



Official Rules

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PLAYING RULES

The Potomac Wiffleball League will observe the Official Rules of Baseball and the Case Book of the Official Rules of Baseball as adopted by the Major League Baseball Playing Rules Committee with the following exceptions.

Exceptions to rules are numbered to match their primary corresponding rule to the extent possible. However, an exception applies to all relevant rules sections, even if not specifically numbered.

In 2015 the MLB rules were reorganized and renumbered. The language of the rules did not change, just the structure. The PWL rules were similarly renumbered to match the MLB rules. For rules that were renumbered, the previous number was maintained in parenthesis to the right of the new number.

1.00 OBJECTIVES OF THE GAME

1.01 Each team shall have exactly three fielders in the game at all times, a pitcher, a catcher, and a fielder. However, if a team wishes to have up to 3 extra hitters, and have a batting order of 4 through 6 players, the team may do so. For the purposes of defensive substitutions, Extra Hitters shall be treated as a fielding position.

1.04 (5.06) Runners are not required to run out all of the bases on an over the fence home run.

2.00 THE PLAYING FIELD

2.01 (1.04) The field shall be a level playing surface of grass or dirt to the extent possible. Fair territory shall be the area no less than 15 feet in front of home plate, between lines that could be drawn from the back point of the plate, through the top left and top right corner of the plate extending to the home run fence or area. This will make an angle at home plate of approximately 53 degrees (53.130102354156). First and third base shall be 40 feet from home plate, on their respective foul lines. Second base shall be 65 feet from home plate, on a line drawn directly through the center of the two foul lines. The home run area or fence shall at no point be less than 70 feet from home plate, and the sum of the length from home plate and the height of the fence shall at no point be less than 74 feet. The catcher's box shall extend to a depth of 25 feet behind home plate.

Playing Field Dimensions

Home to First & Third – 40'

Home to Second – 65'

Second to First & Third – 34' 3"

Home to Pitchers Rubber – 33'

Width of Field Between First & Third – 35' 9"

Width of Field at 85' Foul Poles – 76'

Width of Field at 90' Foul Poles – 80' 6"

2.04 (1.07) The pitcher's plate shall be a junior sized plate, 18 inches by 4 inches. The pitchers rubber shall be placed at 33 feet on the same line as second base.

2.05 (1.08) The benches for each team shall not be less than fifteen feet from the base lines and shall not be enclosed.

3.00 EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS

3.01 (1.09) Balls must be WIFFLE, baseball size.

3.02 (1.10) Bats used in league play must be regulation, yellow WIFFLE bats. They may not be altered in any way other than tape or adhesive material on the handle.

3.03 (1.11) Uniforms are not required, but matching colors bearing numbers are strongly encouraged. No metal spikes shall be worn at any time.

3.04-07 (1.12-15) No player shall wear a glove while playing a defensive position.

4.00 GAME PRELIMINARIES

4.03 (4.01) No player shall be listed on the lineup card in the starting batting order that is not present at the field at the time of the exchange of lineup cards.

4.06 (3.09) Player mingling and fraternization is permitted.

5.00 PLAYING THE GAME

5.04 (6.03) One-handed batting is not allowed, unless a player only has the use of one hand due to incapacitation or disability.

5.05a2 and 5.09a2-3 (6.05b-c) Batters may not attempt to advance to first base after the catcher drops strike three, they are out by strikeout whether the ball is caught or not.

5.05b (6.08) There will be no walks. Batters hit by pitch will not advance.

5.06 (7.01) Runners may not lead off; nor may they steal. Runners may leave their base after a pitched ball is batted. If a runner leaves a base before a pitched ball is batted, the umpire shall immediately call a dead ball, the pitch shall be declared a no pitch, and the offending runner shall be called out.

5.06b4a (7.05a) A fair fly ball caught by a fielder who then goes over the home run fence, even maintaining control of the ball, shall be ruled a home run. Fielders must catch the ball and remain in the field of play to have an out.

APPROVED RULING: If a fielder throws or knocks the ball back into the field of play before they go over the fence, the ball shall be live and in play with runners advancing at their own risk, unless it is caught by another fielder still inside the field of play before touching the ground for an out.

APPROVED RULING: If any part of the players body touches the ground over the fence, they are deemed to have gone over the fence.

APPROVED RULING: If a player is laying on top of the fence, which has fallen over, but no part of their body is touching the ground over the top of the fence, they are deemed to still be in play and to have not gone over the fence.

5.07b (8.03) Pitchers shall be permitted up to six preparatory pitches.

5.09a5 (6.05e) No infield fly rule will be in effect.

5.09b14 (7.08m) Fielders may peg runners. Runners touched by a ball from a peg will be out. Runners touched by a ball from a peg which first touches any other player, a base, or the ground, will be out. If a fielder misses a runner in a peg attempt, the maximum amount of bases that any runner may advance is the base they were heading to, plus one. The base they are heading to for the peg situation only is defined as the base they are physically moving toward at the time the ball leaves the fielder's hand, and not necessarily the next base in numerical order if they are between bases. Runners must advance at their own risk, and should more than one peg attempt be made, the rule will be applied at the time the last peg attempt is made.

EXAMPLE: A runner rounds first base and takes several steps towards second. The fielder with the ball runs towards them and they start to return to first base and are moving towards first base when the ball is thrown and leaves the fielders hand. The pegging attempt misses, and the runner advances. The maximum base the runner can get to (at their own risk) is second base, because they were heading toward first base, and one additional base past first is second.

EXAMPLE: A runner rounds first base and takes several steps towards second. The fielder makes an attempted peg while the runner is still moving toward second base and misses. The maximum base they can get to (at their own risk) is third base, because the runner was heading toward second base, and one additional base past second is third.

5.09b15 (7.08n) When the runner safely reaches the maximum base to which they are allowed to advance on a missed peg attempt the ball shall be immediately dead and any other runners shall advance to the base they were heading to if between bases. A runner shall be defined as reaching the maximum base per this rule the second they touch that base, even if they overrun or overslide the base. They are not eligible to be put out and the play is dead immediately upon their contact with the base.

EXAMPLE: Runner is between first base and second base when a ball is thrown at them in an attempted peg that is missed. They pass second base and slide into third base but overslide the base. The fielder tags or pegs them while they are past third base trying to get back. The play is dead the second the runner first touched third base, even if they overslide it or go past, so any action that occurred after they touched the base is moot, they are safe, and play is dead, the runner is on third base.

EXAMPLE: Runner is between first base and second base when a ball is thrown at them in an attempted peg that is missed. They pass second base and third base and head for home plate. The fielder throws the ball to the catcher who tags the runner before he reaches home plate. The play is dead the second the runner touched third base, and the tag out by the catcher is moot, the runner returns to third base, and the play is dead.

5.09b16 (7.08o) Any force out, or required retouch of a base, may be made if the pitcher obtains control of the live, batted or thrown ball before the runner reaches a base, or returns to a base in the event of a retouch. Should there be more than one force out or retouch in play, only one out shall be made on a single play of the pitcher obtaining control of the ball. The lead out shall be the first one affected, but should it not have been in time, subsequent outs will be enforced in continuing lead order.

EXAMPLE: Runners on first and second base. Batter hits a ball close to the pitcher who picks it up. The runner going from second to third gets to third base before the pitcher picks up the ball. The runner going from first to second does not get to second before the pitcher picks the ball up. The batter does not get to first before the pitcher picks the ball up. There are two runners who could be out by the force, at second and first. The out is given to the lead runner who would be out, so in this case, the runner at second is out, and there are runners at first and third base who were safe.

EXAMPLE: Runner at second base, batter hits a ball close to the pitcher who picks it up before the runner gets to third base and before the batter gets to first base. The runner going to third was not forced, so that runner is safe, and the batter-runner is called out.

EXAMPLE: Runner on first, no outs. The batter hits a ball back to the pitcher, who picks it up before the runner going from first reaches second, then the pitcher touches first base with possession of the ball before the batter runner reaches first base. This is a double play, the runner going to second is out as soon as the pitcher picks up the ball, and then the pitcher gets the traditional force out at the base on the batter-runner by beating them to the base.

EXAMPLE: Runner on first base, the batter flies out to the fielder. The runner left first base on contact and is between first base and second base. The runner is required to retouch first base, and if the fielder throws the ball to the pitcher before the runner returns to first base, the runner is out.

5.09e (4.09) Each inning shall consist of only two outs per team per inning.

5.10d (3.03) Once a player has been in the pitchers position, and has been removed from that position, the player may not return as the pitcher in that same game.

5.10 (3.04) Any player that is eligible to play for a team in a game being played, regardless of whether or not they are presently in the lineup for that game, is eligible to serve as a courtesy runner in the event that a runner currently on base is the batter due up to bat per

the batting order. The runner serving as the courtesy runner in this situation shall not be deemed to be a substitute. Should no player be available to serve as a courtesy runner, the other runners on base will serve as courtesy runners at second and third base, and a ghost runner will be assumed to be the runner at first base. The ghost runner cannot be tagged or pegged out, but can be forced out at second base if a player touches the base with the ball before the batter-runner reaches first base. The ghost runner will always run as fast as the batter-runner, and must be forced to advance to a base by the batter-runner reaching the previous base. After each at-bat, courtesy and ghost runners should be replaced with the appropriate real runner if possible, and if a player becomes available as a courtesy runner the ghost runner should be replaced.

EXAMPLE: Team has three players, and the bases are loaded. The runner at third base is due up to bat. The runners at first base and second base move up to second base and third base to run on behalf of the runner proceeding them, and first base is left with no real runner, but a ghost runner is assumed to be there.

EXAMPLE: A ghost runner is on first base and the batter hits a triple. Because the batter reached third base, the ghost runner scored because he was forced to advance to home.

5.11 (6.10) There shall be no designated hitter.

5.12 (5.10-11) Once all active offensive and defensive play is over, and no base runners are actively advancing, and the pitcher has control of the ball in fair territory, the umpire shall call time. Once time is called, the ball is dead, and all runners must return to their base until the ball is put back in play by the batter making contact with the ball.

6.00 IMPROPER PLAY, ILLEGAL ACTION, AND MISCONDUCT

6.02 (8.01) All pitches must be slow to medium speed. The pitcher must have one foot on, and one foot in front of the rubber when the ball is released. Pitchers must not delay the game and any pitcher who throws four consecutive pitches that do not hit the strike board and are not a strike shall be issued a warning. Any subsequent violations of this rule in the same game, and the pitcher shall be immediately removed from the pitcher's position. In the event of removal under this rule, should no eligible players be available to pitch for the team, the team shall forfeit the game.

6.02a (8.05) There are no balks.

6.03b (6.07) If a player in the batting order leaves the field of play or is unable to bat in his proper turn for more than one at bat, it shall not be necessary for the team to appeal batting out of turn following the completion of the next batters at bat. The scorekeeper shall notify the umpire that it's turn at bat for that player who has left or is unable to bat, and the umpire shall declare an automatic out at the time the player is due up in the batting order until the player returns, is able to bat again, or a substitute player is put in the game in that position.

7.00 ENDING THE GAME

7.01 (4.10) A regulation game will consist of 6 innings. In the event of weather or other factors as agreed upon by both teams, the completion of 4 innings, or of 3 and a half innings if the home team is leading, shall constitute a complete game. Except for postseason games, if at the end of three innings a team leads by 10 runs or more, the game will be over. If the home team leads by 10 or more runs at any time during the bottom half of any inning, the game will be over. After 45 minutes of play, if at the end of any inning a team leads by 5 runs or more, the game will be over. After 45 minutes of play, if the home team leads by 5 or more runs at any time during the bottom half of any inning, the game will be over.

7.02 and 4.08 (4.12-13) All game scheduling including suspended games shall be the responsibility of the Commissioner.

7.03 (4.15) A team that cannot field three players within five minutes of the scheduled game start time shall forfeit the game. The team that would win the forfeit, at their sole discretion, may choose to extend the time period to a maximum of fifteen minutes provided that they notify the umpire before the expiration of original five minute period.

8.00 THE UMPIRE

8.01 (9.01) In the absence of an umpire, teams will umpire their own games. Consensus among players will settle all disputes.

8.04 (9.04) The umpire or umpires may take any position on the field which will enable them to discharge their duties.

9.00 THE OFFICIAL SCORER

9.01 (10.02) Players who serve as courtesy runners shall not be credited with the results of their time on base. The original batter who reached base shall be credited with all of the subsequent activity of any courtesy or ghost runner taking their place.

9.01a (10.01a) Requests to review a judgment call of an official scorer must be made no later than 11:59 PM the Saturday immediately following the date the game was played.

9.01b (10.01b) Official scorers are encouraged to point out and correct an improper batter when it is discovered during their at-bat. However, between the time an improper batter has completed the turn at-bat, and before the first pitch of the next at bat, the scorer shall NOT point out the improper batter. If, however, at any time the official scorer is asked by players from either team during an improper at bat, the scorer must respond with the correct information.

COMMENT: The reason for this is that during the at-bat, there is no penalty, the proper batter just takes their place with the existing count. In between the time when the improper batter has batted and before the first pitch to the next batter has been thrown, the proper batter would be called out. In that situation, the official scorer should wait until after the first pitch is thrown to the next batter to alert the teams to the issue. After the first pitch has been thrown to the subsequent batter, there is no longer an out called for the improper batter.

9.08 (10.08) A sacrifice fly is credited to a batter on any caught fly ball which results in a runner scoring, regardless of whether that fielder is in the outfield.

9.12 (10.12) Peg attempts, no matter how poor the throw, shall NOT be scored as an error for the fielder making the throw. If the umpire on the field rules a thrown ball was a peg, then the scorer shall reflect it as such. If the umpire makes no ruling on a peg, (often times not needed), then the official scorer shall use their judgment as to whether a throw was a peg or a ball thrown to another fielder.

9.17 (10.17) A starting pitcher must pitch at least one-half inning more than half of the innings played in a game in order to be eligible for the win.

EXAMPLE: Three and one half innings for a regulation six inning game.

EXAMPLE: Two innings for a three inning run rule game.

9.22 (10.22) The minimum standard for individual championships shall be:

a) Batting – 3.1 plate appearances per league game scheduled per team

b) Pitching – 1 inning pitched per league game scheduled per team

b) Fielding – 2 innings played per league game scheduled per team

The minimum number for each category shall be reduced based on the overall number of games that were forfeited. The final number shall be multiplied by the percentage of all league games scheduled that were not forfeited. Games forfeited by reason of no remaining pitchers available do not count as a forfeit under this rule.

EXAMPLE: 14 games scheduled per team, $3.1 \times 14 = 44$ plate appearances to qualify. 140 games scheduled, 133 were not forfeited. $133/140 = 95\%$ of games played. $44 \times 95\% = 42$ plate appearances as the final minimum to qualify.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

BALK, BALL, BASE ON BALLS, INFIELD FLY, SET POSITION, TRIPLE PLAY, WILD PITCH and WIND UP POSITION are not applicable under our rules.

The COMMISSIONER is the Commissioner of the Potomac Wiffleball League and anytime the rules refer to Commissioner of Major League Baseball, League President, or any other League official, this shall be deemed to refer to the Commissioner of the Potomac Wiffleball League.

A FOUL TIP shall only be balls which are fouled off the bat and then hit the strike board without first touching any other object, including the ground. A foul tip is dead the moment it touches the strike board, and may not be caught or put into play.

FORFEITED GAME is not reflected with any score.

HOME CLUB or HOME TEAM when used as it relates to providing equipment, facilities, security, ground rules, or scheduling of games shall be deemed to refer to the Potomac Wiffleball League rather than the team designed as the home team on the schedule.

A PEG is a ball which a fielder has thrown, kicked, pushed, or otherwise made to contact a runner, regardless of whether that ball first hits any other player, equipment, or the ground.

APPROVED RULING: If a fielder touches a runner with a ball that is knocked out of their hand, it is not a TAG because of the loss of control, but it is a PEG and the runner would be out.

A STRIKE is a legal pitch when so called by the umpire, which—

- (a) Is struck at by the batter and is missed;
- (b) Is not struck at, if any part of the ball touches the strike board, and the speed of the pitch is recorded by the radar, and that speed is no more than 27 MPH;
- (c) Is fouled by the batter when he has less than two strikes;
- (d) Is bunted foul;
- (e) Touches the batter as he strikes at it;
- (f) Touches the batter in flight in the strike zone; or
- (g) Becomes a foul tip;
- (h) Is intentionally or unintentionally interfered with by a batter before it has passed the strike board.

STRIKE BOARD which shall be 20 inches wide by 30 inches tall, shall be erected so that it is positioned two feet behind home plate, and shall be 10 inches above the ground level of home plate. A radar speed detector shall be installed as part of the strike board, though not to increase its height or width, and shall be considered part of the board.

STRIKE ZONE is replaced with STRIKE BOARD.

LEAGUE RULES

Rosters: Each team must file an official roster with the commissioner prior to the first game in which the team competes. Each team's roster shall include a minimum of four players and maximum of nine players. Each team may change its roster up to three times before 11:59 PM the day of which the scheduled completion of the first half of the regular season games for the league occurs, and up to one time during the second half before 11:59 PM the day of which the final scheduled game occurs. The official schedule will indicate the dates of these deadlines. For the purpose of this section, a change is the exchange of one player for another, not the addition of a player to the roster. Guest players will not count as changes. No other roster changes may be made without the approval of a majority of the league's managers. Trades between teams are not allowed.

Players: No player shall be eligible to play in a league game until that player has paid the registration fee and signed the league's liability waiver. No guest player shall be eligible to play in a league game until that player has signed the league's liability waiver, and that player has been declared as an eligible player prior to the start of the game. In the event of an injury to a player in the lineup that requires them to leave the game in progress, an undeclared guest player may be used as a substitute.

Schedule: A complete, balanced, schedule shall be determined by the commissioner once the official league teams have been finalized. The schedule shall consist of a regular season, and no less than two rounds of post-season play. The final round of postseason play shall be called the World Series, various copyrights notwithstanding, and shall be a best of 3 game series. The next to last round of postseason play shall be called the Division Championship Series, and shall be no less than a best of 3 game series. The first round of postseason play, if needed, shall be called the Wild Card Series, and shall be no less than a best of 3 game series.

Playoffs (17 or more teams): The Division Champion of each division shall advance to the playoffs as well as additional teams to equal a total of eight, based on their overall record, regardless of their division. Seeding for the first round of the playoffs shall be determined first by record among division winners, for seeds #1 through #5, then by records among wild card teams for seeds #6 through #8. The Division winner with the best record will play the wild card entry with the worst record, outside of its Division (#1 vs. #8, unless same Division), while the Division winner with the next best record will play the wild card entry with the next least worst record (#2 vs #7) outside of its Division until all teams are seeded. In the second round of the playoffs, the teams will be reseeded with the team with the best record playing the team with the worst record, regardless of Division, except that the wildcard team(s) shall still be considered the lowest seeds. In the event of a tie record between teams to determine the best record, the regular season record of the teams head-to-head shall determine the better team, and if that is also a tie, the run differential in those games shall determine, and if that is also a tie, the run differential for all games shall determine. The team with the better record will have home field advantage in games 1 and 3 in each series, and shall be entitled to choose which regular season field is used to play their home games on.

Playoffs (12 to 16 teams): The Division Champion of each division shall advance to the playoffs as well as additional teams to equal a total of six, based on their overall record, regardless of their division. Seeding for the first round of the playoffs shall be determined first by division winner, then by record. The two Division winners with the best records shall receive a bye in the first round of the playoffs. The Division winner with the third best record will play the wild card entry with the worst record, outside of its Division, while the Division winner with the fourth best record will play the other wild card entry. In the second round of the playoffs, the teams will be reseeded with the team with the best record playing the team with the worst record, regardless of Division, except that the wildcard team(s) shall still be considered the lowest seeds. In the event of a tie record between teams to determine the best record, the regular season record of the teams head-to-head shall determine the better team, and if that is also a tie, the run differential in those games shall determine, and if that is also a tie, the run differential for all games shall determine. The team with the better record will have home field advantage in games 1 and 3 in each series, and shall be entitled to choose which regular season field is used to play their home games on.

Playoffs (11 or fewer teams): The Division Champion of each division shall advance to the playoffs as well as additional teams to equal a total of four, based on their overall record, regardless of their division. Seeding for the first round of the playoffs shall be determined first by division winner, then by record. Division winners with the best record will play the wild card entry with the worst record, outside of its Division, if there is a team outside of its Division. In the event of a tie record between teams to determine the best record, the regular season record of the teams head-to-head shall determine the better team, and if that is also a tie, the run differential in those games shall determine, and if that is also a tie, the run differential for all games shall determine. The team with the better record will have home field advantage in games 1 and 3 in each series, and shall be entitled to choose which regular season field is used to play their home games on.

Playoffs Tiebreaker: In the event of a tie record between two teams to determine who advances to the playoffs, a one game tie-breaker game shall be held. In the event that more than two teams are tied for two or fewer remaining post-season positions, the teams involved in the tie will play a standard single elimination tournament to determine who shall advance to the playoffs. Teams shall be seeded in the tournament based on their total run differential for the season. Should any teams still be tied after run differentials have been applied, they shall be drawn for seeding out of a hat. The team with the highest seed shall be the home team in each game of the single elimination tournament. If the tournament is to determine one position in post-season, then the winner shall receive that spot, and be seeded with the other teams in the playoffs according to the established seeding rules for post-season. If the tournament is to determine two positions in post-season, then the winner of the tournament shall receive the top remaining seed, and the runner-up shall receive the lowest seed, regardless of their head-to-head regular season records. (IE – The double elimination tournament results shall be determinative of seeding.)

Managers: One player on the roster shall be designated as the team manager, who shall be authorized to represent the team in all matters for which no rule requires a team vote. If the manager is not present at a particular game, the team's players present shall designate an acting manager.

Guest Players: Notwithstanding any other rule, a team may add no more than one guest player to its roster during each regular season game, provided that the guest has never played during the same season for another team in the league. In the event of an injury to a player in the lineup that requires them to leave the game in progress, an additional guest player may be used as a substitute.

Rules Changes: A 2/3 majority vote of teams shall be necessary to change playing or league rules.

Commissioner: The teams shall elect a Commissioner before the Summer Season of each odd numbered year who shall be responsible for the day-to-day management of the league, and shall facilitate any changes to league rules or the settlement of disputes on challenged games. Games shall not be eligible to be challenged based on a judgment call, only the mis-application of the rules. Any decision of the Commissioner can be overturned by a 2/3 vote of the league teams.

GROUND RULES

Trees and Other Immovable Objects: Any ball in the air which has not hit the ground and then hits a tree, light pole, wire, or other immovable object is immediately a dead ball and cannot be played or caught. If the ball is in foul territory when it hits the tree or object it is foul. If a ball is in fair territory past the home run fence and hits a tree or object it is a home run.

Other Playing Field: A fair ball that rolls into the fair territory of the playing field not being used for the game in which the ball is hit, shall be dead and treated as a ground rule double.

Airplanes: Any ball that hits an airplane shall be dead. If it was in fair territory when it struck the airplane, it shall be a ground rule double. If it was in foul territory, it shall be a foul ball.

Out of Play Area: Umpires shall use their judgment in determining areas that are out of play, with every effort made to keep all areas playable for a fielder unless the place where the ball ends up has equipment or other impediments to making a play. At no point should any equipment, the leagues or others, be closer than fifteen feet of fair territory or home plate. Unobstructed areas outside of the fifteen feet area should remain in play, to the extent that they are not blocked or impeded. For example, the area behind the benches should be considered out of play, because the bench blocks access to that area. However, the area that is behind the distance of the bench, but is farther down the foul line and isn't blocked by the bench or any other impediment, should remain in play.

Outfield Fence: Balls that are fair, but roll past the foul side of the foul pole and fence shall be live and in play, subject to interference rules, and there will be no limit to the amount of bases that the runner may advance.