



Nova Scotia Monarchs Baseball - Women's Division

LEAGUE RULES, GUIDELINES, & RECOMMENDATIONS

Official baseball rules can be found here:

[**OFFICIAL BASEBALL RULES 2024 Edition**](#)

NSMBWD will follow these official rules, with the exception, variation or addition of the following:

1. Equipment

- a. Wooden bats only, except for BBCOR-certified bats, which must be approved by the commissioner. No softball or aluminium bats.
- b. Players must wear white baseball/softball pants or knickers with long socks. No bare legs, tights, or leggings. Players in the field must wear a baseball cap.
- c. Players must wear protective batting helmets while on deck, at bat, and on base.
- d. Catchers must wear a full face mask, chest protector, and leg guards.
- e. Other protective equipment that is permitted but not required is pelvic protectors (Jill), fielding face masks, sliding mitts, arm/leg guards, and pads.
- f. Cleats are strongly recommended for use, as they can prevent injuries due to slipping and falling. Metal cleats are not allowed.

2. Rules of play

- a. All games are a maximum of **7 innings**. The time limit is **1 hour and 50 minutes** based on field bookings of 2 hours. If there is a booking after the game, the field and dugouts must be cleared by the end of the booked time (10 minutes is allowed for this).
 - i. Warmups can be done off-field if there is a game in progress before yours.
- b. If there's no booking following the game (ie no one is waiting for the field), the inning may be completed, even if it exceeds the time limit.
- c. If an inning cannot be completed in the allowable time, the final score will revert to the last completed inning. Coaches should use discretion and try not to start a new inning if there isn't enough time to finish it.
- d. **Weather conditions** may play a role, even if fields are open for play. It is up to the Coach's and Umpire's discretion to make decisions whether to continue playing or not.

- i. Play may continue in light rain, but if a downpour or **thunder/lightning occurs, gameplay must stop immediately** (for a 15-minute delay if it's expected to pass).
- ii. If the fields are marked open for the weekend, but unexpected rain has made the grounds too wet to play safely or without damaging the fields, the decision can be made by the Coaches to cancel the game and reschedule.
- iii. If during a game the Coaches decide to call the game due to rain, field conditions, or darkness, the **final score will be taken if 4 innings are complete** or 3 and a half if the Home team is ahead.
- iv. If temperatures and/or humidity are high enough to affect player health, due to heat stroke, gameplay may be cancelled. Safety takes priority, and no one should play if they don't feel safe doing so. This will not result in a rescheduled game.
- e. There is a **3-run rule per inning**, except for the last/open inning.
- f. There is a **10-run mercy rule after 5 innings** (or 4.5 if the home team is winning)
- g. The last inning of a game, even if it is not the 7th, can be played as an open inning (unlimited runs, must get 3 outs). If the home team is winning, the bottom of the inning does not need to be played. Coaches may use their discretion to agree on when to call an **open/last inning**, preferably before the inning is started. Coaches must inform all players and the umpire(s) of this decision.

3. Players, Coaches and Spares

- a. Teams must have a minimum of **8 players** available (including spares) to avoid forfeit. Players arriving late go to the bottom of the batting order.
 - i. Teams must use a **minimum of 5 registered players** and are limited to a **maximum of 3 spares** from the approved spare list.
 - ii. If a team has only 5 rostered players available, they can only pick up 3 spares to avoid a forfeit, but must play shorthanded, with 8 players.
 - iii. Spares cannot bring the total number of players over 10 per team.
 - iv. Spare players must be placed at the bottom of the batting order and must play an outfield position, unless playing shorthanded, in which case 1 spare can play a base or shortstop (not pitch or catch). *Coaches may negotiate at game time.*
 - v. Teams are encouraged to make use of non-rostered spares before using rostered players, to involve more women in the league.
- b. Coaches should plan to play with **10 players on the roster** if possible, including the use of spares. This allows for no-shows, injuries, and rest innings.
 - i. Teams with only 9 players, who do not wish to seek a spare, may proceed knowing they may be shorthanded if they lose a player at any point.
- c. Once a team's Coach recognizes the need for a spare player(s), they should first contact the commissioner, who will put out a call to the spare list of players.
 - i. Spares will be given a jersey to wear for the game, which must be returned at the end of the game. Spares must pay \$10 to play.
- d. All players present will be in the batting lineup.

- e. Pinch runners may be used for an injured player, once they reach 1st base. They must use the last player to get out on their team, and work backwards.
- f. Pitchers will be limited to a maximum of 4 innings per day, whenever possible.
- g. When a team's Head Coach is absent from a game, the Assistant Coach will assume the role and make decisions in that capacity, for that game. It is their responsibility to inform the team's Head Coach of any information deemed pertinent.
- h. Coaches/scorekeepers should **compare scorebooks** at the end of each inning and the game to agree on the final score. The Home team must send the final score to the commissioner to be recorded. coachjendonaldson@gmail.com
- i. At fields where the **backstop distance** is deemed far, coaches may decide at the plate meeting if they want to limit stealing to one base per play. (ie Weir field)
- j. Replacement balls from the umpire cannot be used to throw on a stolen base. If the catcher accepts a replacement ball from the umpire, on a passed ball, they're conceding to the stolen base, including home.
 - i. In this instance, baserunners may only steal one base at a time (one base per pitch or overthrow). Once the ball is returned to the pitcher, stealing is fair game, even if another pitch has not been delivered.
- k. Batters "in the hole" are responsible for retrieving passed balls if no one is on base, or a replacement ball is given to the catcher by the umpire. They must give the balls to the plate umpire during a pause in play.
- l. For the first offence of a **batter throwing a bat** (umpire's judgement call), the batter will be called out and given a warning. If the batter does it a second time during the game, they will be called out and ejected from the game.
 - i. If a bat, helmet (or any equipment) is thrown in anger, it will be an automatic ejection for the player.
- m. Lead-offs and stealing are allowed. Consequently, balks will be called at the discretion of the umpire(s). The first incident may be given a warning and explanation by the umpire. Subsequent balks will result in baserunners advancing one base.
- n. Coaches will only be permitted to ask an umpire for a **ruling clarification**, not to address an umpire to debate/question a judgment call. Umpires are not required to entertain questions or objections, this may result in an ejection from the game.

4. Safety

- a. A baserunner must vacate any space needed by a fielder to make a play on a batted ball unless the runner is on a base. Runners can be called out on **interference** if they impede a fielder's attempt to make a play, or if they are hit by a batted ball.
 - i. For clarification, if you are a baserunner, and there is a fielder in your basepath catching or fielding a ball, it is **YOUR** responsibility to avoid the fielder, not their responsibility to get out of your way.
 - ii. However, if the fielder is not catching or fielding a ball, it is **THEIR** responsibility to vacate the basepath to avoid contact, or the baserunner may be called safe due to **obstruction**.

- iii. Baserunners do not have the right to collide with or shove a fielder, even if they are obstructing the basepath. Baserunners or fielders causing unnecessary contact with another player may be ejected from the game. This is a recreational league, and **injuries should be avoided at all costs**.
- b. An AVOID CONTACT rule will be enforced by the umpires. Players must make every effort to avoid collisions. On accidental contact (interference), the runner MAY BE ruled out. On contact ruled as intentional, the runner is ruled out and is ejected from the game. Contact ruled intentional and malicious may lead to a multiple-game suspension. These are judgment calls made by the umpire(s) and cannot be argued. Malicious intent by any player will not be tolerated and may lead to a league suspension, at the discretion of the commissioner and/or a committee.
- c. If the fielder does not have the ball, they should not be blocking the runner's path, and it is the umpire's judgment to call the play safe, by obstruction.
- d. There's never an acceptable time for a runner to intentionally hit, push, or knock over another player, even if they are blocking a base without the ball. If the fielder has the ball, they are permitted to block the base and/or basepath to tag the runner.
 - i. Ways for base runners to avoid contact with fielders on a tag play are to go back to the previous base, slide/dive under, jump over, go to the side of (within the 3-foot lane), or stop in front of the fielder with the ball.

5. Rules to Remember

- a. Baseball's strangest rule: on a **dropped third strike** (if the catcher misses or drops the ball on strike 3), the batter is permitted to steal 1st base, provided it is unoccupied. The catcher must tag the batter/runner or throw the ball to first base, where it is treated as a forced play (the fielder only needs to tag the base).
 - i. If the batter starts their return to their dugout, with several steps (leaving the batting circle), they cannot change direction and attempt to steal first base. The steal must be initiated once the batter realises the pitch was dropped. This is an umpire's judgment call.
 - ii. If there are 2 outs and a runner on first base, the batter can attempt to steal first if the runner on first advances to second in a steal.
 - iii. If the bases are loaded, with 2 outs, the catcher needs only to tag home plate with the ball, giving the 3rd out to the runner from 3rd.
- b. **Bunting on a 3rd strike:** A foul bunt that's not caught in flight is always a strike, and if it's the third strike, it results in a strikeout. This is different from other foul balls, which are only strikes if not caught and not a third strike, and don't result in a strikeout.

6. Player Conduct

- a. There is **zero tolerance for umpire abuse, arguing, or questioning calls**. The NSMBWD umpires are not required to be BNSU certified. They're people with baseball experience and knowledge who can and will make mistakes, just as players do. Umpires are there to

officiate the games to the best of their abilities and must be treated with respect. Making rude, demeaning or sarcastic comments to umpires may result in ejection from the game and possible game suspensions.

- b. **Judgment calls made by the umpire cannot be questioned or argued.** Only the umpire can stop the game to make clarifications or consult with another umpire or the rules.
- c. It is not appropriate for players to use this time to discuss the play, call, or rules either with the umpire(s) or other players, **causing a delay in the game.**
- d. Clarification of rules/calls may be done after the game, or between innings, provided it does not delay the game, and the umpire is willing to entertain the discussion.
- e. **Confrontations/arguments between players are not acceptable** and may result in a warning or ejection from the game.
- f. If an umpire is unable to call the game, a player from another team may fill in. They must wear catcher gear for protection. Extra grace should be given to player umpires.
- g. The physical and emotional safety and well-being of NSMBWD players, umpires, and spectators is the priority. There are varying degrees of experience, ability, and knowledge of baseball rules and comfort levels.
 - i. Players should not feel pressured to do anything they do not feel safe or prepared to do.
 - ii. This league is at a recreational level of play, not competitive. The main objective of the league is for women to have fun while being active.
 - iii. The Respectful Play policy must be followed, along with the rules in this document.
- h. The NSMBWD is not a place for negativity, drama or personal attacks. Keep it light!

7. Avoiding game delays

- a. When a catcher is on base with 2 outs, they should be given a pinch runner (last batter out, if possible) so they can get their gear on, to avoid game delay.
 - i. If a catcher is last at bat, it is expected that there will be a short delay while they gear up. Another player, wearing a mask, may warm up the pitcher to save time.
- b. Players should avoid delaying the game by knowing which position in the field they are playing after their team bats and having their equipment handy.
- c. Base coaches should be players who are later in the batting order, and replaced when they are getting closer to their turn to bat.
- d. Batters “in the hole” are responsible for retrieving passed balls if no one is on base, or a replacement ball is given to the catcher by the umpire. They must give the balls to the plate umpire when they approach the plate before the next at-bat.
- e. Relief pitchers should be identified by Coaches so that if needed due to injury, fatigue or struggle by the pitcher, they can be brought in without too much delay.
 - i. Relief pitchers may throw up to 8 warm-up pitches when entering a game, during which time gameplay is suspended.
 - ii. Returning pitchers have 90 seconds to warm up for the inning.
- f. Players should hustle on and off the field at the change of innings.

8. Playoffs

- a. Teams who forfeit more than 25% of their games are not eligible to participate in the Playoffs. This does not include rainouts that are unable to be rescheduled.
- b. **Registered players must participate in a minimum of 4 regular-season games** to be eligible for playoffs with their team, based on a 9 or 10 game schedule. If weather or other events impact the total number of games played in a season, see below.
 - i. 7-8 game schedule - 3 required
 - ii. 4-6 game schedule - 2 required
 - iii. Less than 4 games - 1 game required.
- c. Use of Spare players during Playoffs:
 - i. **Spares must participate in a minimum of 2 regular-season games** with any team(s) to be eligible for pickup during playoffs.
 - ii. Teams are discouraged from using registered players from the league as spares during playoffs. All eligible and available spares must be utilized before using registered players as spares. The rule limiting teams to 3 spares remains.
 - iii. A team using registered players from other teams may not have more than 9 players on their lineup.
 - iv. A team that is not using any registered players may field up to 10 players, with a max of 3 eligible spares, similar to the regular season.

PLEASE NOTE: All of the above rules can be negotiated between coaches based on individual circumstances, as long as this is done before game time with both coaches in agreement. In cases of non-agreement, the above rules apply.

9. General

- a. This league is a self-contained and self-regulated entity under the Nova Scotia Monarchs Baseball. Our rules and procedures may not align with other leagues.
- b. NSMB does not report to Baseball Nova Scotia and therefore is not permitted to hire BNS Umpires. We may use people who are BNSUD-certified umpires, however, they are not required to wear their BNSUD uniforms and do not collect the same rate of pay.
- c. NSMB holds contracts with HRM Parks and Recreation and provides its insurance for players to the HRM.
- d. **Coaches must be registered players.** Only members of the league are permitted to act in a coaching capacity and to be on the field, in and around the dugouts.
- e. NSMBWD is limited to **female participants**, except for umpires in cases where female umpires cannot be obtained.
- f. Children, family members and friends are welcome to watch from the bleachers, but it is not appropriate for anyone other than players to be in the dugouts or on the field.

10. Communication

- a. All registered players must download and use the app **TeamSnap** to indicate their expected attendance at games, and communicate with Coaches and teammates.

- i. Players are expected to have their attendance logged 48 hours before the next game unless they are unsure and have communicated that to their Coach.
- ii. No setting availability for more than 2 weeks ahead of time.
- iii. Coaches must know who to expect at each game, and whether they need to call in for spares if there aren't enough rostered players available. Please respect your Coaches!
- b. If a player has proven to be unreliable, by missing availability deadlines 2 consecutive game weeks in a row, and not communicating with Coaches, they will be moved to the spares list and replaced on the team's roster, if players are available.
- c. If you must change your availability within 48 hours of the game, you MUST message your Coach and let them know. There are no app notifications of last-minute changes to Coaches, so you must tell them so they can adjust their game plan.
- d. The Facebook private group for registered players is an important group to monitor, as well as the corresponding general group chat. Polls, events, possible cancellations and other baseball-related posts are often shared in this group. Please follow notifications.

11. Facility rules applicable to this league

- a. Our fields are owned and operated by HRM Parks and Recreation. Our league holds contracts for the usage and therefore must follow the rules set out by them. If we are found breaking any of these conditions, HRM may fine and suspend our contracts, ending our league's ability to book fields in the future. Please respect these rules.
- b. Children under the age of 12 must be supervised by an adult at all times.
- c. The possession, consumption, sale or distribution of **alcoholic beverages** is prohibited at all Halifax Regional Municipality facilities, except where approval has been granted and the appropriate liquor licence has been obtained.
- d. In compliance with **Nova Scotia's Smoke-free Places Act**, Smoking and/or the use of chewing tobacco or marijuana or cannabis or related drugs or narcotics is strictly prohibited in any Facility. There shall be no smoking within four (4) metres of any entrances to or exits from the Facility.
- e. All participants are asked to **pick up any garbage** in or around their dugout at the end of each game. Spectators are also expected to clean up after themselves.
- f. No animals, except for properly documented service animals, are permitted at the Facility at any time.
- g. If you are charging admission to events that will occur on the Facility, or if you are operating concessions or fundraising activities at the Facility, you must receive written permission from HRM before the event.
- h. At no time shall any fires be lit by any league members, participants or spectators.

Players must agree that they have read this document and will follow the rules listed when registering for the league. For clarification or questions, please contact the league commissioner, Jen Donaldson, coachjendonaldson@gmail.com