

# Far North Coast Baseball Association Inc.



Since 1937, Home of the FNC  
**TIMBERJACKS**

## **LOCAL PLAYING RULES**

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## Preamble

1. In general, the Official Baseball Rules will govern all Far North Coast Baseball Association (FNCBA) fixtures. In certain circumstances, however, these rules require modification to assist in the smooth running of the game at our local level. Such modifications will be known as "FNCBA Local Rules".
2. These rules may not and cannot be adjusted or manipulated in any way by any club or official, without the expressed written permission of the FNCBA Board of Management (BOM). Clubs or individuals who infringe these rules will be dealt with by the FNCBA BOM.
3. Changes to the FNCBA Local Playing Rules shall be reviewed by the Association's Rules Committee and recommendations to be forwarded to the BOM at the commencement of each season. A 75% majority of the Board is required for rule changes to be adopted. This is outlined in Appendix A.
4. The FNCBA BOM will determine the method of conducting the season's competition;
5. The competition in all grades and age divisions down to U14s will be played in two parts to be termed the **Minor Premiership** (Regular Season) and the **Major Premiership** (Post Season). In the U12 and lower age divisions, the competition will be played in one part only.
6. At the beginning of each season, the FNCBA BOM will decide how both parts of the competition are to be played.
7. Prior to the commencement of each season, the FNCBA BOM will appoint a Senior Registrar who will draw up a *Fixtures Schedule*, or be responsible for delegation of as appointed by BOM, which will clearly set out the competition in each grade.
8. In that Fixtures Schedule, the first named team will be the "Home Team", occupy third base dugout, have **second** use of the diamond for pre-game warm up and field first. The second named team will be the "Visiting Team".

**THE FNCBA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT SHALL BE EMPOWERED TO RULE UPON MATTERS NOT SPECIFICALLY DEALT WITH IN THESE RULES, OR COVERED BY THE OFFICIAL BASEBALL RULES**

# THE MINOR PREMIERSHIP

## Section A: Points

Premiership points shall be awarded as follows:

Win	3 points
Tie	2 points
Loss	1 point
Win (by forfeit)	3 points
Loss (by forfeit)	0 points
Bye	2 points
Washout	2 points
No-Game	2 points

Penalty for forfeit if no notification is given or insufficient team members turn up for game.

Team will need to explain to FNCBA BOM why forfeit occurred, and a penalty enforced as per Schedule of Penalties.

## Section B: Club Championship

1. A Club Championship shall be competed for annually. Clubs will earn points in this Championship in all grades from U14 up to the Major League.
2. If there is more than one club team in a Division/Grade, only the club team gaining the highest points will be taken into account.
3. In the event of a nominated composite team being made up of members from two or more Clubs in a Junior division, the points shall be allocated according to the percentage of registered team members and coaches contributed to that team.

## Section C: Uniforms

1. Major League and Division 1 players **must wear full** club playing uniform for all games. The uniform includes the Playing Shirt, Playing Pants, Undershirts and Playing Cap.
2. All players and coaches (both Senior and Junior) must wear full club playing uniform. Newly registered players (except Major League and Division 1) have a maximum of four weeks to obtain the correct uniform. After this time, Umpires or Scorers shall record uniform breaches on the back of game cards for the attention of the FNCBA BOM.
3. Sponsorship signage on uniforms is permitted; however, nothing resembling a baseball is permitted. All sponsors names, size and placement of the signage **must** be endorsed by the FNCBA BOM.

## Section D: Field Dimensions

### Field Dimensions

Grade	Game	Basepaths	Pitch Distance	Centrefield Distance	Bases
Under 8	T-Ball	60 feet	46 feet	150-170 feet	Removable
Under 10	Rookie Ball	60 feet	46 feet	200-220 feet	Removable
Under 12	Little League	70 feet	46 feet	225 feet	Removable
Under 14	Baseball	80 feet	54 feet	300 feet	Removable
Under 16	Baseball	90 feet	60 feet 6 inch	Open	Permanent
Under 20	Baseball	90 feet	60 feet 6 inch	Open	Permanent
Division 3	Baseball	90 feet	60 feet 6 inch	Open	Permanent
Division 2	Baseball	90 feet	60 feet 6 inch	Open	Permanent
Division 1	Baseball	90 feet	60 feet 6 inch	Open	Permanent
Major League	Baseball	90 feet	60 feet 6 inch	Open	Permanent

## Section E: Balls, Bats & Shoes

1. The FNCBA BOM will decide upon the type and brand of baseball to be used in all fixtures throughout the season. These, and only these balls, will be used in FNCBA competition games (unused prior year balls may be used as per FNCBA direction).
2. In **Major League and Division 1**, each club will supply a **new baseball** and a **suitable backup ball** to the Umpire in Chief (UIC) at the start of each game. In other Senior grades the UIC must be satisfied with the quality and condition of the balls submitted for play;

Grade	Balls	Bats	Shoes
Under 8	Safety	Option of older style Little League Bats stamped “Approved for Little League” or current Little League Approved Bats as per link in U12.	Rubber Sole
Under 10	Safety	Option of older style Little League Bats stamped “Approved for Little League” or current Little League Approved Bats as per link in U12.	Rubber Sole
Under 12	X-Plate	All bats for Little League play must be on the “Approved Non-Wood Bat List” <a href="http://www.littleleague.org/Assets/forms_pubs/2011ApprovedNonWoodBatList.pdf">http://www.littleleague.org/Assets/forms_pubs/2011ApprovedNonWoodBatList.pdf</a>	Rubber Sole
Under 14	X-Plate	<b>U14</b> Bats shall be not more than thirty-four (34) inches in length; nor more than two and five-eighths (2 5/8) inches in diameter, and if wood, not less than fifteen-sixteenths (15/16ths) inches in diameter (7/8 inch for bats less than 30”) at its smallest part. (A 12 month grace period will apply to U14 bats from July 1 2010 to June 30 2011 for bats -8 or heavier).	Non Metal Cleats Permitted
Under 16	Easton 777 or X-Plate	-5 ounces or heavier	Metal Cleats Permitted
Under 20	Easton 777 or X-Plate	-3 ounces or heavier	Metal Cleats Permitted
Division 3	Easton 777 or X-Plate	-3 ounces or heavier	Metal Cleats Permitted
Division 2	Easton 777 or X-Plate	-3 ounces or heavier	Metal Cleats Permitted
Division 1	Easton 777	-3 ounces or heavier	Metal Cleats Permitted
Major League	Easton 777	Wood	Metal Cleats Permitted

Females playing U16 to Senior Baseball (Excluding Major A) are permitted to use Baseball bats - 5 ounces or heavier.

## Section F: Pre-Game Routine

**NOTE: Clubs must familiarise teams with the pre-game routine to be observed:**

1. The Home Team shall occupy third base dugout and the Visiting Team shall occupy first base dugout.
2. Warming up on the infield, unless undertaking an infield/outfield routine is strictly not permitted.
3. Warming up in foul territory between first and third bases and home plate is strictly not permitted.
4. Umpires will arrive at home plate five minutes prior to the scheduled starting time. Both team Managers will approach the plate at this time, hand required game balls and line-ups to the UIC. The line-ups will consist of at least two (2) pieces (the original for the UIC and a copy for the opposition manager).
5. The UIC will check both line-ups, hand copies back to the appropriate managers and retain original line-ups.
6. Umpires and managers will discuss ground rules and playing regulations as applicable.

## Section G: Game Duration

Grade	Start	Finish	Standard Innings	Mercy Rule	Max Runs/ Innings*
U8	10.00am				
U10	10.00am				
U12	8.15am	9.45am	6 innings	after 4 innings or 1¼ hours	6 per inning
U14	10.00am	11.45am	7 innings	after 5 innings or 1½ hours	9 per inning
U16	8.00am	9.45am	7 innings	after 5 innings or 1½ hours	9 per inning
U20	10.00am	11.45am	7 innings	after 5 innings or 1½ hours	n/a
Division 3	12.30pm	2.30pm	9 innings	after 7 innings	n/a
Division 2	2.45pm	4.45pm	9 innings	after 7 innings	n/a
Division 1	12.30pm	2.30pm	9 innings	after 7 innings	n/a
Major League	2.45pm		9 innings	after 7 innings	n/a

Please note, these are standard times, games times are subject to change.

\* For the purpose of this rule, the maximum runs may be exceeded in the event of a home run that is batted over the home run fence. A home run that has not been hit over the fence, the maximum number of runs will not exceed the above table.

1. All Major League games will be nine-innings games unless stated in the *Fixtures Schedule*. If the scores are equal after nine-innings then the game will continue until a result obtained.
2. All games in other Senior grades are nine innings or time, whichever comes first. The duration of time limits for day and night games shall be as stated in the *Fixtures Schedule*;
3. If either team is leading by 10 runs or more the game shall be called after the completion of the abovementioned “Mercy Rule” time.
4. Double Headers: If a double header is scheduled in any grade, such games will be seven (7) innings for Major League or Two (2) Hours for any other Division/Grade. In Major League, in the event of a tie after seven (7) innings in a double-header, the game will continue until a result has been reached. The second game of the double-header fixture shall start twenty minutes after the first game ends. **Please note, that games played on separate days do not constitute a double header.**
5. All time games will finish at the time set down in the *Fixtures Schedule*, except for circumstances covered in the following instances:
  - a. If the top of an innings is in progress when the allocated time for a game expires, the UIC will call game immediately.
  - b. If the bottom of an innings is in progress when the allocated time expires, that part of the innings will be completed. The maximum time allowed for such completion of the innings shall be *fifteen (15) minutes*. At the end of this time, the batter at the plate will complete his/her turn at bat and the game will thereupon finish. If the winning run is scored in this half innings, the game will end immediately after that runner crosses the plate. If the winning run should result from a home run, then all runs batted by that hit will score.
6. The UIC will be the official timekeeper. The UIC may instruct the scorers to assist with the official timekeeping. Scorers shall give at least five (5) minutes warning to the UIC of the approach of the scheduled finish time.
7. In all time games, a regulation game has been played once playing time has exceeded half of the allocated time.
8. If the UIC calls “game” before the allocated time, the result of the game will be determined by the score at the last even innings (unless the home team is in front during the inning in which “time” is called).
9. Where a game of fewer than the respective minimum number of innings or one half of the playing time has not been completed, this will result in a no-game.



## Section H: Speed-Up Rules

1. In “time” games only. In the event that the *visiting team* draws level or takes the lead in a game, it shall have the right *once, and once only* in a game, to forfeit its remaining “outs” in that half innings. This is done by informing the UIC. The UIC shall immediately inform the Opposition Team Manager and scorers and instruct the home team to leave the field and prepare to bat. This declaration must be made prior to the allocated finishing time of completion of the game. If the visiting team comes to bat again, it shall resume from when the declaration was made (i.e. no automatic outs are recorded for the declaration of an inning);
2. **Between innings** in all grades, the UIC shall allow approximately **one minute** between the last play of one-half of an inning and the first pitch of the next (Pitchers and catchers are to be encouraged to move quickly into position in order to fit 5-6 warm up throws between innings). Each starting pitcher (or new pitcher) shall be allowed a maximum of 8 warm up throws.
3. The batter will take his/her signals from the coach in the batter’s box. The UIC will hold the pitcher until the batter is settled;
4. There is to be no runner for the catcher in any grade.

## Section I: Grounds/Fields

1. All nominated fields must be available for the commencement of the FNCBA competition as per the *Calendar of Events*, unless FNCBA BOM grants an exemption;
2. Prior to the commencement of each season, the FNCBA BOM will inspect all fields and complete a *Grounds Evaluation Form*;
3. All fields must be marked accurately to the satisfaction of the umpire of each game. Marking must be to the correct dimensions as per the *Rules of Baseball*. Markings must include at least foul lines and coaches’ boxes;
4. Clubs must keep all grounds/fields in a clean and tidy condition at all times. Grounds must be free from dangerous objects, e.g. rocks, glass and all other obstacles likely to cause injury to players, officials and visitors;
5. Clubs must maintain all fields to FNCBA approved standards. If FNCBA withdraws grounds from use pending rectification, no FNCBA games (Junior or Senior) can be played on those grounds until FNCBA BOM declares them satisfactory;
6. All Major League Grade clubs’ grounds must have a properly enclosed home run fence.

Division 1 grade clubs' must have either properly enclosed home run fence or witches hats as home run boundary;

7. The host club shall provide a clearly defined dugout; seating and shade cover for both teams, and seating and shade cover for scorers;
8. Clubs hosting finals are required to have a groundsman on site to maintain the field throughout the day;
9. All fields, where possible, shall provide wet weather ground covers for the pitchers and the home plate areas.

## **Section J: Bad Light/Wet Weather**

1. The fitness of playing fields up to a time *two hours* prior to the commencement of play is a decision to be made by the Home Club. Should the field be unplayable, the home Club is to notify FNCBOM appointed Grounds person (or in their absence an alternate Board Member) for final authority of field closure;
  2. If wet weather threatens play, the Home Club must make its decision and:
    - Communicate that decision to local radio before **7.00am** should the field be closed for the day (or immediately should the decision be made to close field during the day). Those decisions will also be placed on a recorded message on the Association phone at Albert Park (02 6622 8268);
    - Clubs outside Lismore are encouraged to place a message on that number for access by travelling teams;
    - Advise the relevant FNCBA BOM and opposing club immediately (or as soon as practical) prior to the scheduled game start time should the field be closed for play;
    - Wet weather contacts are available on the FNCBA website.
- NOTE:*** Notification of closed or unsuitable grounds shall be to the person nominated by Club's as their wet weather contact (*see Club Contact Schedule*).
3. Games are to be called off one game at a time, unless it is obvious that the ground is unplayable for the entire day; The Home Club is responsible for doing everything possible to ensure that the field is safe for play. Up until the start of the game, the Home Club delegate will determine whether the field is playable. Once the home team line up sheet is provided to the UIC, the field condition it is solely the UIC's decision.
  4. If a game in progress is interrupted by rain, the UIC may suspend the game as per the ***Rules of Baseball***;
  5. If a game commences, but is rained out before it becomes a regulation game, scorers must

still complete game cards (with only players that have participated in that game) and forward them to the relevant Registrar;

6. The “calling” of a game because of light is entirely a matter of judgement for the UIC;
7. Where there are lights available they will be turned on at the discretion of the UIC when required to complete the game.

## **Section K: Players and Coaches**

1. All teams shall field a maximum of nine players.
2. When a team does not have a full complement of nine players in **Major League and Division 1**, it shall be deemed to have forfeited the game.
3. In Senior grades below Division 1, teams may take the field with **8 players**. Teams in these grades with less than eight players will forfeit the game.
4. In Junior Divisions, refer to Section P subsection 5 for minimum number of players.
5. If a player in grades (including Juniors) below Division 1 leaves the game due to ejection, illness or injury and so reduces the team to a forfeit situation, another player previously replaced may re-enter the game. This can occur only if no other bench player is available;
6. A player may participate in a game even if that player is not listed on the line up sheet handed to the umpire at the start of the game (that player to be added to line up sheets once notified). **A player shall be listed on the game card only when that player enters the game;**
7. All players playing in the Senior competition must be registered in their appropriate grade. Junior players given permission to play in Senior baseball shall **not be allowed** to play more than one grade above the Senior grade in which they are registered. Any Junior player not registered in a Senior grade may only participate in the lowest grade available;
8. **Floating Players:** Any players from their club’s second lowest Senior team down to the lowest may play down one grade. These players are described as “floaters” for the purpose of this rule. Only 3 floaters can be used at any one time. Floaters may only be used if no regular player from that team is available. Floaters may only play in the outfield;
9. **Pitchers:** The maximum number of pitches that any Senior grade pitcher in FNCBA competition will be allowed to throw in one weekend is **130** plus complete the batter at bat. If a pitcher exceeds **90** pitches over a weekend, he will **NOT** be permitted to pitch in another outing again during that weekend. For the purposes of this rule, a “weekend” commences on Friday at 5pm and continues until Monday morning. For information on Junior Pitching allowances, see *Junior Rules Section*;

**10. Pitching Visits:** In all FNCBA Competitions, a second visit to the pitcher in the same inning will be allowed without penalty of automatic removal of the pitcher from the game. However, player must be removed from the mound and can not return to the pitching position for the game's entirety (including any delay, postponement or replay);

**11. Juniors in Senior Grades:** In FNCBA Senior Competitions, U18 players may participate. In addition, U16 players who are granted consent by the FNCBA Director of Coaching may take part in Senior Competition providing all the rules which govern Juniors playing in Senior grades are fully complied with. A FNCBA Consent Form **must** be filled in, presented to the BOM and approved prior to the player's first Senior game. All Juniors playing in Senior grades must be nominated in a Senior grade. If not nominated in a Senior grade that player may only play in the clubs lowest division. **In Finals, players in the Under 20 competition that are not Under 18 age eligible (that is, players turning 18 and 19 years of age during the year), *must* be nominated in a Senior Grade and participation requirements must be met in order to play in the Major Rounds. All juniors (Under 18 age eligible and below) that are not nominated may only play in the club's lowest Senior grade;**

**Note: U16 players shall not pitch or catch in U18/20s and Senior divisions.**

**12.** When Junior players participate in Senior fixtures, Senior coaches must be aware of the Junior pitching and catching rules. Breaches of these rules will be considered as serious offences by this Association.

***Penalty:* The coach, club executive and player concerned will be cited to appear before the Judiciary. BQI and ABF will be notified of any breach.**

**13. Juniors playing for more than one club:** Any Junior player, **including Under 20's**, wishing to play Senior baseball with another club must forward a letter of application to the FNCBA Secretary. If consent is given, that player must wear the full uniform of the second club, and his participation in Senior games is governed by the Junior rules;

**14.** Each team will have an accredited coach who is nominated on the official line up sheet;

**15.** Only the coaches may approach the umpires to make player changes or to communicate about the game;

## Section L: Conduct

1. The *FNCBA Player's Code of Conduct* clearly sets out what is and is not, acceptable behaviour when participating in FNCBA competitions. It is the responsibility of the Club, its Coaches and Players to familiarise themselves with conduct requirements and to comply with them;
2. Players must not eat or drink while on the playing field;
3. Smoking, chewing tobacco and drinking alcohol on the field or the bench are not permitted. Players participating in a game are also not permitted to smoke, chew tobacco or drink alcohol in uniform in the direct vicinity of the playing area;

**Penalty:** Player may be ejected. Team may suffer a forfeit if player refuses to comply.

4. Audible foul language is not permitted. An offender may be ejected from the game;
5. Foul language directed at an official or scorer is not permitted and will result in immediate ejection;
6. If a person (i.e. player, coach, manager, batboy, club official, substitute, injured player etc.) is ejected from a game, that person must leave the vicinity of the playing field **IMMEDIATELY**. Managers should be aware that if an ejected player remains near the playing field further penalties may be enforced by the FNCBA BOM.

## Section M: Umpiring Duties

1. Reference to Umpires in these Local Rules relates to members of the FNCBA Baseball Umpire's Association and those players appointed on any participating day by their Club's or by the FNCBA;
2. All clubs will be given umpiring duties from time to time throughout the season. When clubs fail to supply an accredited umpire, the following penalties will be applied.

*In Seniors, the club shall lose two club championship points, the team shall lose two competition points and the club shall be required to pay a \$50.00 fine for each umpire failing to attend.*

*In Juniors, the club shall lose two club championship points and the club shall be required to pay a \$25.00 fine for each umpire failing to attend.*

*The breach shall be recorded on the score card and the monetary component of the fine shall be given to the club in which the relief umpire is associated with. Should there be no association (or no relief umpire), then FNCBA shall retain the monetary penalty.*

3. Umpires must start all games on time and be present for plate meeting five (5) minutes

- before the allocated starting time;
4. U14's and above are required to have accredited umpires. It is desirable for U12's to have an accredited Umpire available for all games, however, where an accredited umpire is not available, a responsible person conversant with the Rules of Baseball and these relevant Junior rules may substitute;
  5. Travelling teams will not be required to umpire that game;
  6. The UIC **MUST** be situated behind home plate and wear the necessary equipment, including enclosed footwear. Thongs and sandals are not permitted. The UIC is not permitted to umpire from the mound during any fixture (unless there is only one umpire present);
  7. It is recognized that members of U12 team's coaching staffs may, at times, have to umpire during their games. Where possible, this practice must be avoided;
  8. Junior Umpires under fifteen (15) years of age may only umpire games below their age group. In all other grades, Umpires must be at least 15 years of age. FNCBA will support all umpires (especially young umpires) with severe penalties against any persons who attempt to intimidate, or take advantage of, a Junior umpire;
  9. Umpires are encouraged to allow a **GENEROUS** strike zone in games up to and including the U14 age group;
  10. Between innings, the UIC shall allow approximately **one** minute between the last play of one half of an innings and the first pitch of the next or 5 warm-up pitchers maximum. (**All players are to be encouraged to move quickly into position**)

## **Section N: Scorers**

1. Each team shall have its own scorer. Scorers of both teams *must sit together* during the game to assist the accurate recording of details in scorebooks. Clubs are urged to encourage their Scorers to seek accreditation and develop their skills to a higher level;
2. It is important for Scorers to be conversant with the Pitching and Catching rules pertinent to both Senior and Junior Grades;
3. At the completion of the game, the scorers will, compile the **Official Game Result Card**. The scorers will present the result card to the UIC for checking, and signing. It is the responsibility of the winning team to lodge the Result Card with the relevant FNCBA Registrar within the allowed time frame; (*See Result Cards*)
4. The scorers are to keep an accurate record of each pitchers pitch count. Scorers are to encourage to inform coaches when the pitcher is within 10 pitches of reaching the maximum limit;

5. On the result card in Junior games, the scorer must record the number of pitches and full name of all pitcher(s) who pitched in the game.

## **Section O: Game Result Cards**

1. **Official Game Result Cards** are required for all games, including those where forfeits occur;
2. At the conclusion of the each game, **both teams** shall be responsible for the accuracy of the **Official Game Result Card**. The **winning team is then responsible** for the submitting of the game card to the relevant FNCBA Registrar. This can be achieved by placing it in the FNCBA Result Collection Receptacle at Albert Park, or by post, email or fax. The Game Result Card must include all players participating in game (names must include **Christian names**, initials are not acceptable), scores for the game, together with details of any ejections, cautions or protests recorded on the game card;
3. Floating Players participating in a game must be marked on the result card with an asterisk;
4. **Both scorers** will ensure that:
  - a. Game cards are fully completed, accurate, and legible;
  - b. Team coaches print their name in the appropriate place on the card; and
  - c. UIC print and sign their name in the appropriate place on the card.
5. All Juniors participating in grades above their relevant age divisions must have their age division listed along side their name on the result card. If a Junior player catches or pitches in a Senior game this must be recorded on the result card and the number of pitches thrown or innings caught;
6. So that the FNCBA Registrars can keep point score tables up to date, Clubs must get the results of all games to those registrars by Saturday night at 9pm. Such results can be phones, texted, or emailed. If no results are forwarded, then no points will be given to winning teams;
7. All result cards must be handed in no later than seven days after the game was played. Clubs from outside Lismore must deliver to the Registrar such cards within this time frame, or alternatively, forward a card via mail to the Registrar. Such mail must be postmarked within seven (7) days of the game that was played. It is the responsibility of the Club to ensure such mail is delivered;
8. For all games MVP must be completed on the result card by both coaches at the completion of each game. 3, 2 & 1 points are to be given per game not per team;

## Section P: Forfeits

1. A team that is unable to compete in a scheduled game in accordance with these Local Rules **shall notify the opposing team at least two days** prior to the commencement of the scheduled game;
2. All teams should go to great lengths to see that forfeits do not occur;
3. Teams have ten (10) minutes from the scheduled starting time to put the required number of players on the field. After ten minutes, a team failing to meet that requirement shall be deemed to have forfeited the game;
4. If a Senior team forfeits a game under these laws, the opposing team shall be credited with 3 competition points and a score of 9 – 0. In Junior grades, the forfeit is recorded as 7 – 0;
5. Forfeit Rules in Junior Grades are summarized as follows:
  - a. Under 8                      No forfeit rule                      No automatic outs
  - b. Under 10                      No forfeit rule                      No automatic outs
  - c. Under 12                      No forfeit rule                      No automatic outs
  - d. Under 14                      Minimum of 7 players                      No automatic outs
  - e. Under 16                      Minimum of 8 players                      No automatic outs
  - f. Under 20                      Minimum of 8 players                      No automatic outs

## Section Q: Player Safety

1. **Catchers must** wear protective equipment **at all times** when catching or warming up a pitcher;  
*NOTE:* At Rookie Ball (U8/10) level ONLY, it may be preferred that catchers wear suitable Soccer style shin guards in lieu of the traditional catcher's leggings. This is a time saving recommendation.
2. All batters and base runners in all grades must wear 2-eared helmets. If the helmet fits loosely, a chinstrap is recommended for U8; U10 & U12;
3. Protective cups are **MANDATORY** for all players. Female players may wish to consider breast protection, and if used must be worn under the uniform;
4. It is the responsibility of the Head Coach to ensure that any batboy or girl (minimum 8 years of age), who comes onto the field or sits in the dugout, wears a 2-eared helmet **at ALL times**;
5. All clubs must make available a generous supply of SPF 30+ sunscreen.



6. *The following extract from ABF rules pertains to all clubs.*

- a. Those handling bleeding players must wear disposable rubber or plastic gloves;
- b. Resuscitation bags or disposable mouth-to-mouth devices must be available;
- c. The practice of spitting and urinating in team areas are not permitted;
- d. All clothing, equipment and surface contaminated by blood, must be treated as potentially infectious. Household bleach in a 1:10 solution may be used to wash contaminated areas. Clothing should be soaked in a bleach solution or disinfectant, depending on manufacturer's instruction;
- e. Sharing of towels, razors, face washers and drink containers must be discouraged;
- f. All personnel working within Baseball should be vaccinated against Hepatitis B;
- g. All open cuts and abrasions must be reported to the official and treated immediately.

## **Section R: Injured Players**

If a player is injured during a game it is essential that the UIC, Scorers and the player's Club officials to ensure the injury is reported accordingly.

# THE MAJOR PREMIERSHIP

## Section A: The Finals

1. Semi Finals, Preliminary Finals and Grand Finals shall be discussed before the *Fixtures Schedule* is compiled for the season. The Major Premiership games will be played as determined by the FNCBA BOM;
2. The team finishing at the top of the points table at the end of the Minor Premiership shall be declared **Minor Premiers** and designated as the home team for the first semi final. In the event of two or more teams being level at the top of the minor premierships points table, they shall be declared joint **Minor Premiers**;
3. Should two or more teams who qualify for the major rounds (after completion of the Minor Premiership fixtures) be tied, the Registrar shall allocate places using the following criteria:
  - a. Head to head for the tied teams for the season;
  - b. Win-loss percentage for the season ;
  - c. Then runs for and against, head to head for the season;
  - d. Then runs for and against overall for the season.
4. When semi final draws are being made, the team finishing in the higher place on the points table at the end of the Minor Premiership shall be designated as the home team for the first semi final;
5. The winner of the major semi final in each division will be the ‘home team’ for the Grand Final. In the Major League, the competing teams will then alternate as ‘home teams’ for Game 2 and Game 3 (if required);
6. **Two weeks prior to semi-finals** all Clubs must submit team rosters (**on the FNCBA Team Nomination Form**) for all Senior grades to the FNCBA Registrar for ratification by the FNCBA BOM;
7. For any player to be eligible to participate in Major Round games, they must have played in at least **one third** of the **available weekends played** by their team (or nominated Division) in the Minor Premiership. The minimum amount of games will be rounded up to the next whole game. **Players in the Under 20 competition that are not Under 18 age eligible (that is, players turning 18 and 19 years of age during the year), must be nominated in a Senior Grade and participation requirements must be met in order to play in the Major Rounds. All juniors (Under 18 age eligible and below) that are not nominated may only play in the club’s lowest Senior grade;**

*(NOTE: washout games are NOT to be counted for this purpose, team forfeits resulting in a loss DO NOT count for this purpose also)*

- Players who are absent from the area on Representative Baseball duties will be credited for participation for games missed whilst on Representative Baseball duties.
  - Missed games due to injuries do not qualify as participation.
  - Clubs must notify the FNCBA BOM prior to such duties for participation approval.
8. In the event of games being halted by wet weather (time games only) half the scheduled playing time shall constitute a regulation game;
  9. If a Major Round game is washed out, the Registrar will reschedule the game for the following week or midweek if possible;
  10. In the event of a rescheduled Grand Final then being washed out, the “home team” will be declared the Major Premier;
  11. No player in the starting line-up of a Major Round game is permitted to take part in a lower grade Major Round fixture in that season.  
**PENALTY:** A forfeit will be recorded against offending team.
  12. The maximum number of pitches that any Senior grade pitcher in FNCBA competition will be allowed to throw in one weekend is 130, plus complete the batter at bat. If the pitcher exceeds 90 pitches in any one appearance, he will NOT be permitted to pitch in another outing again during that weekend. For the purposes of this rule, a “weekend” commences on Friday at 5pm and continues until Monday morning.
  13. All Major League finals and grand finals shall be played over nine innings in a “**Best-of-three games**” format. Mercy rule to apply after 7 innings if applicable.
  14. In all other Senior Grades (excluding Major League), all Major Rounds will be played over the same time period as the Minor Rounds. However, any commenced innings will be completed and a result must be achieved.

# RULES SPECIFIC TO JUNIOR DIVISIONS

## Section A: Age Eligibility

1. There is to be no age restriction to play T-Ball. The recommended age for T-Ball is U8 years of age, Rookie Ball recommended age is 8-9 years of age. Any player outside these age brackets wishing to play T-Ball or Rookie Ball must seek permission from the Regional Director of Coaching.
2. The cut-off for age divisions is **December 31** in the year of registration. To illustrate the rule, in order for a child to play U12, that child must not turn 12 in that year. This ruling is consistent with all ABF under Age Rules and Procedures.
3. Players are required to show proof of age upon initial registration. This documentation should be kept on file by the player's club and produced on request by an official of the League, Region, or BQI.
4. Players, U14 and below, may only play up **one age group in Junior competition. All players must** lodge a consent form *“Player Playing another Grade Permission Form”* signed by parents/guardians, must be in the hands of the Registrar prior to participating in the higher age group. Restrictions may be placed on any player playing up a grade.
5. Underdeveloped players or first year players in age groups may apply to the FNCBA BOM to **play down** one level only, upon approval sought from parents/guardians. The Club must forward FNCBA consent *“Player Playing another Grade Permission Form”* to the Registrar prior to participating in a lower age group. Restrictions may be placed on any player playing down a grade.
6. Under age players are **not to play in games** in which correct age players are relegated to the bench. Each time an under age player is used his/her name shall be marked with an asterisk (\*) on the result card and on the back of the card the reason why the player was used. An under-aged player can take the field only if:
  - a. Another player is removed due to an injury or illness; or ejection, or
  - b. The pitcher reaches the maximum pitching limits as stated in “Pitching and Catching”
7. Players (excluding U20) playing up a grade **are not permitted to pitch or catch.** All Junior players playing in Senior competition are to adhere to the relevant restrictions bound by the “Pitching, and Catching Rules”;
8. Registered U20 players are encouraged to play Senior baseball;

9. Registered U16 players may participate in Senior baseball competition should they be assessed by the FNCBA Regional Director of Coaching. A FNCBA consent Form (***Player Playing another Grade Permission Form***) signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s), must be in the hands of the Registrar prior to participating in Senior Baseball. **Restrictions may be placed on their participation.**
10. All Junior players participating in Senior or Junior competitions are to adhere to the **Playing, Pitching and Catching Rules** for their natural age group;  
**Penalty:** A loss by forfeit may be recorded against offending team. The offending Coach will appear before the Board of Management.
11. **No player who is U18 or U16 age eligible may play in more than 3 games within a 24 hour period within the Minor Rounds of the FNCBA competition.** Any participation (except where a player is used as a pinch runner **only**) is counted as “a game”; **note: this rule does not apply to the Major Rounds.** For the purpose of this rule, a junior may start game 4 at the same time as the player started their participation game 1 on the prior day, but not beforehand. They are not required to wait until the completion time of game 1.
12. The Regional Director of Coaching, along with the FNCBA BOM, have the ability to downgrade a Junior player after they have made an inspection of that players ability.

## **Section B: General Playing Rules**

1. Each Junior player **must** play at **least 50%** of the time allowed for that fixture.  
**NOTE:** A five-minute leeway either side of the time will be granted.
2. There is **no designated hitter** in Junior Baseball.
3. U12, U14 & U16 teams **must** use a 10 player batting lineup if they have 10 or more players available. U20 teams **may** also use a 10 player batting lineup at the discretion of each team’s manager. This 10<sup>th</sup> batter must stay in place for the complete game. The extra batter may appear in any batting position and must enter the game in defence at the halfway point. The extra batter is for development only and will not count towards participation until they appear on the field. The batting positions may not be changed at any point during the game, **ONLY** the fielding positions.  
**NOTE:** In cases where teams have just 9 players, players of a younger age group **may** play up as the 10<sup>th</sup> batter provided they do not take the position of a player who should rightfully be playing that age group. However, they may not take the field in place of another player, except in the case of an injury or ejection.

4. **If a play is imminent**, runners **must** slide at **2nd and 3rd bases and home plate**. At home plate, the runner **must** slide feet first.

**NOTE: An imminent play is defined as:** A fielder or catcher, while **receiving or retrieving** the baseball is physically able to touch the base or home plate with normal effort.

**Penalty:** The runner shall be called out for interference. All other runners return to the base they were previously occupying.

**Exception: In accordance with the ABF ruling, sliding at the SENIOR level is not mandatory, BUT IS ENCOURAGED**

5. Under **normal circumstances**, games will be considered finished when either the maximum time duration or the maximum innings, as determined by Leagues in their bylaws, is reached.
6. Players at the U14 and below levels **MUST** start and play **a full game** in **at least 25%** of the teams officially scheduled games. Strategic coaching replacements in Junior baseball, especially at these levels are not encouraged, as they detract from player development.
7. In the event of an injury or ejection, a team may continue with seven players. Also, a team may commence a game with eight players. However, teams are never permitted to have less than eight players on the field at any given time.
8. In Junior games substituted players may re-enter a game in the event of an injury, ejection or a player forced to leave the ground prematurely, but are not permitted to pitch.
9. In U12, U14, and U16 games, teams with 9–11 players must attempt to bat all players. Players from a lower age division do not have to be batted if they are a reserve on the bench.
10. Players are prohibited from throwing the bat. This is the Umpire's judgement call. Offenders and their Coaches are to be cautioned on the first offence. A second offence will result in the batter being called out and all runners return to their last legally occupied base.
11. Should the last bat of the innings result in more than the required amount of runners crossing the plate, all runs scoring on the play will count;
12. In Junior games, teams shall not steal when 10 or more runners ahead;  
**NOTE:** The Runner must return to previous base occupied.  
In U12 games, no players are allowed to steal. Players may only advanced on a passed ball or wild pitch.
13. In U12, once the count on a batter reaches “ball four”, the “Soft Toss” rule will come into effect. The batter takes his/her stance and **shall not bunt**. The pitcher must stand in the allocated soft toss position on field. The catcher must take up a position in the catcher's box. Batters have a one strike count and the Coach must pitch a soft toss pitch. All fouls on soft

toss are strikes except after two strikes, and then every foul is a foul ball. The ball must travel at least 15 foot from home plate, if does not travel this distance it will call a foul ball. Any U10 player may have soft toss tossed to them when they come to the plate. The soft toss pitch may be delivered from either in front of the batter or on the foul line.

14. A batter, who hits safely from a soft toss pitch, may run a maximum of two bases. The batted ball is still in play. Runners on base for soft toss pitchers are not permitted a lead. If a runner takes a lead, he will be called out.
15. In U12 when a batter has three strikes and the Catcher drops the ball, the batter is out.

## Section C: Pitching and Catching

1. No Junior player (including U20 competition and U18 players in Senior baseball) may pitch and catch in the same day.
2. No Junior player (including U20 competition and U18 players in Senior baseball) may catch in more than two games in any given day.
3. Catchers are to wear full protective equipment at all times when catching in a game **or** warming up a pitcher;
4. **There is no runner for the catcher in juniors.**
5. Fastballs and changeups (NO knuckleballs, curveballs, sliders, splitfingers etc) are the only pitches permitted at the U14 and below age levels.
6. **Pitchers may not exceed the game maximums**, with the **exception** that should they reach their maximum number of pitches while there is still a batter in the box, they must complete that batter and then be immediately replaced. Scorers are to inform the coach when pitchers are within 20 pitches of reaching their maximum limit.

**NOTE:** All coaches should make changes between innings when possible.

It is recommended that pitchers should not start the next inning if 10 or less pitches remain before reaching this maximum. This also allows for the next incoming pitcher to be prepared adequately.

7. Pitching limitations for home and away League games during the normal season are:

Grade	Game Maximum
Under 10	35 (2 <sup>nd</sup> year players second half of the year only)
Under 12	60
Under 14	70
Under 16	80
Under 20	90

**NOTE:** Any player 16 to 19 years of age (by Dec 31 in the year the season begins) that pitches at any level, including Senior baseball must adhere to the U20 pitch limits.

It is **strongly** recommended that pitchers at the **U16 – U20** age levels throw at least **75% fastballs** throughout the season. This is an arm safety and player development requirement.

It is **strongly** recommended that Junior pitchers not pitch in excess of 1/3 of their game maximum in any single inning.

It is **strongly** recommended that Senior pitchers not pitch in excess of 120 pitches in any outing.

8. **All Junior players (including U20)** that pitch in a game **at all**, must have **at least** one complete day's rest from pitching. (**Example:** Pitches Saturday, cannot pitch again until Monday). If pitchers exceed 50% of their pitching maximum, they must have two complete days rest from pitching. (**Example:** U20 player pitches 50 or more pitches in a Senior game on Friday night, they **cannot** pitch again until Monday)
9. **No Junior player (including U20)** may pitch in more than one game per day or in 2 days in a row. A pitcher, once relieved, may not pitch again during that game or day.
10. In all FNCBA Competitions, a second visit to the pitcher in the same inning will be allowed without penalty of automatic removal of the pitcher from the game. However, player must be removed from the mound and can not return to the pitching position for the game's entirety (including any delay, postponement or replay). However they are not permitted to catch. If the pitcher remains in the game it is strongly **recommended** that they play either First Base or Second Base. ***This is only a recommendation.***
11. Pitchers are allowed a **maximum** of eight warm-up pitches at the start of each inning. The **recommended** warm up pitches should not exceed 6 pitches. Between innings the UIC shall allow approximately **one** minute between the last play of one half of an innings and the first pitch of the next or 5 warm-up pitchers maximum (All players are to be encouraged to move quickly into position);



12. For multiple games over more than a one-day period, please consult the BQI Tournament Rules.

**NOTE:** Teams breaching the pitching and catching rules for Junior Players **will forfeit the game** where the breach occurred. The FNCBA BOM, taking into account the circumstances surrounding a breach of these rules, will levy **STRONG** penalties on **COACHES** who repeatedly, deliberately or knowingly breach these rules. Coaches who breach the rules will be reported to BQI.

## **Section D: Protective Equipment**

1. Players must wear full protective equipment at all times when catching or warming up a pitcher. For example: Mask, helmet, chest protector, throat protector, leg guards and protective cup. Coaches warming up a pitcher are only required to wear a mask and protective cup.

**NOTE:** At the Rookie Ball age level or below, soccer style leg guards are permitted.

2. Properly fitted, non-damaged two eared helmets must be worn by all batters, base-runners and Juniors performing the duties of a base coach.
3. Any bat boy/girl (must be a minimum of 8 years old) in the dugout or on the field must wear a two-eared helmet at **ALL TIMES**.
4. Protective cups are **MANDATORY** for **ALL** players.
5. All clubs must make available a generous supply of SPF 30+ sunscreen.

**NOTE:** If in the opinion of the home plate umpire (in consultation with both coaches), the weather becomes potentially detrimental to any player's health, the game will be abandoned.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Rule Change Process

Changes to the FNCBA Local Playing Rules shall be reviewed by the Association's Rules Committee and recommendations to be forwarded to the BOM at the commencement of each season. A 75% majority of the Board is required for rule changes to be adopted.

1. Delegate or representative to raise a Motion of a proposed rule change at a Delegates Meeting or Annual General Meeting.
2. A Club Delegate to second the Motion.
3. Club Delegates to vote on the Motion to take the proposed rule change to Rules Committee for review and comment.
4. Rules committee to review motion and provide feedback to FNCBOM as to the wording, location in rules and date of enforcement of proposed rule change
5. FNCBOM to review Rules Committee feedback and present to delegates at next Delegates Meeting.
6. Delegates to vote on Rule Change and date of enforcement

Please note that rule changes effecting participation will not become enforced until the following season.

All rules to be provided to each club delegate once affiliation fees have been paid. This allows Clubs to review rules prior to commencement of season.

For the purpose of this appendix: A Club Delegate includes:

- The affiliated club's nominated delegates
- Any member on the FNCBOM
- Any member on the appointed Rules Committee

These rules may not and cannot be adjusted or manipulated in any way by any club or official, without the expressed written permission of the FNCBA Board of Management (**BOM**).

## **Appendix B: Schedule of Penalties**

The FNCBA shall have the right to impose penalties for any breach of the Local Playing Rules or By-laws, including but not limited to the following:

- Clubs must pay all breaches in full within 30 days of the date of the *Notice of Breach* (but two days prior to participation in any finals).

<b>BREACH</b>	<b>PENALTY (Senior Games)</b>	<b>PENALTY (Junior Games)</b>
Withdrawal of a Team Prior to Nomination Closure	Refund of nomination fee	
Withdrawal of a Team After Nomination Closure	Loss of nomination fee	
Breach of Player Safety	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
<b>Breach of Uniforms</b>		
• 1st offence by team, one player in breach	Warning	Warning
• 2nd offence by team, one player in breach	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
• 2nd offence, more than one player in breach	\$ 100.00	\$ 50.00
• 3rd offence by team, one or more breaches	\$ 200.00	\$ 100.00
<b>Breach of Scorers</b>		
• 1st offence	Warning	Warning
• 2nd offence	\$25.00	\$25.00
• 3rd offence	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
<b>Breach of Game Cards/Results</b>		
• Failure to phone results by specified time	\$25.00	\$25.00
• Failure to return game cards on time (7 days)	No points to both teams. \$25.00 + \$25.00 per week	No points to both teams. \$25.00 + \$25.00 per week
<b>Breach of Forfeits</b>		
• 1st offence (notified more than 48 hours)	Warning	Warning
• 1st offence (notified less than 48 hours)	\$25.00	\$25.00
• 1st offence (not notified prior to game time)	\$50.00	\$25.00
• 2nd offence	\$50.00	\$25.00
• 3rd offence	\$100.00 + Removed from Competition	\$50.00 + Removed from Competition

<b>BREACH</b>	<b>PENALTY (Senior Games)</b>	<b>PENALTY (Junior Games)</b>
Breach of Umpire Supply	\$50.00	\$25.00
Breach of Player Eligibility (Registrations)	Forfeit + \$100.00	Forfeit + \$100.00
<b>Breach of Junior Specific Rules</b>		
• Participation	N/A	Forfeit
• Players playing in Higher/Lower Grade (including Nomination Regulations)	\$50.00	Forfeit
• Pitching & Catching Regulations (1 <sup>st</sup> offence)	Forfeit + Letter of Reprimand + \$50.00	Forfeit + Letter of Reprimand + \$25.00
• Pitching & Catching Regulations (2 <sup>nd</sup> offence)	Judiciary + Forfeit + \$100.00	Judiciary + Forfeit + \$50.00
• Pitching & Catching Regulations (3 <sup>rd</sup> offence)	Coach Suspension for Remainder of Year + Forfeit + \$200.00	Coach Suspension for Remainder of Year + Forfeit + \$200.00
<b>Breach of Junior Specific Rules</b>		
• Participation	N/A	Forfeit
• Players playing in Higher/Lower Grade (including Nomination Regulations)	\$50.00	Forfeit
• Pitching & Catching Regulations (1 <sup>st</sup> offence)	Letter of Reprimand + Forfeit + \$50.00	Letter + Forfeit + \$25.00
• Pitching & Catching Regulations (2 <sup>nd</sup> offence)	Judiciary + Forfeit + \$100.00	Judiciary + Forfeit + \$50.00
• Pitching & Catching Regulations (3 <sup>rd</sup> offence)	Coach Suspension for Remainder of Year + Forfeit + \$200.00	Coach Suspension for Remainder of Year + Forfeit + \$200.00

<b>BREACH</b>	<b>PENALTY (Senior Games)</b>	<b>PENALTY (Junior Games)</b>
<b>Breach of Junior Specific Rules</b>		
• Participation	N/A	Forfeit
• Players playing in Higher/Lower Grade (including Nomination Regulations)	\$50.00	Forfeit
• Pitching & Catching Regulations (1 <sup>st</sup> offence)	Letter of Reprimand + Forfeit + \$50.00	Letter + Forfeit + \$25.00
• Pitching & Catching Regulations (2 <sup>nd</sup> offence)	Judiciary + Forfeit + \$100.00	Judiciary + Forfeit + \$50.00
• Pitching & Catching Regulations (3 <sup>rd</sup> offence)	Coach Suspension for Remainder of Year + Forfeit + \$200.00	Coach Suspension for Remainder of Year + Forfeit + \$200.00

## JUDICIARY PENALTIES

<b>OFFENCE</b>	<b>PENALTY (1<sup>st</sup> Offence)</b>	<b>PENALTY (2<sup>nd</sup> Offence)</b>
Late lodgement of Incident Report Form	1 Week	2 Weeks
<b>Offensive Behaviour</b>		
• Disputing umpire's judgment call	2 weeks	4 weeks
• Audible obscenity	2 weeks	4 weeks
• Bringing the game into disrepute	4 weeks	8 weeks
<b>Dangerous Behaviour</b>		
• Personal Intimidations	2 weeks	4 weeks
• Gear Abuse	1 week	2 weeks
<b>Violent Behaviour</b>		
• Fighting	2 weeks	7 weeks
• Illegal personal contact	2 weeks	7 weeks
• Leaving position to participate in conflict	2 weeks Team Fine \$200.00	10 weeks Team Fine \$500.00
• Once ejected: Not following instructions of umpire	1 week Per instruction	2 weeks Per instruction

Please note, the abovementioned penalties are guidelines only and are tabled to assist the Judiciary in ascertaining appropriate penalties.

Penalties may differ from the table based on information gathered from Incident Reports lodged and the severity of misconduct. Penalties may also be accrued for multiple penalties.

“Pre-hearing” early guilty pleas may result in a reduction of penalty.

A “Pre-hearing” early guilty plea comprises of receipt of an Incident Report (from the reported offender or a representative) by the Secretary (or Judiciary Chairperson) no less than an hour prior to scheduled hearing.