as written.
9. Pinch Runner: The pinch runner rule is used for a hitter that cannot run to first base. A permanent pinch runner is only allowed in the event of an injury. Pinch runners must be behind the backstop in the grass and cannot leave until after contact with the ball.
10. Courtesy Runner: One courtesy runner per team in any game may be designated for one player in the hitting lineup if the team elects to do so. Hitter must run to first, then the Courtesy Runner can take over.
11. Baserunner Shuffle: Baserunners MUST occupy their own base if possible. Cannot freely decide who is on what base when lineup turns over.

#### **Section 4: Defense**

1. Pegging: Pegging is allowed. If the ball hits the ground or anything else before hitting the runner, the runner is still out on the play. Once the runner is hit with the ball, the play will be ruled dead. On a missed peg attempt, play is still active as long as the ball is still in play. If the ball goes out of play on a peg attempt, runners will be awarded one base.
2. Pitcher's Poison: When the fielding team has control of the ball in the pitcher's mound area before the runner reaches first safely, the batter will be called out. Once the pitcher's poison rule has been put into effect, the play is ruled dead. If runner(s) is/are not passed the  $\frac{3}{4}$  line along the basepath, they must return safely to their base.
3. Infield Fly: Infield Fly rule is in effect throughout the entirety of the field. The batting team must call their own infield fly and only when there are 0 outs.

4. Fence: Outfielders may jump over the fence and catch the ball in the air to rob a home run. Just don't break the fence.

5. Outfield Tree Rule: Played like a Green Monster. If a player who is already on base is not running, and the ball is played off the trees and thrown to the pitcher's poison circle before the player is past the  $\frac{3}{4}$  line, the play is not dead until runner is safely on the base and the pitcher is in the circle, or the runner is forced out.

## **Section 5: Pitching**

1. Strikeouts: 3 Strikes is a strikeout. (or Rule Section 3.1 or Rule Section 5.2 below)
2. First Strike Rule: If the first strike of the at bat is a looking strike, the hitter will be called out.
3. Walks: 8 balls for a walk.
4. Hit By Pitch: A batter hit by a pitch will be awarded two balls.
5. Wild Pitch: If the pitcher throws a pitch that completely misses the backstop area (above or to the sides), that pitch will be ruled as a wild pitch, and the batter is awarded 2 balls. All runners get to advance one base. If the runner is on third they will advance home and the RBI will be awarded to the player that is currently at bat.
6. Pitching Speed: Maximum pitching speed is 55 MPH. Radar Gun will be in view of the field throughout the season. Every pitch that is over 55 MPH will be a ball for the hitter's count or they may swing for free and if positive, they must take the result. In a negative result, the hitter is awarded a ball and the at bat continues.
7. Innings Pitch Cap: Pitcher may only pitch 30 innings in one season.
8. Bullpen: Once a pitcher gets taken out, they cannot pitch for the rest of the game.
9. Saves: Ten runs or less ahead, constitutes as a save situation.

## **Section 6: Playoffs**

1. Teams: 5 teams make playoffs, with each division winner and the remaining top two wild cards from any division making it in.
2. Format: Playoffs are a single-game elimination tournament.
3. Playoff Home Field Advantage: Home Field Advantage is awarded to the top overall team in the regular season standings throughout the playoffs. This is determined by winning percentage. If a tiebreaker is needed, use head to head matchups, then use run differential if still tied.

4. Extra Innings: During the playoffs, if a game ends in a tie after the regulation 5 innings, the teams will play as many extra innings as needed until a winner is decided.

### **Section 7: Unique Rules:**

1. Green Monster Rule: If a home run is hit in home run territory and hits any tree, then comes back into the playing area, it is still in play. Just like Fenway's Green Monster.
2. Outfield Frozen Rope: If a runner is running home and you cannot peg them or if you choose to try and not peg them from anywhere behind the bunt line, you may throw the ball at the strikezone behind the plate. If you hit any of the "rectangular" part of the strikezone before the runner touches home plate, then the runner is out at home. If there are runners behind that are also advancing, then the runner(s) must go back to the base they came from. This rule will give chances to fielders throwing from anywhere behind the bunt zone to stop the runner without trying to have to peg them. If the ball misses the strikezone then the ball is still in play. If the ball is thrown out of play then the runner(s) will be granted one base on the overthrow.
3. Pickoff Attempt: If runner leaves base before contact is being made, pitcher may throw any one ball at the runner inside of the circle for a free attempt that the runner cannot advance on.
4. Tree Foul Ball: If the batter hits the ball foul to any part of the third base tree above the bench, it is ruled a "dead foul ball" and is not eligible to be played by a fielder, or a hit.

# SWBL Roster and Transactions Insert

*Adopted December 2011*

## League Roster Terms:

### ***Captain:***

The Captain is the “General Manager” for the Franchise. Captain stays with their franchise for the entirety of their one-year, league controlled contract. Captains will be approved by the league front office. Captains are contracted with the SWBL on a year-to-year basis. Captains control all Franchise actions and roster makeup.

### ***Contracted Player:***

Any player can agree to play with an SWBL Franchise. The Player is a member of their selected franchise for a minimum of one year and can play as long as mutually agreed upon with their captain, or are traded by their captain to another franchise. Player must abide by all Franchise Captain decisions.

### ***Free Agent:***

Free Agents are players who have no attachment to any current SWBL Franchise. Free agents can negotiate after the season as a Restricted Free Agent until October 1<sup>st</sup> after the playing season, when they can then decide if they will pursue Unrestricted Free Agency.

*The following is in sequential event order for a full calendar year of play.*

### **Season Registration Period Opens: January 1<sup>st</sup>**

- The SWBL opens its doors to anyone interested in joining the league.
- The first day when Captains can begin trading players and draft picks for the upcoming season.
- All players are eligible to be traded.
- Captains cannot trade themselves to another franchise.
- Trades must be agreed upon by all captains involved and submit the proposal to the league front office.

### **Franchise Expansion Period Ends: January 1<sup>st</sup>**

- Expansion teams must be filed with the front office by any interested non-rookie personnel, with intent to draft and/or sign at least 3 players for their roster.
- Captains must have their intent to retire or announce their team as disbanding to the Front Office if needed.

### **Season Division Draw: Mid-February Weekend**

- SWBL Divisions will be drawn for using the three tiers from last season’s final standings.

### **Season Registration Period Ends: March 15<sup>th</sup>**

- SWBL season registration closes at 5:00 PM.
- Registered eligible rookies will be put into the draft pool.
- Free Agents may have their intent to enter the draft or retire given to the Front Office if needed.

### **Team Draft Entering Deadline: Pre-Draft**

- Teams must decide if they will participate in the draft the day before the draft.

**Draft (Rookie Free Agency): Late March**

- Each year there will be a “draft” held after registration is closed.
- All draft participants are decided upon pre-draft.
- All interested Free Agents and registered Rookies will be entered into the draft.
- Each registered team in the draft should have pre-selection conversations with interested draftees, and will select after rookie has agreed to play with the franchise.
- There are no limit on number of picks. Draft can last as long as there are players available and teams needing to fill a spot.

**Captain’s Meeting: End of May, Before Season Begins**

- Go over rules and last minute changes.
- Contracts reviewed for all players and are filed with the front office.

**Season Begins: Memorial Day Weekend Friday****Roster Deadline: 5 PM on Sunday of Memorial Day Weekend**

- This includes all trades and free agent signings for this current season.

**Season Ends: Memorial Day****Restricted Free Agency Period Begins: June 1<sup>st</sup>**

- Teams can begin extension conversations with Restricted Free Agents.
- Rookie eligible players will be automatically entered back into the draft pool for next year.
- Free Agents can begin deciding to re-sign to their current team, return to the draft, or retire.
- Captains can begin filing for retirement from their franchise with the Front Office.

**Franchise Expansion Period: June 1<sup>st</sup>**

- Any non-rookie eligible player (or league appointed prospect) may request to begin a new Franchise with the SWBL Front Office.
- Requests are subject to League Approval and are not guaranteed.
- The SWBL will only allow Franchise Expansion if logistically the league is ready to take on more teams.
- Up to 9 teams can play in the amount of time needed on one league field. So with more teams, come a change in scheduling setup.

**Restricted Free Agency Period Ends: October 1<sup>st</sup>**

- Restricted Free Agency ends.
- All Captains must have agreed to an extension with the player and text sent to League Commissioner, or that player will enter Unrestricted Free Agency.

**Unrestricted Free Agency Period: October 1<sup>st</sup>**

- Unrestricted Free Agency Period begins.
- To sign a free agent you must negotiate and agree to play for a franchise and text sent to league Commissioner.
- Free agents can request certain clauses for their contract, but are not guaranteed a spot on a team’s roster during any specific season.
- Teams can stay competitive in a specific free agent acquisition race by offering incentives, including but not limited to, playing time promises, or by paying for some/all of the league fees of the free agent.

**Winter Meeting: Late December/Early January**

- Roster and Franchise Reports
- League Updates and all Calendar Dates Set