

**MANITOWOC COUNTY YOUTH SPORTS, INC.  
YOUTH BASEBALL PROGRAM**

**2026 PEANUT LEAGUE RULES**

**\*\*\*\*\*SPECIAL NOTE: Unless noted in this document, all league rules are to follow the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Baseball Rules Book. Reference <http://www.nfhs.org/>.**

Additions or clarifications to rules for 2026 are in <b>bold block font.</b> Deletions to rules for 2026 are <del>struck out.</del>
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**I. ORGANIZATION**

1. All entries for teams desiring to play in the Peanut League must submit entry by the date established at the Annual Spring Meeting each year.
2. An official master schedule with designated Peanut League regular season game dates and starting times will be released no later than one day after the Annual May Coaches Scheduling Meeting each year.
3. Peanut League regular season games will be generally played on Wednesday evenings.
  - a. Any team may, by mutual agreement with the opposing team, change the date or time of play if necessary. Postponed games should be rescheduled in good faith and in a timely manner. The Peanut League Commissioner must be notified of the time or date change.
  - b. Teams must schedule make-up games within 2 (two) weeks after postponement due to weather or other conflict. If they are not scheduled within this time, a request may be filed by one of the teams with the Peanut League Commissioner regarding forfeiture.
  - c. If one team does not show or is not ready to play 15 (fifteen) minutes after the designated starting time, a forfeit can be requested from the Peanut League Commissioner.
  - d. A team failing to field 9 (nine) players at game time shall forfeit the game.
  - e. All forfeits in this rule must be presented to, and granted by, the Peanut League Commissioner.
4. A Peanut Tournament may be scheduled upon the completion of the regular season. A Peanut Tournament will be structured as follows:
  - a. Team participation in the Tournament is voluntary.
  - b. Tournament bracket structure and seeding will be set by the Peanut League Commissioner, but will be generally based upon regular season record.
  - c. Member Communities may bid on hosting the Peanut Tournament Championship Games at the Annual May Coaches Scheduling Meeting.
    - i. Peanut Tournament championship games may be bundled with other League Tournament championship games.

- ii. If multiple bids are received, the games shall be awarded to the Community with the longest time passing since last hosting.
        - iii. In case of a tie, a random drawing of bidding Communities will determine the winner.
      - d. In Tournament championship games for first/second or third/fourth places, establishing Home Team is by means of the flip of a coin - heads or tails.
      - e. If any team fails to show up for their scheduled first/second or third/fourth place championship games at the appropriate tournament site and date the MCYS would:
        - i. Impose a fine of \$500 (five hundred dollars) which would be paid by the Community who the team plays for and paid to the MCYS Treasurer. This monetary amount would be then given back to the community hosting the tournament.
        - ii. All MCYS awards acquired during the year would be forfeited.
        - iii. Penalties in this rule must be approved by the Steering Committee.
5. The following dimensions shall apply for the layout of the ball diamonds for Peanut games:
  - Base path distance - 60 (sixty) feet
  - Pitcher's mound distance - 35 (thirty-five) feet (this distance is from the front of the pitching rubber to the rear point of home plate).
  - A 16 (sixteen) foot diameter circle is required to be marked (chalked) around the center of the pitcher's mound.
6. All Peanut half-innings shall end with either 3 (three) outs or once the 5th (fifth) run of that half-inning crosses home plate, regardless of the number of outs.
7. All Peanut regular season shall be 6 (six) innings duration. EXCEPTION:
  - a. If a game is called because of weather or darkness, 3 ½ (three and one-half) innings will be considered a complete game if the home team is in the lead, or 4 (four) innings if the visiting team is in the lead.
  - b. A regular season game shall be ruled a tie if the score is tied after 7 (seven) innings.
    - i. If a regular season game is tied after 6 (six) innings, each half of the 7th (seventh) inning shall start with a runner placed at 2nd (second) base (aka International Rules). The runner shall be the person from the appropriate half of the 6th (sixth) inning who made the last out.
  - c. All post-season (tournament) games must be continued until a winner is determined.
  - d. To resume a suspended game, resume game play where it was left off at the time of the suspension. If any players are missing when the game resumes, those players are removed from the batting order without penalty. Any additional players available for the game completion would be added to the end of the batting order, just like if they arrived for the game late.
8. All Peanut regular season and tournament games shall have the following run rule limits.

- a. If a 12 (twelve) run lead exists after 4 (four) innings, the scoreboard will be turned off (with that score being reported for official game results), but the game will be finished with no scoreboard.
  - b. Any Peanut regular season or tournament game can be ended before 6 (six) innings by agreement of both managers.
10. Lightning or thunder protocols during games shall be per NFHS Guidelines on Handling Practices and Contests during Lightning or Thunder Disturbances (see Appendix A). It is recommended that practices use these same protocols.

## **II. EQUIPMENT**

1. Steel spikes are **NOT ALLOWED!** Any player actively listed in the lineup found wearing steel spike shoes, shall change them immediately before the player can continue to participate in the game.
2. All players shall wear baseball caps with the exception of the catcher, who must wear a full plastic cap along with a catcher's mask.
3. Players shall wear a full protective helmet while batting and running the bases. (This means a helmet equipped with earflaps).
4. The official ball for the Peanut League will be determined each year at the Officer's, Commissioner's, and Director's Meeting. 1 (one) dozen balls are supplied with each team entry. See the General Commissioner to purchase additional balls from MCYS inventory, or to obtain the official ball make and model for purchase elsewhere.
5. The use of the aluminum bat is legal, however, if used, it must be intact. Any change in the basic form of the bat causes it to be outlawed.

## **III. ROSTERS (PLAYERS - RESTRICTIONS)**

1. To be eligible to play in the Peanut League, a player may not reach his/her 9th (ninth) birthday before June 1st of the current year.
  - a. Any appeal for an age or other MCYS roster exemption must be submitted to the MCYS Steering Committee before the Annual May Coaches Scheduling Meeting.
  - b. Peanut League participation is open to both boys and girls, defined as male (boys) or female (girls) as indicated on the child's birth certificate.
2. No player may participate in this program unless they have a current liability form on file with the MCYS. A player is not eligible to participate in any game until a current liability form is properly filed with the Peanut League Commissioner.
  - a. Penalty for using a player that does not have a current liability form properly filed will be forfeiture of those games played. Penalties in this rule must be approved by the Steering Committee.

3. No players shall change from one Peanut team to another after the start of the season. Before the first league game is played, a roster is to be filed with the Peanut League Commissioner. Failure to do so will result in forfeiture of all games played until such roster is filed.
  - a. Players can be added to a roster at any time during the regular season. A player is not eligible to participate in any game until they have been added to the official roster. Penalty for using a player that has not been added to the official roster will be forfeiture of those games played.
  - b. Penalties in this rule must be approved by the Peanut League Commissioner.
  - c. The number of players on a roster will be unlimited.
4. Players are generally limited to play on one team and one league only within the MCYS program to give as many players as possible an opportunity to play.
  - a. Starting in 2026, Peanut players that are currently eligible and actively playing on an MCYS Peanut, may also play on an MCYS Peewee Team. To be eligible for this special roster exemption, players must be registered to play on Peanut and Peewee teams from the same community, and must have reached their 8th (eighth) birthday by June 1st of the current year. This special roster exemption will apply for the regular season, and for tournament play.**
5. To be eligible for tournament play, players must have a current liability form on file and must be on the official roster in the Peanut League Commissioner's possession before July 1st. Exceptions to this rule must be approved by the Steering Committee.
6. Each team may play with a maximum of 10 (ten) players on the field, of which 4 (four) must be outfielders.
7. 1 (one) or 2 (two) defensive coaches may be on the field when their team is playing defense. These defensive coaches shall position themselves in the outfield. All defensive coaches are considered to be part of the playing field, if hit by a batted or thrown ball. All defensive coaches may not purposely interfere with a batted or thrown ball. Such interference shall result in a dead ball call, base runners will advance 2 (two) bases from their original base, and the batter shall be awarded second base.
8. Note: There are no residency rules for all Leagues starting in 2017.

#### IV. BASERUNNING

1. Peanut players **may not** score on a wild pitch. However, any runner may advance at his/her own risk, if there is a play made upon any base runner.
2. It is recommended that all managers instruct the base runners that have run past first base and have not made a break or started for second base, to return to first base via foul territory so there is no question as to the runner's intent.

3. In Peanut games, when the ball is thrown into foul territory, runners shall advance only one base they are headed for at the start of the play, but any attempt to advance shall be made at the runner's own risk. EXAMPLE: The batter hits a ground ball that is fielded and thrown over the first baseman's head; the runner may take second base [at his own risk] and only second base unless the defense attempts to make a play.
4. If a defensive player, in a force out situation has already touched the base and is no longer in the base line, the runner shall not go out of the baseline in an attempt to make contact with the defensive player.
5. If a runner stands up and runs into a defensive player, the runner will be declared out for the interference. If such contact is, in the opinion of the umpire, malicious or flagrant, the runner shall be ejected from the game. If in the opinion of the umpire, the runner's interference also prevented an out on the batter-base runner; the umpire shall declare the batter-runner out. *(Special emphasis should be placed on double play situations where this rule will apply!)*
6. No base runner shall, upon seeing the catcher or another defensive player who has the ball waiting for the runner, deliberately and with great force, crash into the defensive player in hopes of jarring the ball loose. The umpire shall declare such runner out, and if in the umpire's opinion, it is flagrant act; the runner shall be ejected from the game.
7. Peanut League base runners may lead off only after the ball crosses home plate. There will be no base stealing.
  - a. A warning will be given if a base runner leaves early.
  - b. A second offense for the same base runner in the same inning will result in the base runner being called out.
  - c. The runner may not be put out on a throw from the catcher after leading off.
  - d. On a dropped third strike, the batter is out. The batter may not attempt to go to first base.
8. There **shall be no** infield fly rule call in the Peanut League games.
9. In Peanut games, if a ball is being returned to the defensive pitcher and is mishandled by the defensive pitcher, runners may not advance any base runner not more than halfway to the next base when the ball is returned to the defensive pitcher, must go back to the previous base. A runner more than halfway to the next base when the ball is returned to the defensive pitcher, may continue on to that next base only.
  - a. A thrown ball is considered to have been returned to the defensive pitcher, if the defensive pitcher is standing inside the pitcher's mound circle (the chalked circle drawn around the pitcher's mound), and one of the following conditions occurs ...
    - i. The defensive pitcher makes contact with the ball, and the ball subsequently lands outside of the pitcher's mound circle, or
    - ii. The ball lands and stays inside the pitcher's mound circle, regardless of whether the defensive pitcher makes contact with the ball.

- iii. Umpire judgement shall be used to determine when the above conditions occur, and whether “timeout” is required to stop play.
  - iv. Umpire judgement will also determine relative positions of the base runners when the above conditions occur.
10. In order to call a time out during the game, a defensive player must have the ball in his/her possession in the infield and runners must have been stopped from advancing to the next base. The home plate umpire only may grant time out.
11. Appeal procedures and guidelines for:
- a. Missing a base.
  - b. Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched.

**Live Ball Appeal** - can be made by any fielder in possession of the ball touching the base missed or left too soon on a caught fly ball or by tagging the runner committing the violation if still on the playing field.

**Dead Ball Appeal** - once all runners have completed their advancement and time has been called, a coach or any defensive player, with or without the ball, may make a verbal appeal on a runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball. The umpire shall then make decision on the play. If the ball has gone out of play, runners must be given the opportunity to complete their base running before the “**Dead Ball Appeal**” can be made.

~~12. When the ball is thrown “out of play” all runners will be awarded the base that they are going to when the ball is thrown out of play plus one base. **EXCEPTION.** When the tenth batter of an inning hits the ball into fair territory and the ball rolls or is thrown out of play all runners who were not previously put out shall score.~~

## V. BATTING

1. Roster Batting and Roster Substitution Options. Coaches must exchange with each other and with the home plate umpire which roster format they will use before the start of each game.
- a. For both regular season games and league tournament games, either coach may use what is known as Roster Batting to create their batting order. The following modifications to NFHS rules would then apply.
    - i. All eligible players present must be included in the batting order. Any eligible players arriving after the game officially starts are added to the bottom of the order. Players may not be moved to another batting order position.
    - ii. If a player leaves the game due to injury or illness, **the opposing coach and umpire must be notified prior to the at-bat,** that player is removed from the batting order, and no out is recorded when that spot in the batting order comes up later in the game. If removal of the player reduces the number of players to 9 (nine) or less,

an out will be recorded when that spot in the batting order comes up later in the game. The player removed **from the game or batting order for any reason** cannot re-enter the game.

- iii. If a player leaves the game due to reasons other than injury or illness, that player is removed from the batting order and an out is recorded when that spot in the batting order comes up later in the game. The player cannot re-enter the game.
  - iv. All players are eligible for defensive play, and can be substituted into any defensive position at any time.
- b. A traditional roster format can also be used for either regular season games or league tournament games. The following modifications to NFHS rules for player substitution would then apply.
- i. All starting players can be withdrawn and reinserted into the batting order more than once, however, they must be placed back into their original batting order position, and must sit out 6 (six) total outs (offensive plus defensive) before they can be reinserted.
  - ii. All substitute players can be inserted and withdrawn from the batting order more than once, however, they must be reinserted back into the same batting order position they were first substituted into, and must sit out 6 (six) total outs (offensive plus defensive) before they can be reinserted. Initial insertion into the roster for substitute players can occur at any time once the game starts.
  - iii. Each batting order position can accommodate 1 (one) starter and multiple substitutes during the course of a game.
  - iv. If a starting player leaves the game due to injury or other, that spot is filled by any available substitute players who have not yet been inserted into a batting order position. If all available substitute players have already been assigned other batting order positions, any available substitute player can fill the open position defensively. When that starting player's spot in the batting order comes up, the out-of-position substitute player does not bat, and an out is recorded.

**2. Catcher's interference (obstruction), where the catcher makes contact with the swinging bat (generally with the catcher's glove), can be called on a pitch from either the defensive pitcher or the offensive coach-pitcher. A dead ball shall be called and the batter awarded first base. Any base runners already on base shall advance one base, if forced.**

## VI. PITCHING

1. Starting in 2022 in the Peanut League, each at-bat will begin with a defensive player pitching to the opposing team's batters from the regulation pitching mound.
  - a. Each at-bat will proceed until the batter strikes out {3 (three) strikes}, is called out on a defensive play on a batted ball, or makes it safely to base on a batted ball. No walks will be issued.
  - b. When the batter's count reaches 3 balls, or if the batter is hit by a pitch, an offensive coach-pitcher will take over pitching duties to complete the at-bat. The coach-pitcher must pitch overhand, with a full overhand motion. With the coach-pitcher on the mound, the at-bat will continue until the batter strikes out {3 (three) strikes}, is called out on a defensive play on a batted ball, or makes it safely to base on a batted ball.
  - c. The defensive player displaced by the coach-pitcher will assume a defensive position inside the pitcher's mound circle, to either side of the coach-pitcher, so the player can see the pitched ball and bat contact with the ball. The coach-pitcher is not allowed to interfere with any defensive play being made on a batted ball. When a batted ball is being played defensively, the coach-pitcher will leave the pitcher's mound circle to allow the defensive pitcher full access to the mound.
  - d. To speed up the game, the coach-pitcher will assume a position between the mound and second base when a defensive player is pitching. From this position, the coach-pitcher may help retrieve errant throws from the catcher back to the pitcher.
  - e. Peanut pitchers may pitch / appear in a maximum of 3 (three) innings or 9 (nine) outs in any 1 (one) game. Throwing at least 1 (one) pitch counts as an appearance by the pitcher, which counts as 1 (one) inning towards the limit of 3 (three) innings per game. The maximum number of outs that can be recorded by a pitcher in 1 (one) game is therefore 9 (nine) outs, recorded over 3 (three) appearances or innings.
2. To speed up the game, a catcher-assistant can be utilized to help retrieve wild pitches or passed balls. The catcher-assistant shall be of high school age or older. The catcher-assistant shall position themselves "behind the batter" at the backstop fence (third base side for a right-handed batter or first base side for a left-handed batter). The catcher-assistant shall return baseballs directly to the pitcher or coach-pitcher. The catcher-assistant may not position themselves behind the catcher or umpire to gain a view of the strike zone, nor communicate any coaching-related information to the coaching staff. A warning shall be issued for the first offense, followed by ejection from the game for a second offense.
3. The coach-pitcher and catcher-assistant are considered to be part of the playing field, if hit by a batted or thrown ball. A coach-pitcher or catcher-assistant may not purposely interfere with a batted or thrown ball. Such interference shall result in a dead ball call, base runners will remain at their original base, and the pitch shall be ruled a no pitch.
4. Balks will not be called in Peanut League games.

## VII. HOME TEAM RESPONSIBILITY

1. The home team shall furnish the umpires, 2 (two) per game. Once a game starts, the umpires shall have complete control over how the game proceeds. The umpires shall eject from the game, any player, coach, or manager for using profane language. The umpires may also eject from the game, for good reason, any person or player at any time they feel it is necessary for the good of the game and the program. Such ejections shall be agreed upon by all umpires working the game and shall be reported to the Peanut League Commissioner as soon as possible, but in no case later than the following day.
2. The umpires must be well versed in the rules of the game, especially MCYS special rules. At least 1 (one) adult umpire is required per game ... must be 18 (eighteen) years of age or older, while the second umpire must be 12 (twelve) years of age or older. The adult umpire may be positioned either behind home plate or on the bases. The umpires shall, in all cases, be persons worthy of the position, of sufficient maturity to use good judgment, and do a satisfactory job.

The manager or coach of a team involved in a game shall not umpire that game, unless by mutual agreement with the manager or coach from the opposing team.

- a. If the home team has not supplied the required, qualified umpires within 15 (fifteen) minutes after the designated starting time, a forfeit can be requested by the visiting team (**see Rule I.3.e**).
  - b. If both teams agree to use umpires that do not meet these requirements, then all decisions made by those umpires will be upheld as final (MCYS will not allow protest of the game results).
3. The home team shall furnish the official scorer. Both teams shall submit full names, first and last, to the official scorer.
  4. The winning team shall be responsible for reporting results to the Peanut League Commissioner. Results should be phoned, texted, or emailed to the Peanut League Commissioner, preferably the night of the game or the morning following the game, but in no case, later than 2 (two) days after the scheduled date of the game.
  5. The home team shall have available a current year or one year old copy of the Baseball Rules Book from the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), and the current year Peanut League Rules for each game. The MCYS shall provide a new NFHS rules book to each coach in every even-numbered year. (The expectation is that new coaches in odd-numbered years will receive their copy of the NFHS Rules Book from their predecessor).
  6. The home team shall furnish official game balls for regular season and non-championship tournament games, 1 (one) in new condition and others in good condition, as needed.

## VIII. MISCELLANEOUS MCYS RULES

1. To promote sportsmanship and fair play, umpires, managers, and coaches should insist that conversation between opposing teams during the game be addressed to play position, rather than name, nickname, or other forms of razzing. This is of prime importance in the younger leagues. We feel it is equally important for spectators to act in the same manner.
2. The Steering Committee will be composed of the Officers, Directors, and Commissioners of the MCYS. It shall be their responsibility to evaluate any problems or questions submitted to them by any member of this program and to make such decisions and take such action as they feel is necessary to rectify these situations. They shall have authority to suspend temporarily or permanently any member of the program, or to make such reprimands as they deem necessary.
3. Game Protest Procedures and Requirements.
  - a. All game protests must be submitted verbally (no texting) to the appropriate MCYS League Commissioner within 24 (twenty-four) hours of game completion.
  - b. The protest shall then be presented in writing (email is acceptable – texting is not) to the MCYS President within 48 (forty-eight) hours of the verbal submission.
  - c. A \$100 (one hundred dollar) protest fee shall accompany any written protests and must be in the MCYS President's possession before the protest will be reviewed. This fee will be refunded if the protest is ruled in favor of the protesting team.
  - d. No protests will be allowed on judgement calls. Protests will only be allowed on the application of MCYS or NFHS rules.
  - e. Any protests will be decided by the MCYS Steering Committee and the teams involved. If a protest is upheld, the original game shall be declared a "no-game", and will be rescheduled by the appropriate MCYS Commissioner, with the rule infraction corrected.
  - f. There will be no protests allowed in tournament games.
4. Smoking or alcoholic beverages will not be allowed on the playing field or in the play area (dugouts, benches, etc.).
5. Any proposed changes or modifications of these rules must be submitted in writing to the MCYS General Commissioner by February 1st of the next year. The appropriate League Commissioner (or Commissioners, should the requested change directly affect multiple Leagues) shall review the request and shall decide whether to submit the request to the full Steering Committee for review and a formal vote on adoption, or to place the request on the MCYS next business meeting agenda as a discussion item only. If the decision is to submit for review and formal vote, the Commissioner(s) shall work with the Requestor and the MCYS General Commissioner to draft language for the Steering Committee review. If the decision is for discussion only (not to submit for review and formal vote), The Commissioner(s) shall provide feedback to the Requester

after the Steering Committee discussion has been completed. The Steering Committee shall conduct either the reviews with formal vote, or the discussions only, at a regular or special business meeting prior to the annual Spring Meeting.

# Appendix A

## NFHS GUIDELINES ON HANDLING PRACTICES AND CONTESTS DURING LIGHTNING or THUNDER DISTURBANCES

### National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)

These guidelines provide a default policy to those responsible or sharing duties for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of practices and contests based on the presence of lightning or thunder. The preferred sources from which to request such a policy for your facility would include your state high school activities association and the nearest office of the National Weather Service.

#### **Proactive Planning**

1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests.
2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safe areas.
3. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
  - a. When thunder is heard or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for thirty minutes and take shelter immediately.
  - b. Thirty-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
  - c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
4. Review annually with all administrators, coaches and game personnel.
5. Inform student athletes of the lightning policy at start of season.

For more detailed information, refer to the "Lightning Safety" section contained in the NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook.

#### **Revised and Approved October 2014**

#### **DISCLAIMER – NFHS Position Statements and Guidelines**

The NFHS regularly distributes position statements and guidelines to promote public awareness of certain health and safety-related issues. Such information is neither exhaustive nor necessarily applicable to all circumstances or individuals, and is no substitute for consultation with appropriate health-care professionals. Statutes, codes or environmental conditions may be relevant. NFHS position statements or guidelines should be considered in conjunction with other pertinent materials when taking action or planning care. The NFHS reserves the right to rescind or modify any such document at any time.