



## TOURNAMENT RULES

### ***Tournament Overview & Guiding Principles***

Welcome to Rec Ball Bash 2026, a youth baseball tournament hosted by Sandlot Sluggers with the goal of celebrating the spirit of recreational baseball—competition, development, sportsmanship, and fun.

Unless otherwise stated in this document, Rec Ball Bash 2026 will follow the official rules and standards of the Little League World Series, as they apply to age-appropriate play. The rules below outline specific tournament modifications, clarifications, and enforcement standards unique to this event.

### ***Tournament Philosophy***

The overriding purpose of Rec Ball Bash is to provide a positive, safe, and fun baseball environment for players, coaches, families, and officials. While competition is encouraged, player experience, sportsmanship, and respect for the game take priority over wins and losses. To that end, all participants—players, coaches, parents, and spectators—are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the values of the tournament and Sandlot Sluggers.

### ***Zero-Tolerance Conduct Policy***

Rec Ball Bash enforces a zero-tolerance policy for the following behaviors, whether directed at umpires, players, coaches, staff, or spectators:

- Arguing umpire judgments or calls;
- Use of foul, abusive, or threatening language;
- Unsportsmanlike conduct or gestures;
- Harassment or intimidation of any kind; and
- Disruptive behavior that detracts from the game environment.

Umpires and tournament officials have full authority to issue warnings, remove individuals from the premises, or take additional disciplinary action as necessary to maintain order and protect the integrity of the event. There is no right to argue judgment calls.

### ***Shared Responsibility***

Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players and coaching staff. Parents and spectators are expected to model appropriate behavior and support all players respectfully. Failure to adhere to these standards may result in disciplinary action, including ejection from the venue or further sanctions at the tournament's discretion.

Rec Ball Bash is designed to be an experience kids remember for the right reasons—great baseball, great sportsmanship, and great memories. In accordance with the foregoing principles, below are specific tournament and game play rules:

## ***1.0 Field Rules & Dimensions***

- 1.1 Base paths: 60 feet between each base.
- 1.2 Pitching distance: 46 feet from the pitcher's rubber to the rear point of home plate.
- 1.3 Outfield fences: Recommended at least ~200–225 feet from home plate.
- 1.4 Bat standards: Only approved Little League baseball bats may be used.
- 1.5 Only rubber cleats or turf sneakers shall be allowed.
- 1.6 Chewing gum and sunflower seed are NOT permitted.
- 1.7 Any fair batted ball that passes under, through, or becomes lodged in a fence shall be ruled a dead ball ground-rule double. The batter shall be awarded second base, and all runners shall advance two (2) bases from the time of the pitch. Fielders may not leave the field of play to retrieve a ball that has passed under or through the fence.

## ***2.0 Game Play Basics***

- 2.1 Time/Innings: Standard games are 6 innings long or 1 hour and 45 minutes. No new inning shall begin once the time limit has expired. The inning in progress shall be completed unless otherwise directed by tournament officials.
- 2.2 For innings one (1) through five (5), a maximum of six (6) runs may be scored per inning, provided all players in the lineup have not yet batted. Once the sixth run is scored and all players have batted, the inning shall end. The final scheduled inning shall be an open inning with no run limit.
- 2.3 Tie After Regulation: If a game results in a tie and there is still time left, there will be a "Golden At Bat" tie breaker. The inning shall begin with the bases loaded and two (2) outs. The batting order shall continue from where it left off. A maximum of three (3) run may be recorded during a golden at bat. The team scoring the most runs during its golden at-bat shall be declared the winner. If the game remains tied, the game shall be recorded as a tie.
- 2.4 No mercy rule in place.
- 2.5 Mandatory participation: All players must participate in each game either offensively or defensively under certain roster sizes. One player may be designated as an "Optional Player," which shall refer to a player on a team with more than 12 players. Such a player is not required to play and shall not be counted in the "Dynamic Lineup" for subsequent games. Such a player may also be taken out of the game at any time. The "Optional Player" rule shall be reserved for younger players to gain experience.
- 2.6 No Player, other than a player designated as an "Optional Player," shall be designated to the dugout for more than 3 innings in one game. Everyone must play and coaches are encouraged to balance the playing time evenly.
- 2.7 Official Score: Coaches shall decide prior to the game who will be keeping the official score and such score shall be confirmed with the head umpire after every inning.

## ***3.0 Pitch Counts***

- 3.1 No pitcher may pitch more than 35 pitches in a single game (this is a strict rule which will apply even in the middle of a hitter's count).
- 3.2 No player may exceed 80 total pitches for the entire four (4) game tournament.
- 3.3 Coaches are encouraged to rotate pitchers each game to spread opportunities.
- 3.4 Penalty: If a pitcher exceeds the pitch count, each pitch thrown will be called as a "ball," even if the exceeded pitch results in a batted ball out.
- 3.5 Pitcher Re-Entry: Once removed from the mound, a pitcher cannot return as a pitcher later in the same game.

## ***4.0 Stealing & Base Running***

- 4.1 Closed Bases Rule: No leading off is allowed.
- 4.2 Stealing: Permitted only after the ball crosses the plate. A runner who leaves early must return to the base, and if the ball is hit, may advance only one base.
- 4.3 Overthrows: On overthrows the ball is live and runners may advance. On overthrows out of play, standard Little League base awards apply.

- 4.4 No Head-First Slides: To promote safety, head-first slides into any base are not allowed. A runner who slides head-first shall be declared safe or out based on the play; however, the ball shall immediately be declared dead and the runner returned to the previous base. If the runner cannot be returned, the play stands and a warning shall be issued.
- 4.5 A runner may advance on wild pitches/passed balls.

### ***5.0 Batting & Courtesy Runners***

- 5.1 Continuous Batting Order: All eligible players present for the game shall be included in a continuous batting order. Late arrivals shall be allowed to play and shall be added to the bottom of the batting order upon arrival.
- 5.2 Dynamic Lineup: The batting order is dynamic and shall continue from where it ended in the previous game. The lineup does not reset between games.
- 5.3 Courtesy Runners: Courtesy runners are permitted for injured players at any time and for the pitcher or catcher when there are two (2) outs in the inning. The courtesy runner shall be the player who made the last out. A courtesy runner may not be used for the same player more than once per inning.
- 5.4 Bunting is NOT allowed more than two (2) times per inning.
- 5.5 Dropped Third Strike: The dropped third strike rule is NOT in effect.
- 5.6 Ball Striking Coach or Equipment: A batted or thrown ball that unintentionally strikes a coach or loose equipment on the field shall be declared a dead ball, and runners shall return to the last legally touched base.

### ***6.0 Defensive Play Rules***

- 6.1 10 players will be allowed on the field with a mandatory four (4) outfielders.
- 6.2 Infield defensive shifts are not permitted.
- 6.3 Every player must play a defensive position.
- 6.4 Infield fly rule is NOT in effect.
- 6.5 Coaches are encouraged to allow a child to play at least three (3) defensive positions.
- 6.6 Coaches should ensure that every player gets meaningful time both infield and outfield.

### ***7.0 Game Atmosphere Rules***

- 7.1 No Umpire Arguments: Coaches, players, and fans must respect the umpires. Any arguing of calls may result in removal from the game. If a ruling is to be challenged, it is expected to be done in an orderly and respectful manner with a visit to the chief umpire during the game. No shouting from the dugout or anywhere in the field. It shall be a private conference. Violation of this rule shall result in immediate expulsion from the game.
- 7.2 Encouragement Rule: Coaches are responsible for promoting positive cheering. Negative chants, trash talk, or put-downs are not allowed.
- 7.3 Coach on the Field: Only one coach may be on the field in front of the dugout to help direct defensive positioning.
- 7.4 Spirit of the Sandlot Award: After each game, the opposing team's coaches shall jointly select two player from the other team to receive the Spirit of the Sandlot Award. Selections must be unbiased and based on sportsmanship, effort, teamwork, respect for teammates, opponents, coaches, and umpires, and a positive attitude throughout the game—not athletic performance or game results. This award is intended to recognize players who best embody the mission and core values of Sandlot Sluggers: love of the game, fair play, respect, and having fun the right way.