

2026 Nippersink Mustang Level

PURPOSE: Minor (Mustang) League baseball is intended to further develop the baseball skills which were introduced at previous, lower levels, introduce and develop new skills that will prepare the players for the next level of baseball, stress the importance of social skills and good sportsmanship as important to being a good team mate and team member, and to maintain an atmosphere that encourages fun while learning how to play competitively and win and lose.

IHSA rules apply, except for amended rules listed herein. Illinois High School Association Rule Book, none other acceptable.

Every Manager should carry a copy to each game.

The following rules apply to both regular season and year-end tournament or playoff play.

Home team must supply field, Umpire, and two (2) game balls.

ROLB1 or Wilson A1010 baseballs or equivalent.

Each team must supply directions to their game fields to all other teams.

In the event a team is late arriving to the field, there will be a fifteen (15) minute grace period before a game can be forfeited. The grace period may be extended, if mutually agreed upon by both managers and no other games are scheduled afterwards on that field.

The Home team for each game will occupy the Third Base dugout unless both teams agree to a change mutually.

MANAGER: The team manager and any coaches and acting coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players, coaches, and parents before, during and after a game once they have arrived at the playing and spectating area. The team manager has the right to bench a player on his/her team who does not follow a league established rule, disrupts the play of the game, or does not act in an orderly manner. If the team manager takes this action, the reasons for such action should be conveyed to the umpire and the opposing team manager immediately and to the parent of the player after the game. Repeated occurrences must be reported to the League Director. If a spectator for a team behaves in such manner as to cause him or herself to be removed from the field and viewing area, **the manager of that team shall be ejected from the game** if an assistant coach is available to run the team. Any manager or coach ejected from a league game for any reason **MUST** meet with his organization's Director (in person or by phone call) for the Minor (Mustang) level before being reinstated to manage.

A team manager must, at all times, respect the decision of the umpires, and is required to foster an environment whereby the umpires are able, without distraction, to fulfill their responsibilities during a game. The manager and coaches must require their players and fans to abide by this code of conduct as well. The umpire's call is correct and will NOT be argued with or ridiculed in ANY

WAY, SHAPE, or FORM – even when that call is obviously wrong. Disagreements as to calls and rules will be discussed quickly and quietly between innings when minor explanations are requested. Major disagreements will be addressed immediately after a game and on the umpire evaluation sheet that is required to be filled out after each game by an adult manager or coach from each team. All umpires calling a game are required to fill out manager evaluation forms for each of the opposing manager/coach teams as well.

In the rare case when an umpire is not able to be at a game site and when it is the decision by the two team managers to assign either themselves or one of their coaches to be an umpire, that manager or coach assigned should refrain from their team responsibilities.

UMPIRES:

Umpires have the final decision as to all rulings pertaining to the play of the game. Umpires also retain the right to rule a player ineligible to start (e.g., for equipment violation), or to remain in a game.

EQUIPMENT:

The home team is to provide two (2) new balls for each game to the umpire, and have a third new ball on-hand if needed. **ROLB1 or Wilson A1010 baseballs or equivalent.**

Players are to wear appropriate footwear, such as rubber or molded plastic cleats. No metal tipped spikes are permitted.

All players on the team at bat while on the playing field (which includes the on-deck circle) are required to wear a helmet (face guards are optional) with ear protection on both sides. If a player does not wear appropriate head gear, the umpire will call an automatic out for each non-conforming player on the field. All male players are required to wear a protective cup when catching or playing ANY infield position including pitcher. Their play will be limited to the outfield if they are not wearing such protection.

Anytime a player is the catcher on the playing field (including between innings when the pitcher is warming up), he must be in full gear – catcher's mask, chest protector & shin guards. If a player is being utilized as a bullpen catcher, they must, at minimum, wear a catcher's mask.

Any sized USA bat is allowed. No USSSA bats are allowed. 1st offense of using illegal bat: Player is automatically out and warning for manager. The level coordinator will be notified of the warning. 2nd offense of using illegal bat: Manager is suspended next game. 3rd offense of using illegal bat: Manager is suspended rest of season.

BEHAVIOR:

The throwing or misuse of baseball equipment during a game is not permitted. The Umpires, at their discretion, can either call an automatic out, or if they feel the violation was unintentional and the act did not disrupt the immediate play, issue a warning to the player and team manager. If a player is issued a warning for a violation, any subsequent violation of a like kind will result in an automatic out. If the umpire feels any violation is intentional on the players behalf, an automatic out will be called, the player will be ejected from the game, and the player will be suspended from the next game.

For the safety of both players and fans alike, **NO WARMUP SWINGS ARE ALLOWED** Except in these circumstances:

**The current batter may take practice swings when OUT of the batter's box and away from the catcher and umpire.*

**Any batter NOT the current batter may only take practice swings in an area away from all players and spectators that is deemed safe by the manager and UNDER THE DIRECT AND IMMEDIATE SUPERVISION OF A COACH! The On Deck circle on the field MAY constitute such an area on fields where On Deck batters are permitted. No area off the playing field is considered safe without being under the direct supervision of a coach or other responsible adult.*

The same rule applies to warm up throws by ANY players. Warm up throws may only be taken on the field between batters and between innings. NO WARM UP THROWS ARE ALLOWED OUTSIDE THE PLAYING FIELD Except:

**under the DIRECT AND IMMEDIATE SUPERVISION OF A COACH!*

GAME DAY PREPARATION: The home team is responsible for preparing the field for game play. Preparation includes but is not limited to raking the infield, setting the bases, lining the foul lines, and lining the batter boxes. After the game the field should be completely raked and all equipment should be returned to storage. Teams from other towns outside RBBA are not required to do field maintenance of RBBA playing fields. However each manager, including non-RBBA managers **is** responsible for making sure all garbage on and surrounding the playing field and a result of their teams and or fans is picked up and disposed of properly.

If time permits, the home team has 10 minutes of infield access 30 minutes prior to game time. The visiting team has 10 minutes of infield access 20 minutes prior to game time.

All necessary conferences and exchange of line up should be completed 5 minutes prior to the assigned start time in order to permit an on-time start.

MAKE-UP GAMES AND SUSPENDED GAMES:

Unless shortened by weather or other outside element (power outage, for example), the score at the end of 2 hours of play (per the length of game rules above) with the Home team leading for incomplete innings or either team leading for completed innings is the final score. The Home team manager is responsible for reporting game scores to the Minor (Mustang) League Director within 24 hours of the end of the game.

Determination of whether physical conditions are suitable for play is the responsibility of the scheduled Home Team Manager until the time an umpire arrives for that game. It is imperative that the home team manager makes a decision on playability as early as possible and notifies the League Directors and opposing manager as soon as possible to prevent unnecessary travel and to allow time to cancel umpires before they travel. Umpires are due to be paid if they show up at the playing field before the game is called.

Any suspended games and cancelled games are required to be made up. The minute the cancellation is communicated the two managers must look at their schedules and decide upon a makeup date and location which must be communicated to the Mustang League Director that same day to be put on the official schedule and umpires arranged, etc. Games not made up by the last day of the regular season will count as losses to both teams.

STANDINGS & YEAR END TOURNAMENT:

Team records will be used to decide placement of teams for a seeded, single elimination year-end tournament. Percentage of wins will determine any seeding. Ties amongst teams will be first decided by head to head competition, and then by a coin toss if necessary.

RULES AFFECTING THE PLAY OF THE GAME:

1. Continuous batting order set at start of game - all players bat. All players do not, necessarily bat each inning. If 3 outs are made before the lineup finishes batting, then the inning is over. The batting order can repeat in an inning subject to the 6 run per inning rule.
2. No inning can start after the 1 hour, 45 minute time limit. A new inning begins the instant the 3rd out is made in the bottom of an inning. If the home team is at bat and winning when 1:45 occurs, the game is over. **If you start the 6th inning, you will finish the 6th inning.**
3. **5 runs per inning max for innings 1-3 and 10 runs per inning max for innings 4-6.** 12 run slaughter rule after 3.5 innings. If the home team has a 12 run lead in their half of the game before 3.5 innings, the visiting team still gets to bat in the top half of the next inning. The coaches of the respective teams may, at their discretion, continue the game beyond slaughter point up to a maximum of 2 hours or for an entire 6 inning game if there is no game waiting.
4. No Infield fly rule.
5. Pitchers can pitch 2 innings max per game. Players may pitch a maximum of 6 innings per week. If you have 3 games in one week, they can pitch 2 innings per game that week. A week goes Monday through Sunday. Pitchers can pitch on back-to-back days, **however, they can only pitch 2 innings in game one, and one inning the following day, or in the reverse. Once a pitcher is removed in a game, he cannot be brought back in to pitch. Even if the pitcher only throws 1 pitch. In that case 1 pitch = an inning pitched.**
6. Pitchers are to not twist or break their wrists with the intent of throwing a curve ball. Any pitcher that violates this rule will first be issued a warning, and a second violation will require substitution. Players removed for violation of this rule will not be permitted to pitch again in that game.
7. For the first two strikes of each plate appearance strikes will be called in what is known as a "Hittable" strike zone in order to encourage aggressiveness at the plate and speed games along. Pitches that are deemed by the umpire to be able to be hit well with reasonable effort will be called strikes. Generally this expands the strike zone about two or three inches on every side. The third strike, however, must be in the standard rulebook strike zone.
8. The Player must slide or make visible effort to avoid contact with a fielder if a play is being made on him (i.e. ball is thrown to the base the runner is advancing to – even if runner has the throw beat). When in doubt, SLIDE. For failure to slide, the

player will be called out. If the fielder is off the base or up the base line, the player may run around him, but three-foot rule on either side of the baseline applies. Outside of that, the player is out for leaving the base path. The only time a head first "slide" is permitted is when "leading off" a base. If a pickoff attempt is made, the runner may return to base with a head first slide.

9. Speed up rule applies; the catcher and/or pitcher can be replaced by the batter-runner who made the last out.
10. If catcher over throws the pitcher on a return throw after a pitched ball, the runners shall not advance.
11. Pitchers hitting 2 batters in same inning, or 3 batters in game, must be replaced, (unless the throw hits the batter on a bounce) Umpires discretion may be used as to whether the throws were hard enough to cause potential injury or whether the batter made significant effort to avoid an avoidable pitch. Batters hit in the strike zone **will not** count as Hit Batter but as a Strike.
12. Players must rotate positions at least every 2 innings to gain more experience playing different positions, and **each player must spend at least 2 full innings in the infield per 6-inning game. The maximum number of innings a player can play the same defensive position per game is two (2). At least one of those innings must be before the end of the 4th inning. (Infield includes pitcher and catcher).** The positions played are subject to safety concerns for the players. No player whom the coach deems unable to "defend" himself properly from a batted ball will be required to Pitch or play 3B or Catcher.
13. Stealing Bases: runners may advance to next open base, after the ball passes the batter, at their own risk. If the catcher makes a play on the runner, and the ball is over thrown, the runners may not advance any further. **Runners cannot advance from 3rd once there has been one successful steal of home, or advances on overthrows, of home in each inning. No LEAD-OFFS are allowed.**
14. No players may advance once the ball has been returned to the control of the Pitcher within the cutout or chalked circle of the Pitcher's mound. **ALSO IF TIME IS CALLED AND AWARDED BY THE UMPIRE AND PLAY IS RULED DEAD. CLARIFICATION OF RULE 14: ONLY ON AN OVER THROW. EVEN IF THERE HAS ALREADY BEEN ONE STEAL OF HOME.**
15. Double steals are allowed. However, if runners are on 1st and 3rd and only the player from 1st is in the act of stealing, the player from 3rd cannot advance home on the throw to 2nd base. Although, if he was in the act of stealing home (which is unlikely unless the ball has passed the catcher) he can advance home. Stealing, however, is not defined as leading off a few steps and waiting to see what happens with the throw from the catcher. Double steals MUST be simultaneous attempts.
16. We will allow the stealing of Home base, (however we will limit the number of times you can steal home to 1 per inning -- that is one successful steal of Home, if a runner tries to steal home is caught, that team can still try again, until they have scored a run by stealing home). Scoring from third on a wild pitch or passed ball will also count as the successful "steal" of home for the inning.

17. Bunting: if a batter shows bunt, he must either bunt or take the pitch; the batter cannot pull back and swing away. The batter will be called out if he swings away after showing bunt.
18. **No player will sit out more than one inning at a time unless for explicit disciplinary reasons!** There is free movement of players in and out, except at pitcher. Once a player pitches and is removed, **he cannot go back in and pitch in the same game.**
19. The playing field will conform to Little League dimensions. Pitching mound is 46' from front of Pitching Rubber to back of Home Plate and 6" high. The bases should be 60'.
20. A walked batter **cannot** advance beyond 1st base **until the first pitch to the subsequent batter.**

21. THERE ARE NO INTENTIONAL WALKS.

22. Substitute players may be brought up from a lower level if a team is short and falls below ten (10) players. A substitute player cannot play ahead of a normal roster player. **If no lower level players are available,** a player from another Minor/Mustang team may play for another team if needed AND if such player is not scheduled to play with his normal team, however that player must bat last in the order and only play the outfield. No team may play with more than 3 such approved substitutes. All substitutes from other teams must wear their own normal team uniform in order to make enforcement of the position and batting order rules easier to identify. **All substitutes must be disclosed to the opposing coach before start of the game.**
23. If a player shows up late (after the first pitch), he/she must be placed at the end of the batting order
24. A player, who was absent for a game that was suspended may not be added to the line up for the continuation of the game.
25. A team must have at least eight (8) players to start a game but may finish with seven (7)
26. A "Zero Tolerance" Policy will be in place for Unsportsmanlike acts. Coaches are to coach, players are to play, Umpires are to Umpire, and Parents are to cheer and be supportive. Any coach or player who is ejected by the Umpire for Unsportsmanlike conduct will be suspended for the next scheduled game of that team and his/her conduct must be reviewed by the league to determine if further discipline is to be assessed. All Managers and Coaches – both Home and Visiting – are required to assist the umpire in maintaining proper behavior of players, coaches, and fans.
27. All other runner advancement follows IHSA rules. For example, as long as a ball is live and remains on the designated playing field, the runner is free to advance at his own risk until such time as he is called Out, advances safely to Home, or the

ball is returned to the CONTROL of the pitcher ON the pitcher's mound (cutout area or other designated circle around the pitching area). Balls leaving the designated playing field are governed by dead ball advancement rules.

28. Players with a cast or any other injury are able to play as long as the player is able to field the position without assistance from a coach.