



# **Boston Baseball Association**

## **2025 Season Rulebook**

Updated December 27, 2024

## **Player Registration and Player Eligibility**

In order to be eligible to participate in league play, players must follow two steps. First, they need to complete the online registration form. Second, they must ensure that their name appears on the current season Team Roster, which can be found on the public pages of the BBA website. Additionally, players are required to make the necessary payment on the league site. It's important to note that the online registration includes a Liability Waiver. Every player must sign the Liability Waiver prior to participating in any BBA games and events. [BBABOSTON.COM](http://BBABOSTON.COM)

If a player's name is not listed on a current season team roster, they will not be allowed to play in any League-sanctioned events. There are no exceptions to this rule. Any team found to be violating this rule will forfeit the game in which the illegal player participated. If a team is found to be in violation for a second time, they will forfeit all of their remaining games and will not receive any refund of Registration Fees.

## **Age Eligibility**

The age limit for the BBA is determined by the end of the calendar year rather than the players actual birthdates. The BBA is an age 28 and over league. However, for 2025, all CHBL D2 and Boston Fall League players 2024 will receive a waiver and will be permitted to participate in the BBA.

## **Fees, Waivers & Roster Matters**

The dates for submitting final rosters, all league forms, and designated player fees will be established each season by the President and the league leadership team. It is the responsibility of the team manager to ensure that all items are provided to the President. Failure to submit any of these items may result in a team and/or individual players being prohibited from participating in the BBA League until all submissions have been received and approved by the President. Once the season begins, no changes to a team's roster will be permitted without the submission of all league forms and designated league payments. The President will verify the accuracy of the rosters, league forms, and receipt of all league payments, and will communicate the compliance status of all teams to the league managers via email, text, or phone call prior to the start of the season.

League fees are assessed on a per-player basis, and all players are required to register and pay the player fee on the league website, [BBABOSTON.COM](http://BBABOSTON.COM)

Payment of league fees does not guarantee a specific amount of playing time or games. Playing time is at the discretion of the MANAGER.

Each roster must include a minimum of 18 players, not counting the manager. All players must have their fees paid in full on the website before participating in any BBA games. Rosters, with players' complete addresses and dates of birth, must be entered into 400Hitter. Players are not permitted to participate in league games unless they have completed the online waiver form.

No player may switch teams without the consent of the involved managers, the BBA President, and the leadership team.

A. If a player wishes to be released from their current team and continue playing in the BBA, they will be assigned to the last-place team. If that team does not require the player, they will be assigned to the next team up in the standings. This process will continue until the player is picked up by a team.

B. If a player wants to leave their existing team to form a new team, they may do so with the consent of the BBA President and the leadership team. No other players may be taken from an existing team without the approval of that team's manager, the BBA President, and the leadership team. Managers or players are prohibited from recruiting players from other teams. Any manager or player found to be recruiting from other teams will face immediate suspension at the discretion of the BBA President and leadership team.

## **Waivers**

Preliminary rosters, with complete addresses and dates of birth, must be entered into 400Hitter by Opening Day. It is permissible for a player to participate in a game before the player's information is entered into 400Hitter if player information is entered before the team's next game. Players are not permitted to participate in league games unless they have completed the online waiver form.

## Uniforms

All teams are required to wear complete baseball uniforms when participating in BBA games, which must include matching jerseys of the same color and different numbers, baseball pants, and hats of the same color. Uniforms must be purchased directly from Be Clutch Sportswear. Jeans, shorts, and other non-baseball attire are not allowed.

The BBA President and the leadership team will have the final authority on what is considered appropriate baseball attire. If a team is found to be non-compliant, the team manager will receive a written warning for players who are not in full uniform, and those players will not be allowed to participate in any BBA games.

## Equipment

All batters, runners and catchers must wear protective helmets, no exceptions. All teams are required to use the official BBA League-designated baseballs, as provided to each manager at the start of each season. Home team provides baseballs. Baseball spikes may have either metal or rubber cleats. When playing on turf fields you may wear molded cleats or turf sneaker **NO METAL ALLOWED ON TURF**.

The BBA is a **WOOD BAT ONLY** league. Only MLB-style, wood bats are allowed. No Bambu bats allowed. Wood composite bats are allowed but must meet the BBCOR (Batted Ball Coefficient of Restitution) standard and be properly marked with the BBCOR logo (ex. Baum Bats).

## Schedule, Postponing a game and Forfeits

1. Schedule: At the beginning of each season, teams must communicate any scheduling constraints, conflicts, or other team scheduling issues to the league office before the start of the season. This information is used to create the Season Schedule. The league makes its best efforts to accommodate team constraints. However, teams are expected to fulfill their schedule obligations without exception. If a team is unable to field a team for a game, they will suffer a forfeit.

2. Postponing a Game: The league may occasionally postpone games for various reasons (weather mostly). Once the schedule is posted on the league website, a team will forfeit their game if they are unable to field a team as scheduled.

The number of games played is dependent on field availability, weather conditions, and other unforeseen events or acts of nature that may prevent scheduled games from occurring. If games cannot be made up prior to playoffs, there is a specific eligibility requirement for pitchers. The eligibility of pitchers will be based on the number of games played.

*For example, if a team has played 16 games, a pitcher would only need to pitch 16 innings to be considered eligible for the playoffs. This ensures that pitchers have a fair opportunity to meet the eligibility criteria based on the number of games played by their team.*

## **Forfeits**

(a) A team becomes ineligible for the playoffs if they forfeit two or more games during the season.

(b) In the event of a forfeit, the winning team has the option to credit each member on their Active roster with one game and any pitcher with four innings (with a limit of once per season per team). The winning team will be awarded 2 points in the standings for the win, and the forfeiture will have not count for any runs scored or runs against for the winning team. This will require updating the 400hitter. However, if the game is forfeited before the first pitch, the losing team will not be able to credit any member of their roster with a game. If play has commenced, players appearing for the losing team will receive playoff credit.

**Exclusions:** Players who were serving a suspension or who were otherwise ineligible for the forfeited game at the time of the forfeiture decision 1) will not receive game credit toward their playoff eligibility requirement if they are on the winning team, and 2) the forfeited game will not count as a game served toward their suspension if they are on the forfeiting team.

(c) The forfeiting team becomes responsible for paying the full umpire fees for both umpires.

A forfeit will be declared and a loss with negative two (-2) points will be assessed to the forfeiting team in the following circumstances:

- (i) If a team does not show up for a scheduled league game;
- (ii) If a team does not have a team of eight (8) or more players at the start of the game;
- (iii) If a team is left with only seven (7) or fewer players due to an ejection or ejections;
- (iv) If a forfeit occurs for any reason other than those mentioned above, the forfeiting team will receive a forfeit loss, but no point penalty will be imposed.

## **Game Length**

- (a) All games will consist of 7 innings. In the event of darkness, light failure, curfew, rain, or other unforeseen circumstances, a game will be considered complete if at least 4 innings have been played or if the home team has the lead after 3.5 complete innings
- (b) If a game is tied after the 7 innings, additional innings will be played, subject to the curfew mentioned below.
- (c) During the regular season, no inning can start 2 hours and 45 minutes after the first pitch of the game. Depending on field availability and scheduling, this time limit will be assessed by the League President and any changes to the time limit will be communicated to the managers prior to the game and the managers will discuss these time limits with the umpires prior to first pitch.
- (d) If both teams agree and there are no other teams waiting to use the field, games can be played beyond the curfew, provided there is no risk of darkness and with the consent of the umpire.
- (e) The Mercy Rule will be in effect, declaring a game as final if a team maintains a 15-run lead after 4 innings, 12-run lead after 5 innings, or a 10-run lead after 6 innings. However, please note that this rule does not apply during the playoffs.
- (f) All playoff games in the league will be played to completion. If a playoff game is shortened due to weather, darkness, light failure, or curfew, it will be continued before the next scheduled game. Managers are expected to make their best efforts to keep the lineup intact when the game resumes.

## **Called Games**

Games that are called due to inclement weather, darkness, light failure, or curfew will be considered complete if the following conditions are met:

- (a) At least four (4) innings have been completed.
- (b) The home team has scored more runs in three (3) or three and a fraction (3+) half innings than the visiting team has scored in four (4) completed half innings.
- (c) If the home team scores one or more runs in its half of the fourth inning to tie the score.
- (d) If a regular season game is called while an inning is in progress after it has already met the requirements to be considered a completed regulation game, for reasons including but not limited to inclement weather, darkness, light failure, curfew, or other unforeseen circumstances, the official final score of the game shall revert to the score of the last fully completed inning. This rule ensures fairness and consistency, acknowledging the efforts of both teams up to the last inning that was completed in its entirety.

## **Suspended Games – Playoffs Only**

If a playoff game is suspended while an inning is in progress after it has already met the requirements to be considered a regulation game but before it is completed, the game is classified as a "Suspended Game."

The game will be rescheduled to resume at the point where the game was suspended and will be finished through a minimum of seven innings. This distinction ensures the playoff outcomes are determined by a full seven innings of play. Managers are expected to make their best efforts to keep the lineup intact when the game resumes.

## **Incomplete Games – Regular Season Only**

If a game is called before the conditions for a complete game are met (see definition above), then the game will be rescheduled. The score will revert back to 0-0 and the game will begin from the first inning. Attendance for playoff eligibility will not be counted for an incomplete game that needs to be rescheduled. Umpires will be paid a full fee for the incomplete game, and then full payment will be due for the umpires who are scheduled to officiate the rescheduled game.

## **Rainout/Poor Field Condition Notification**

- (a) The manager of the home team must inform the League President, the opposing manager, and the umpire assignor(s) for the field, and the league office of any game cancellation due to field conditions at least 90 minutes before the scheduled game time.
- (b) If the designated home team is playing at a field where the away team holds the permit, the designated home team still has the responsibility of coordinating the cancellation or postponement planning.
- (c) The League reserves the right to reschedule all makeup games at its discretion, depending on permit availability.
- (d) If a postponement is necessary once the teams are at the field, the following procedure must be followed: 1. The manager of the home team decides if the game should start. 2. Once the game has started, the umpires have the authority to call off the game due to inclement weather or poor field conditions.
- (e) For night games in Boston, cancellations must be made by 4:30 PM on the day of the game. Failure to do so will result in the home team being charged the full \$150 fee by city of Boston. Fields such as True Field, Victory Field, Breed Field, and World Series Park are managed separately and the league is notified directly whether these fields are playable or if games must be postponed.

## **Starting a game, Mercy rule, Time limits and Time outs**

**Line-Up Card / Team Roster:** Prior to the start of each game, team managers must identify themselves to the Home Plate umpire. They are also required to submit their line-up cards to the chief umpire and opposing manager, listing the full names and jersey numbers of all players in their line-up, including bench players. It is important to note that a player's name must appear on the official line-up card submitted to the umpires before the start of the game in order to be eligible to play. Players requiring a courtesy runner must be designated as such on the line-up card.

**Start Time:** A 15-minute grace period is allowed if the minimum number of players required to play an official game are not present by the scheduled start time. However, if the 15-minute grace period expires without the required number of players, the game will be ruled a forfeit.



**Eight Batter Rule:** For an official game, teams must have a minimum of 8 batters. In the case where a team has only 8 batters, the ninth batter slot in the batting order will result in an automatic out each time it appears.

**Time Limits:** Except for post-season and championship games, all games are subject to a time limit. No new inning shall be started if 2 hours and 45 minutes have elapsed. Ties are permitted for regular season games only; no ties are permitted for post-season games.

**Reporting Final Scores:** The winning manager is required to report the final scores immediately after each game. Managers should send the score in the managers' group chat on WhatsApp.

(a) Accompanying the score should be a picture of the scorebook for both the winning and losing team.

(b) Stats from the game must be entered into 400Hitter no later than 48 hours after the game's completion. Failure to do so may result in the loss of playoff eligibility for all players involved in that game.

**Time Outs:** Each manager is entitled to one free trip to the mound per inning. However, if a second trip is made during the same inning, the current pitcher must be removed from the mound.

## **Moving games**

The BBA does not allow non-weather game moves.

## **Umpire Fees**

Umpire fees are \$95 per game per team.

## **Payment Conditions**

(a) Home team is responsible for paying the home plate umpire, the away team shall pay the base umpire.

(b) Umpire fees are to be paid IN CASH prior to the start of the game. The league reimburses managers for the umpire fees before the end of game day or the following morning.

(c) If there is only one umpire who shows up for a game, they are to be paid 1 1/2 fee (\$150 for 7 innings). Teams should notify the Umpire-In-Chief and the league commissioners if only one umpire shows up.

(d) Once an umpire shows up at the field within 60 minutes of game time, they must be paid, even if the game is called before a single pitch is thrown.

(e) If the game is postponed by rain or field conditions within 60 minutes of game time, each umpire is due a 1/2 fee.

(f) Umpires are due fees for forfeits. Please see the rule above on forfeits for the schedule of fees due.

(g) In the event a playoff game is suspended (per rule 3.05f) and requires up to 4 full innings to complete, the umpires shall be paid \$15 per inning needed. If more than 4 innings are needed, a full fee will be paid to each umpire.

## **Lineups and Courtesy Runners**

Managers have the option to designate two (2) courtesy runners for each game. Prior to the first pitch, managers must inform both the Home Plate Umpire and the opposing manager about the name and numbers of any player who will be using a courtesy runner during the game. Once a player is designated as having a courtesy runner, they must be replaced by a courtesy runner for the entire game. The courtesy runner will be the player who made the "last batted out". A "batted out" refers to a player who made an out while at the plate (excluding a runner forced at second base). If there is no previous batted out available to act as a courtesy runner, such as in the first inning, the manager shall use the last batter in their lineup. There is also a mandatory catcher speed-up rule, which requires the catcher to be replaced by a courtesy runner when there are two outs.

Each team must have a minimum of 9 (nine) batters in their lineup, but they can choose to have additional players listed as Extra Hitters from their official roster. Once the lineup has been expanded, it cannot be reduced without incurring an automatic out. Teams can add batters to the end of their lineup at any time during the game, as long as these players have not yet been part of the batting lineup. Managers may also choose to use the A/B alternating batters scheme.

## **Alternating batters**

An A/B batting system can be used for any batting position desired. The “A” hitter bats during the first time through the lineup, with the “B” batter hitting the second time through the order, continuing in alternating fashion until the game is complete. Once a team declares the use of this A/B system, it must continue using it for the remainder of the game in the batting slots for which it was designated. Hitters in an A/B position may be pinch hit for, just as any other player. A/B slots may only be added on the initial lineup card. Additional batters can be added to the lineup as A/ B or single hitters.

## **Designated Hitter**

A team may use one (1) Designated Hitter to hit for a pitcher consistent with Major League Baseball rules. Alternatively, a team may use one (1) Designated Hitter to hit in the place of ANY positioned player (not just a pitcher). If the pitcher/player that the Designated Hitter is hitting for switches positions, the Designated Hitter is lost.

*If a team is forced to bat with only eight players for any reason during a game, they will receive an automatic out each time the ninth unoccupied slot in the batting order comes up. However, if an eligible ninth player arrives late, they can be inserted into the ninth unoccupied slot in the batting order and the automatic out will be removed.*

*In the event of a player ejection that reduces the team to eight (8) players, the team can continue to play. However, an automatic out will be recorded each time the ejected player's spot comes up in the lineup.*

## **Defensive Lineups**

All players may be substituted for defensively at any time without affecting the player's offensive status in the line-up. With the exception of pitcher, teams are permitted to rotate any and all players defensively at any time and repeatedly without affecting the batting lineup. Pitchers are subject to normal MLB rules with the exception of the Pitcher Re-Entry Rule.

## **Pitchers**

If the starting pitcher is removed from the game, the starting pitcher may return to the pitching position only once during the course of the remainder of the game whether they leave the playing surface or not. Only the starting pitcher may return to the pitching position; no subsequent pitchers may assume the pitching position once they are removed. The starting pitcher may not return to the mound until at least three outs have been recorded or the inning has ended after his departure.

Wearing white or gray pitching sleeves, batting gloves, wrist bands, and sunglasses are not permitted for pitchers.

Each pitcher is entitled to a maximum of eight (8) warm up pitches prior to the start of the game, and five (5) warm-up pitches at the start of each inning. The only exceptions to this rule are if the pitcher is new and did not throw at least one pitch during the previous inning, in which case he is entitled to eight (8), or an injury to the previous pitcher, in which case the new pitcher is granted a reasonable warm up period by the Home Plate umpire.

## **Playoff Eligibility**

To be eligible for the post-season, players must meet certain criteria. They must have participated in at least 50% of the regular season games or pitched a minimum of 20 innings with the same team. To document a player's eligibility, score sheets and online stats are required. In order to receive credit for a game played, a player must have had a plate appearance, pinch ran, played defense for an inning, or thrown at least one inning. These requirements ensure fair and accurate assessment of player eligibility for the post-season.

## **Playoffs and Tiebreakers:**

Final league standings will be determined using the following point system:

- 2 points will be awarded for a win
- 1 point will be awarded for a tie
- 2 points will be deducted for a forfeit

## **Tiebreakers**

- (a) Seeding will be determined by the number of total points each team earned throughout the regular season if all 20 games are played, or by winning percentage if teams have not played the same number of games.
- (b) If teams are tied at the end of the regular season – either by point or by winning percentage, then the head-to-head results between the tied teams will become the tiebreaker.
- (c) If still there remains a tie, each team's run differential (runs scored minus runs against) will become the tiebreaker.
- (d) If still there remains a tie, then a coin flip will serve as the tiebreaker

*Games that have been previously cancelled and not rescheduled will not earn points for either team. If teams end the season with a different number of games played, the seeding will be determined based on winning percentages. If all teams have played the same number of games, the seeding will be based on the point system.*

## **Team Playoff Qualification**

- (a) A total of 5 teams will qualify for the playoffs based on their highest point total or winning percentage.
- (b) The No. 4 seed will host the No. 5 seed in a one-game playoff. The winner advances to the semifinals.
- (c) The semi-final round is a best-of-three series. The No. 1 seed will face the winner of the Nos. 4/5 play-in game. The No. 2 seed will face the No. 3 seed. and finals best-of-three format. The higher-ranked seed will have the advantage of playing at home for games 1 and 3.
- (d) The finals will be a best-of-five series against the two semifinals winners. The team with the higher seed will have the advantage of playing at home for games 1, 3, and 5 in the finals, while the lower seed will be the home team for games 2 and 4.

## **Dugouts**

NO BEER NO ALCOHOL NO TOBACCO NO WEED on school premises and/or at the baseball field/dugout. Only rostered players, managers and scorekeepers are permitted in the dugout area. Violation of these rules may result in forfeit of said game. League insurance does not allow for family members, friends and pets to be present in the dugout area. Please avoid this practice at all times.

## **Player Behavior**

The BBA has set a standard of sportsmanship and player misconduct and/or alcohol, tobacco or weed infractions will not be tolerated. Read between the lines. Suspensions or expulsions are likely outcomes. Any player ejected from an official league game will serve an automatic one game suspension at minimum.

## **Ejections/Discipline**

If a player is ejected from a game, they will receive an automatic 1-game suspension. They may also face additional disciplinary measures after evaluation by the leadership team.

Please note that this rule does not apply to players who are acting in a managerial capacity. However, any ejection will be reviewed by the Leadership team for evaluation