



## Game Rules at a glance

Border Town SPL is sanctioned by NSA Canada ("NSA").



All rules not covered or set out below will be governed by the current rules of NSA in addition to added "League Specific Rules" as adopted, for regular season and playoffs.

### Rules of Play

The game Umpire will have the authority to make decisions on any situation not specifically covered by these rules. **ONLY THE CAPTAIN MAY APPROACH THE UMPIRE** to discuss rule interpretations. Sportsmanship shall be observed at all times. Unsportsmanlike acts are grounds for player ejection, suspension, and/or game forfeitures.

**Protest:** Only Team Captains may question an Umpire's call or ask desired rule clarification – **JUDGEMENT CALLS EXCLUDED**. If a Captain is to protest a rule interpretation, they must inform the Umpire at the time of the infraction. Captains cannot protest after an actual occurrence, i.e., a couple of innings after the infraction. If amicable resolution is not achieved amongst Captain and Umpire, the protest must then be put into detailed writing and provided to League Executive within 48 hours of the game. A ruling if applicable will then be made and communicated. **REMEMBER THIS LEAGUE IS FOR YOU, FOR FUN, PLAYERS MAKE MISTAKES AND SO CAN UMPIRES.**

**Conduct:** Captains are responsible for dealing with their teammates at the field. Any players who are playing aggressively, swearing or exhibiting any other types of inappropriate behavior should be removed from the field by their Captain. Failure to leave the diamond, if requested by the Umpire, may result in a forfeit by the offending team.

**Abuse of an Umpire:** Your League Executive supports all of the Umpires and adopts a zero tolerance for any abuse. Any player that is ejected from a game for any reason will be suspended for a minimum of ONE game. The Umpire-in-Chief must report all infractions to League Executive. Appropriate action and possible fines and/or suspensions will be levied.

**Profanity:** A warning may be issued to a player for the first profanity offense. A second warning for abusive language or profanity will result in player ejection; the Umpire shall have the authority to eject the offending player from the game and/or the park.

**Bat Throwing:** If a bat is considered thrown by the batter and it makes contact with a defensive player, the batter is automatically "out". If the bat does not make contact, batter is provided with one warning. This warning will also be considered a team warning. Next thrown bat is recorded as an "out" or if warranted by the Umpire may result in player ejection.

**Alcohol:** Consumption of alcohol on or around the ballpark is prohibited and will result in player ejection.

**Smoking:** Introduced in 2014, as at September 2, 2013, the Peel Outdoor Smoking By-Law makes it against the law for anyone to smoke within 9 meters (30 feet) of municipal entrances and exits and outdoor recreation areas including sports/activity areas (including spectator seating areas and player warm-up areas). Regional tobacco enforcement officers and municipal by-law officers can issue warnings, tickets and fines starting at \$250.00 if this law is broken. For more information about the relatively new by-law, please call Peel Public Health at 905.799-7700 and ask to speak with a health inspector or visit SmokeFreePeelRegion.ca.

**Litter:** Introduced on March 12, 2016. Issues included litter around benches and bleachers, all with nearby waste containers not being used on sports fields generally (BTSP not singled out) continues to be a concern. All Leagues have been asked to join the City in reminding Captains and players to help keep our parks clean. A fee for litter left on sports fields may apply to Leagues who are not keeping our fields clean.

**Mercy Run Rule:** NO game mercy rule was voted on in 2013 and remains unchanged for our 2017 season (play to continue to 7 full innings).

**Mercy Inning Rule:** To ensure fair competition, MAX runs scored per inning per team shall be limited to 7. The last inning of the game shall be an open inning (unlimited runs by either team) with no run maximum.

**Home-Run Rule:** The HOME RUN RULE for 2017 will limit each team to **"MATCH PLUS 2"**. No team can be up in home runs over the other team by more than two during any point in the game. When a home run is hit, that is in excess of the number allowed, the batter will be called "out".

**EXCEPTION:** When a fair batted fly ball deflects off a defensive player over the home run fence, the batter-base runner will be awarded 4 (four) bases. This will not be considered the same as an over the fence home run.

Introduced in 2014, and remains status quo in 2017, if so desired, a homerun hitter has the option to not round the bases after a home run.

For Home Runs or balls hit out of play, the team that hit the ball is responsible for retrieving the ball or supplying a replacement ball.

**Balls & Strikes:** BTSP calls balls & strikes using an official board. Introduced in 2015, and remains status quo in 2017, it is mandatory to use a wooden 2x3 home plate. A strike will be called when a legal pitch lands anywhere on home plate. Balls and strikes will be determined by an officially carded Umpire and again, home plate will be used to aid Umpires. Any ball pitched, which meets the height requirements, which hits any part of the **wooden** home plate on the way down, will be called a strike (a pitched ball that hits the ground first and then hits the board/home plate on the bounce is a ball).

**Foul Tips:** Regarding situations where the batter swings and the ball ticks the bat and goes back to the catcher - **THERE IS NO LONGER A HEIGHT REQUIREMENT** for an "out" to be recorded. As long as the ball made contact with the bat and the catcher makes a legal catch on the ball coming back to them, an "out" will be recorded.

### Pitching Rules:

1. Standard slo-pitch 6 to 12 foot arc; the ball must be delivered with a perceptible arc of at least six (6) feet from the ground and not more than twelve (12) feet from the ground at its highest level, as determined and enforced by the Umpire. A pitch not meeting these requirements is an illegal pitch.
2. An illegal pitch counts as a ball and shall be so called by the Umpire. If the batter swings at an illegal pitch, the play stands and the pitch is no longer deemed illegal. As a courtesy, the pitcher should first be given a reminder of the height restrictions.
3. Pitchers can pitch from behind the rubber, as pre-mentioned with a minimum height of 6 feet and a maximum of 12 feet. The 24" X 10'FT pitching zone is in effect (for safety). The pitcher rubber is no closer than 50 feet from back of the plate.
4. After the first inning, pitchers will be allowed warm-up pitches between innings. No infield or outfield practice between innings is allowed.
5. There are no balks.
6. Any batted ball that strikes the board shall be ruled a dead ball and the 'count' on the batter shall be increased by one strike for each instance.

**Scoring:** The league shall continue use of safe lines and commit lines.

1. All base runners coming home from 3<sup>rd</sup> must cross said safe line. If the catcher is in contact with the plate and in possession of the ball before the runner crosses the safe line, the runner will be declared "out".
2. The safe line shall be indicated to the right of home plate and all players shall cross the line and NOT home plate. Any player crossing home plate and not the safety line will be declared "out".
3. In the interest of safety, the commit line shall be indicated approximately 20 feet from home plate towards third base.
4. The home team is responsible for marking the safe and commit lines before the start of each game.
5. The base runner is "out" if he/she touches home plate unless avoiding a collision with a defensive player with, or attempting to, field the ball.
6. Tag plays at the plate are allowed.
7. If a ball is overthrown at first or third, and the ball remains in play, runners may advance at their own discretion. Any overthrown ball that goes out of play will result in a 2 base award from THE TIME OF THE THROW. Judgement calls are made by the Umpire.
8. Any player (or players) on base can advance a base, or score, by tagging up (post-catch) on any ball that is caught in foul territory.

**Safe and Commit Lines:** Setting up the diamond is the responsibility of the Home Team at/pre game time. That includes putting in the bases, home plate, safe line, commitment line, etc. Often with teams that may not be well versed with our responsibilities when home team, and in order not to delay from "getting started", Umpires will (as a courtesy) set up the commitment and safe lines, noting however, it is not their job. *Note: It is always a force play at the plate after the runner passes the commit line, but tagging the runner is allowed in our League.*

**Safe Line:** A line drawn in foul territory starting at the top left-hand corner of home plate perpendicular to the third base line. A runner attempting to reach home must do so by touching the ground in foul territory on or beyond the SAFE line. The runner is "out" if he/she touches home plate **whether or not a play is being made**. A runner is not "out" if the plate is touched in an attempt to avoid a collision.

**Commit Line:** As mentioned ("Scoring" sec.3.), in the interest of safety, the commit line shall be indicated approximately 20 feet from home plate towards third base. Any player advancing from third base towards home plate shall continue to home once having crossed the commit line. There is ONE exception: Runner is allowed to run back to 3<sup>rd</sup> base to tag up if a fly ball caught.

If any of the teams aren't sure where to put the commitment line, they can ask the Umpire where they might want it. Sometimes people put it a little bit farther out toward third base - - none of this should be an issue as the line is the same for both teams.

**NO Anticipation Step: NO Lead-Offs:** CONTACT MUST BE MADE WITH THE BAT FOR THE RUNNER TO COME OFF BASE.

If a base runner leaves before the bat makes contact with the ball, the base runner will be called "out", the ball will be declared dead and no pitch will be recorded.

### Batting Rules:

1. All teams must bat their entire line-up.
  2. Batting order as written on the score sheet must be maintained.
  3. Batting out-of-order is an appeal play that may be made by the Captain of the defensive team only. The defensive team forfeits it's right to appeal for batting out-of-order when all fielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout.
- 3[A]. If the error is discovered while the incorrect batter is at bat:
- (a) The correct batter may legally take his/her place, and assume the ball and strike count of the incorrect batter.
  - (b) Any runs scored or bases run while the incorrect batter is at bat shall be legal.
- 3[B]. If the error is discovered after the incorrect batter has completed his/her turn at bat and before a legal or illegal pitch has been made to another batter:
- (a) The player who should have batted is "out".
  - (b) Any advance or score made as a result of the improper batter becoming a batter-runner shall be nullified. Any "out" that is made prior to discovering this infraction, remains "out".
  - (c) The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player called "out" for failing to bat. If the next player was the incorrect batter who was called "out", go to the next person in the line-up.
  - (d) If the batter declared "out" under these circumstances is the third "out", the correct batter in the next inning shall be the player who would have come to bat had the player been put "out" by ordinary play.
  - (e) If the third "out" is made on a runner prior to the discovery of the infraction, an appeal may still be made in order to reinstate the correct batting order. This appeal, if made, does not result in an additional "out".

**Batting Rules cont.:**

3[C]. If the error is discovered after the first legal or illegal pitch to the next batter:

- (a) The turn at bat of the incorrect batter is legal.
- (b) All runs scored and bases run are legal.
- (c) The next batter in order shall be the one whose name follows that of the incorrect batter.
- (d) No one is called "out" for failure to bat.
- (e) Players who have not batted and who have not been called "out" have lost their turn at bat until reached again in the regular order.

3[D]. No runner shall be removed from the base he/she is occupying to bat in his/her proper place. He/she merely misses his turn at bat with no penalty. The batter following him/her in the batting order becomes the legal batter.

EXCEPTION: The batter-runner who has been taken off the base by the Umpire as in Section B, subsection (b) above.

3[E]. When the third "out" in an inning is made before the batter has completed the turn at bat, that batter shall be the first batter in the next inning, and the ball and strike count shall be cancelled.

4. BorderTown has amended the player eligibility rule for late-comers (applicable to all time slots). Any late player can enter a game up until the bottom of the 4<sup>th</sup> inning and must be placed at the bottom of the line-up. Players removed from a line-up remain out of the line-up for the remainder of the game.
5. Late players whom arrive AFTER the bottom of the 4<sup>th</sup> inning cut-off time, he/she is only eligible to play if the opposing Captain consents. Late-comers must be announced to the Umpire between innings (not to disturb game in play).
6. Teams must be "ready to play" with the minimum number to avoid a forfeit. A minimum of eight players must be on the scorecard (player list) at the start of the game. Reminder, a team can play with 8 players, minimum 2 females; however there will be one auto "out" if a team fields one female.
7. Should a team be short-handed, Captain's may add players not on your roster (must be BTSPPL registered players, i.e., borrowing from other BorderTown teams) up to a MAX of 10 players. ALL "fill-in" players MUST be placed at the bottom of the order.
8. No restrictions on batting sequence; may bat as many males/females in a row as you wish.
9. If a male batter receives four (4) straight balls without a strike being delivered at his turn at bat, he is automatically awarded second base only if a female bats next. The following female has the option of either hitting or receiving an automatic walk.

Introduced in 2014 and remains status quo in 2017, regardless of the count, if a male batter is walked with a strike called during his at-bat and is followed by a female batter, the male batter advances to second base and the following female must hit.

10. If a player is not ready to play when he/she is due up to bat, he/she is declared "out" and play continues with the next player in the batting order.
11. If a player is removed from the line-up for any reason during the game, his/her spot in the batting order is vacated without penalty (NOT declared an "out") and everyone moves up one position in the batting order.

**Bunting.** The batter is considered "out" if there is an intention to bunt.

The following motions will be considered bunts:

- i. Squaring up to bunt
- ii. Checking one's swing
- iii. Chopping at the ball in a downward motion

Should a batter take a full swing, without the intention to bunt, then any ball in play is considered to be a legally struck ball.

**Courtesy Runner:** The courtesy runner must be announced to the Umpire before he/she takes his/her place on the base.

If a player becomes injured during an at-bat, the batter has to run to first base. A courtesy runner can be used if the batter reaches first base safely. All runners trying to make it to first base before being thrown "out" must step on the **orange** bag while the first baseperson steps on the white bag.

Courtesy runners can be any player (not only by the last recorded "out") in the line-up. However, a female may only substitute for a female, a male for a male, but the courtesy runner must take his/her next scheduled at-bat. Also voted in 2009 and unchanged in 2017, a maximum of 3 courtesy runners per team per game. If a courtesy runner is due to bat, he/she must be replaced with another courtesy runner. The replacement courtesy runner counts against the team's allotment of 3 courtesy runners.

**Defensive Replacement:** If a defensive player is injured, a player from the bench may replace him/her and must take the place of the removed player in the batting order.

**Subs:** Players must be in the batting order to play the game. Introduced in 2012 and remains unchanged in 2017, late players have until the bottom of the 4<sup>th</sup> inning to enter a game and must be placed at the bottom of the line-up. Thereafter, only with opposing Captain's consent, players removed from a line-up may NOT re-enter a game (blood rule exempt). If for any reason, whatsoever, a player is removed or asks to be removed from the game, please squeeze the order. NO PENALTY/"OUT" APPLIED.

**Plays at 1<sup>st</sup> Base:** A double base shall be used at first base. On a play to first base, the runner must run to 1<sup>st</sup> base on the foul side of the foul line and touch the **orange** base, while the fielder must tag the white ("inside") base on the fair side. If the runner touches any part of the inside base said runner shall be declared "out". Ball remains alive. Only if the batter runner has a reasonable chance to advance to second base and is making the turn attempting to advance may the inside bag be used without penalty.

**New for 2017: ELIMINATE THE ROVER.**

As decided at the 2017 Captain's Meeting, BTSPSPL will eliminate the rover. All outfielders are subject to starting each play in the outfield, i.e., on the grass - at least until the ball is in play. As well, once the ball lands on the fly in the outfield grass it cannot be thrown to first base by any of the 4 outfielders except by relay to one of the infielders (SEE **Throw to 1<sup>st</sup> Base**: immediately below).

**Throw to 1<sup>st</sup> Base:**

1. A batter-runner (male/female) CANNOT be thrown "out" by an outfielder on their first attempt at 1<sup>st</sup> base. They CAN be thrown "out" if they are returning to 1<sup>st</sup> base after having safely rounded the base.

**EXCEPTION: RELAY THROWS** (outfield-to-infield ball delivery).

2. Once the ball is hit into the outfield (whether batted deep into the outfield, or to shallow outfield depth) an infielder becomes the relay. Which infielder acts as the relay and their position on the field changes according to which part of the outfield that ball is hit.
3. Any throw made by a defensive player that is judged by the Umpire to be excessive or unnecessarily heavy-duty within the context of the situation, will result in the base runner being called safe.
4. Should an errant throw pass into foul territory but not go out of play, the ball is considered live and the runner may advance any number of bases with the liability of being put "out".
5. When a female is batting, no fielder is allowed in front of the baseline until the ball is hit. Outfielders are not allowed to line up defensively on the dirt portion of the infield. During a play, outfielders may enter the dirt portion of the infield. If this is violated, the offence will be awarded 1 base to that batter and all runners.

**Sliding:** Sliding is ALLOWED at any base at BTSPSPL – including home plate. **Please exercise extreme caution!**

**Ball to Player/Base Runner Contact:** If the base runner is deemed by the Umpire to have interfered with a thrown ball, the base runner will be called "out". If a player is attempting to reach the base safely by sliding, and a rare "head shot" occurs, this will result in the player being called safe. The defensive player should make every effort to avoid any throws that may be directed towards the player's head. A "head shot" will not be called if the ball hits part of the runners' body then skips and hits said runner in the head.

Fielders shall not block the base path for oncoming batters. If a fielder is in the base path and NOT making a play on the ball, the runner shall be automatically rewarded the next base.

**In-Field Fly Rule:** An infield fly is a fair ball (not including a line drive) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, when there are less than 2 "outs"; 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases are occupied. The pitcher, catcher and any outfielder who positions him/herself in the infield on the play shall be considered infielders for the purpose of this rule. When it seems apparent that the batted ball will be an infield fly, the Umpire shall immediately declare "**Infield Fly**". If fair, the batter is "out" for the benefit of the runners. The ball is live and the runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or retouch and advance after the ball is touched, the same as on any fly ball. If the hit ball becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul. If a declared infield fly is allowed to fall untouched to the ground and bounces foul before passing 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base, it is a foul ball. If a declared infield fly falls untouched to the ground outside the base lines, and bounces fair before passing 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base, it is an infield fly.

**Jewelry:** It is strongly recommended that no jewelry of any type be worn in sports play. If worn, each player is solely responsible for any injury/damage that may be caused by this jewelry.

**Footwear:** NO steel spikes or cleats. Rubber spikes or cleats are permitted.