

Twin Rivers – Baseball – Official Rules – 2026 Season

Minors and Majors Divisions

Effective April 16, 2026

1. Governing Rules

USSSA 9U (Minors) and 11U (Majors) baseball rules apply, except where modified by these Twin Rivers rules. Rule changes adopted by USSSA after the start of the season are not used.

[https://www.usssabaseball.org/images/USSSA National By-Laws 11-21-2025.pdf](https://www.usssabaseball.org/images/USSSA_National_By-Laws_11-21-2025.pdf)

Non-wood bats require one of the following bat markings:



2. Team Requirements & Lineups

- Teams must start and play with at least 7 players or else the game will be recorded as a forfeit (recorded as a 10–0 score)
- Batting lineups must include at least 9 batters
- Teams will be required to take an out for each batting order spot that is not filled up to the 9 required batters

3. Twin Rivers League Rule Exceptions

3.1 Participation

- All players on the active roster must bat
- Each player must play at least two defensive innings unless injured or the game lasts fewer than 3 innings
- Defensive substitutions are unlimited except for pitchers
 - Once removed as pitcher, a player may not return to the game to pitch

3.2 Pitching Rules

- One out equals 1/3 inning for pitching totals
- Player pitching limits per game:
 - Minors: Maximum 2 innings pitched per player per game
 - Outs recorded during coach-pitch count toward the pitcher's inning limit
 - Majors: Maximum 3 innings pitched per player per game
- Giving up 5 runs in an inning counts as 3 outs pitched, even if fewer outs were recorded
 - If multiple pitchers combined to allow 5 runs in one inning, outs should be divided between the pitchers in a way that makes sense
- During the regular season, if it is discovered that a player exceeded their innings pitched limit for the game, coaches are encouraged to discuss and rectify the situation in a way that allows the game to continue.

3.3 Run Rule per Inning

- Minors: 5-run limit per inning
- Majors: 5-run limit per inning

3.4 Sliding Rules

- No headfirst slides advancing to a base
 - Headfirst slides only allowed returning to a base
- If a runner fails to slide on a close play at 2nd, 3rd, or home, the runner is out
- Umpire discretion applies for slides and close plays

3.5 Pitching Distances and Mounds

- Minors: 46 feet from the back of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber
- Majors: 50 feet from the back of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber
- Pitching mounds may be natural or artificial and should not exceed 6" height above home plate or reduce the legal size of the pitching rubber
 - If using an elongated mound, the short end goes in the back

3.6 Minors-Only Rules

- No dropped third strike
- No leading off
- Steals of 2nd & 3rd are allowed at pitch release
 - No more than one stolen base per runner per pitch – even if a play is made on a runner
 - No stealing bases during coach pitch
- A player cannot steal home unless all of the following conditions are met:
 - A runner is already legally occupying third base, and
 - The defense makes a live throw to third base, and
 - The runner from third advances as a direct reaction to that throw
- Courtesy runners for catchers are encouraged

- Bunting allowed except during coach pitch
- No infield fly rule
- May field 10 defensive players; the 10th must play in outfield
- Maximum 6 infielders, including catcher
- When pitcher is set, holding the ball and has a foot on the rubber, and the catcher is ready, runners must return to their base
 - Otherwise, the ball is live and runners can advance
- After a pitcher throws ball four:
 - Coach-pitch begins
 - Coach must have one foot in contact with the mound
 - Strike count carries over
 - Coach-pitch will continue until the batter either hits the ball or strikes out
- During coach-pitch:
 - Until the time that the coach-pitched ball reaches the plate, the player/pitcher must:
 - Be no closer to the plate than parallel to the pitching rubber
 - If there is coach-interference on a batted ball:
 - Ball is dead, runners return to their previous base
 - Batter re-hits
 - Pitch does not count
 - Bunting is not allowed during coach pitch

3.7 Majors-Only Rules

- Dropped third strike applies when 1st base is unoccupied or there are two outs
- Each team receives one balk warning; subsequent balks advance runners

4. Rosters & Player Eligibility

- Teams may roster up to 3 reserve players
 - Reserves may not play in tournament unless the roster falls below 10 players
- Non-reserve players must attend at least 50% of regular season games for tournament eligibility
- Typical ages: 8 (2nd grade) through 12 (6th grade)
 - Players may not exceed age 13
- Players normally play only Minors or only Majors unless needed due to roster shortages
- Players on Minors teams that are the same color and community as Majors are automatically eligible to play up
 - To play on a different colored team, a Minors player must be specifically indicated on the Majors roster and is not eligible to play for other teams

5. Game Duration Rules

5.1 Minors Game Length

- 70-minute timer
 - When the timer goes off, in-progress innings will continue until completed
 - A new inning officially starts after the last out of the prior inning
 - If the home team is batting and ahead at expiration, the game ends immediately
- Games must last at least 70 minutes, with exceptions for weather or mutual coach agreement
- Rain-shortened games, which are subject to umpire discretion, are considered as official if the losing team batted at least two complete half-innings

5.2 Majors Game Length

- 6 inning games, with the following exceptions:
 - 100-minute timer
 - When the timer goes off, in-progress innings will continue until completed
 - A new inning officially starts after the last out of the prior inning
 - If the home team is batting and ahead at expiration, the game ends immediately
 - Darkness-shortened games, which are subject to umpire discretion, revert to the end of the previous completed inning
 - Rain-shortened games, which are subject to umpire discretion, are considered as official if the losing team batted at least three complete half-innings
 - Mercy rule applies if a team leads by:
 - 15 runs after 3 innings
 - 10 runs after 4 innings
 - 8 runs after 5 innings
- If time remains, coaches may agree to extra innings to break a tie after playing 6 innings

6. Umpires & Game Administration

- Certified umpires strongly encouraged for all games
- Base umpires are upon a coach's or umpire's request and may be provided by visiting team or agreed upon adult
 - Home plate umpire may overrule base umpires
- Home team provides game balls (Diamond brand baseballs are preferred)

7. Pitching Across Divisions

- 10-year-olds may pitch in either division, but pitching in Minors eliminates pitching in Majors on the same day

8. Coaching Rules

- Three coaches allowed per team and in dugout
- Two coaches allowed on field when batting, with all three allowed during coach-pitch
- Substitute coaches must be communicated before game and may not coach pitch

9. Player Draft Rules

- All towns must hold a genuine draft
- Two coaches per team may automatically assign their sons/grandsons
- Player pools combine all players in same division (e.g., 3rd–4th grade for Minors)

10. Make-Up Game Policy

- Home coach must attempt to reschedule within one week
 - The *date* of the rescheduled game does not need to be within one week of the cancelled game, just the effort to schedule the make-up game
- Home field is not required to be the makeup location
- No response from either team may result in a forfeit (commissioner discretion)
- Attempts to reschedule must include at least one email and one call or text message

11. Standings Reporting

- Either team may enter final score on the website
- Scores must be entered within 3 days of the completion of the game
- Home team scorebook is official in case of disputes

12. Spectator Conduct

- Umpire may instruct coach to warn a problematic spectator
- Second offense: spectator must be removed from the game