



# League Rules 2020

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## **SECTION ONE: League format, schedule, duties**

1.1. Each team pays a \$20 fee annually on Draft Day to cover all expenses. These include league cards distributed at the draft and the costs of renting a website. Remaining funds will be divided between those managers who help run the website and help coordinate the draft matrix. Any other expenses must be approved by a majority of owners.

1.2. Schedule: The league has 2 conferences. Each team plays 7 games with teams in its conference and 3 games with teams in the other conference, for a total of 83 games.

1.3. The regular season runs from the conclusion of the draft to the third Monday in January (Martin Luther King Jr day). Teams can play as soon as they submit an Opening Day roster. Playoff games should be done by draft day.

1.4. After every 10 games played, teams have a day off. This "rest day" counts as a game day for injury duration and for pitcher rest rules.

1.5. **DEADLINES:** Teams are expected to play 15 games by June 15, 40 games by Sept. 15, and 67 games by Dec. 15. If prior notification is sent by a league wide email, there is no penalty if an owner misses an occasional deadline due to illness, family or job responsibilities, other emergencies, or takes over a team in midseason and tries hard to catch up. Managers should accommodate managers who need to play during certain times of year and shouldn't dodge teams to wait for roster expansion. The Rules Committee will penalize teams that miss multiple deadlines within a season. If the Rules Committee decides that the manager cannot keep up with league obligations, they will be asked to resign. The penalty for missing a deadline the first time (with prior notification) will be waived; for the second missed deadline, the affected team will be penalized one slot in its draft position in the highest round in which it has draft picks (its own pick and/or any others that it has acquired); for the third missed deadline, the affected team will be penalized an additional 2 slots for every pick in every round, and in addition will lose its 2 NC rights in the upcoming draft.

1.6. Teams must report, via league wide email, game results, trades, options, waivers, and W-L record in a timely manner. All player movement and statistics become official when reported by email to all owners.

1.7. Team totals must be reported in all categories. Reports include stats for players traded, sent to the minors, or waived. Only stats with players' current team are reported. The stats below are the minimum stats required. All other stats are optional at the manager's discretion.

1. **For hitters:** games played, at-bats, at-bats available, runs, hits, RBI, doubles, triples, homers, walks, strikeouts, stolen bases, caught stealing, batting average. Pitcher's batting can be listed individually or combined.
2. **For pitchers:** games played, starts, complete games, innings pitched, innings available, hits, walks, strikeouts, runs, earned runs, shutouts, wins, losses, saves, ERA.

The Rules Committee will penalize teams that do not report stats within 14 days of playing game 30, game 60 and completing the season. Since teams play different number of games at a fest, or during one on one play, it is acceptable to turn in stats a few games before game 30 or 60 if the team anticipates not playing for several weeks, or to wait until compiling stats after a fest in which the team passed the 30 or 60 game threshold. The penalty will be similar to that outlined in 1.5 above. For the first missed deadline with prior notification, the penalty will be waived.

For the second, the penalty will be one slot in its draft position in the first round. This includes its own pick and/or all other first round picks it has acquired. In the absence of any first-round picks, for all of its picks in the highest round in which it has picks. If already penalized under 1.5 above the penalty will be an additional 2 slots in every round over and above any penalty imposed under 1.5.

1.8. Teams are encouraged to host multi-team fests and are expected to do their fair share of travel, allowing for family, work obligations and health issues.

## **SECTION TWO: Rosters, player use limits**

2.1. Teams draft each year until they reach 40 players. Teams must have at least 25 carded players year-round and can't have a roster larger than 43 during a season. The major-league roster is limited to 25 players until roster expansion.

2.2. No more than 8 never-carded players can be on a roster anytime, including during the draft. An uncarded player who's had a card in a previous season does not count against this limit.

2.3. Teams must have at least 2 players eligible to play every defensive position on their major-league roster at all times. One of those 2 could be unavailable due to injury, but if the DL is used for the only backup at any position, another player eligible for the position must be called up. If a position player has no injury on his card, this rule is waived and no backup is required at that position.

2.4. Owners must submit an Opening Day roster before they play any games and no later than 10 days after the draft. All rosters will be posted to the league within 14 days after the draft.

2.5. Managers must use interleague cards if furnished for multi-league players.

2.6. Carded players remain eligible to play even if they die or are suspended, banned, arrested, indicted, injured, demoted, detained abroad, or transgendered. Only the pitcher's hitting cards 1-8 will be used, not the personalized pitcher cards. If a pitcher has a separate position player hitting card, he must use that hitting card only when playing a position other than pitcher. If said pitcher/position player is pinch hitting ONLY, the Manager may use either the pitcher hitting card or position player hitting card.

2.7. Opening Day rosters must list player use limits.

1. League PAs for hitters are calculated by adding ABs and BBs as listed on the Strat-O-Matic card. For hitters with 449 PAs or less, multiply by 0.52. For hitters with 450 PAs or more, multiply by 0.55.
2. League IP for pitchers are calculated using IP as listed on the Strat-O-Matic card and multiply by 0.52.

Round all results **up** to the next whole number. Unless a manager can document an error, the walks, at-bats, and innings pitched printed on the Strat-O-Matic card are official (which excludes intentional walks). League usage limits apply to the regular season and any potential tiebreaker games.

2.8. Transactions do not affect player use limits. A manager should get a tally of a new player's remaining available innings or PAs from the previous owner.

2.9. A manager must announce before a game if any player might exhaust his usage limits during that game. A hitter who's used all his PAs can still play defense or pinch-run but may not bat, even to bunt. A pitcher who's used up his innings can pinch-hit or pinch-run but can't face a batter even to issue an intentional walk. There is no penalty if a pitcher exceeds his innings due to a double or triple play.

2.10. A manager who uses an injured player, a player who has exhausted his eligibility, a player on waivers, or anyone not on the major-league roster forfeits the game. The game must be finished no matter when the forfeit is discovered. If the forfeiting team loses on the field, the score stands; if not, the final score is 9-0, with the starting pitchers given the win and loss. All other stats count. But any injuries that occur during a game that is declared a forfeit are nullified (this does not affect subsequent games that

have already been played and any player placed on the DL because of an injury during a forfeit game can be reinstated without use of a waiver or option).

2.11 If a manager mistakenly uses a starter who has not had enough rest, it is not a forfeit. The pitcher must remain on the major-league roster and rest the number of games he should have rested plus the regular number of games in the next rotation turn until he can again start. If this mistake occurs repeatedly the Rules Committee may assess a forfeit.

2.12 Rosters expand starting in Game 68. Any carded player on the entire roster can then play subject to use limits. Teams will follow all trading rules.

### **SECTION THREE: Injuries, the DL, Options and Waivers**

3.1. Use the league's modified injury chart. Players are "modified" if they pitched 200 or more innings or made 600 or more PAs including hit by pitch, sac bunt and sac flies. Players with less than 600 walks and at-bats but who have enough sacs and HBPs to qualify as "modified" must be so noted on the Opening Day roster. Catchers are "modified" if they have more than 500 PAs, 75 % of which were as a catcher. See [Appendix 1](#) for the list of current modified catchers.

3.2. Pinch hitters can be injured.

3.3. If a player is injured for 1 game or more, he can be put on the DL and replaced on the major-league roster by a call-up or player acquired by trade or waiver. Teams don't have to use the DL for any injury. Injured players, whether or not on the DL, can be traded, optioned, or waived but must complete their injury period if sent to another team.

3.4. A player must stay on the DL at least 3 games or until his injury of any greater length is completed and then immediately be put back on the major roster. A spot must be cleared on the major-league roster for him by option, waiver, trade, or as described in Rule 3.6 below.

3.5. A player can be sent to the minors by option or waiver. Each team has 8 options per season. A player may be optioned or waived more than once a season. Options cannot be traded.

3.6. A team that places a player on the injured list may call up a replacement player. The team will not have to use an option to send the replacement player to the minors when the injured player comes off the injured list. An option must be used if a player other than the replacement player is sent to the minors.

3.7. To waive a player, a manager must announce, in a league wide email, the player and their available stats. Teams have 72 hours to place a claim. The claiming team with the lowest winning percentage in the most recent standings gets the waived player and can put him on his minor-league roster (or major league roster if he clears a spot for him). If any team has not yet played 10 games when a waiver is announced prior to June 15 that team's winning percentage in the previous season determines claim order. All waivers are irrevocable. Waivers cannot be used once a team has expanded its roster.

3.8. A team that receives a waived player must immediately send a player on its major or minor league roster to the waiving team as compensation. The compensation player can be put on the waiving team's major or minor league roster without use of an option. If no team claims a waived player, he is put on the waiving team's minor league roster.

## **SECTION FOUR: Trades**

4.1 All trades must be announced at the time they are made and take effect immediately. The announcement must be made via league wide email and must include the following information (at minimum): Players Name, RCBL team, PAs/IP used, PAs/IP available. The trade recipient should confirm and agree that the information provided is accurate. Off-season trades for the upcoming season, PAs/IP are not required to be reported. When trades are made, both teams must exchange the league-purchased cards, if possible.

4.2. Teams can't make trades for the current season after roster expansion or Dec. 15, whichever comes first. Teams making a trade must be within 15 games played of each other.

4.3. No trade can involve players to be named later or be contingent on a later trade. A team cannot trade players for the current season in exchange for players to be received in the following season. You can trade players for future draft choices, no-card rights, or uncarded players. Multiple-team deals are allowed if all other rules are followed.

4.4. Injured players and pitchers do not get any extra rest when changing teams. They must complete their rest or injury as required on their new team.

4.5. Teams may trade draft picks for the next draft. Starting Jan. 1, teams can also trade draft picks for the next year's draft. They may trade other teams' draft picks previously acquired.

4.6. After Sept. 1, if teams have completed 45 games, they may make trades that take effect the following season. No players may change teams during the current season as part of such trades.

4.7. Any handshake deal proposed but not announced before Sept. 1 is not binding on either party. Managers are cautioned not to make such agreements.

4.8. The Rules Committee may decide on a probationary period of up to a year for new managers, depending on their experience, during which it should be consulted by that new manager on proposed trades that might adversely affect league balance or integrity. Teams shouldn't take undue advantage of any new manager.

4.9. Managers should not conceal relevant information in any trade negotiations.

## **SECTION FIVE: The annual player and ballpark drafts**

5.1. The draft is held on the first Sunday in March (March 7, 2021, March 6, 2022, March 5, 2023), unless the league approves different dates.

5.2. Teams must submit a roster by Feb. 15 with 25-40 players they are protecting, a tally of all draft picks owned (including those acquired by trade) through Round 15 (regardless of the number of protected players), and a list of all players being released. Tom Dietz will publish a list of every team's protected and released players by Feb. 21. No players can be released after Feb. 15.

5.3. After Feb. 15 through the end of the draft, no team can trade a draft pick the team cannot use to complete a draft of 40 players. No team may trade a draft choice beyond Round 15. Through trades, teams may change the number of protected players they have and the draft picks they own, even at the draft. But no trade can be made involving a draft pick not available to a team at the time of the trade. When trades are reported after Feb 15, teams must note any change in the number of protected players and draft picks available.

5.4. Teams may enter the draft with fewer than 25 players but no more than 43 players. Trading is permitted during the draft, but no team can ever have more than 43 players.

5.5. Non-playoff teams draft in order of winning percentage in the first round, followed by playoff teams drafting in order from lowest to highest winning percentage. Ties among non-playoff teams in this round will be broken by the results of their head-to-head season series. In the case of a tie between two teams for wins and losses in the regular season, draft order in the first round (regardless of whether either team owns its first round pick) will be decided by the results of their head to head season series. The team winning the season series will have the better pick in the first round and all odd numbered rounds, the team losing the season series will have the better pick in even-numbered rounds. In cases where there are three or more teams with the same win-loss record, and where there is not one of these teams that won all of the season series with the teams they are tied with, the teams with the best divisional record will have the better pick in the first and other odd-numbered rounds. If this still does not yield a clear draft order for all teams with the same record, the record of the affected teams in the previous season will be used as an additional tie-breaker. In this instance, the team with the worst record in the previous year will have the better pick in the first and other odd-numbered rounds.

5.6. A team assessed a penalty for forfeits or any other reason will have all draft picks it owns on the second and subsequent rounds lowered. Such a team's draft picks traded to other teams prior to the draft will not be penalized. Penalties will be imposed and draft order settled before the beginning of the draft.

5.7. All teams draft until they have 40 players. Each team can draft 2 uncarded players, which can be anyone at any level or league, unless they have acquired or lost no-card rights through trades. (Expansion teams may be allowed extra players or no-card rights if the league so decides.)

5.8. A ballpark draft will be conducted by email before Draft Day once the new ballpark effect numbers are known. Teams must declare their choice: they can remain in their previous season's ballpark (using the new season's ballpark numbers or keeping a previous season's numbers) or enter the draft. Teams draft in reverse order of current season's winning percentage. Only one team may play in a ballpark. Teams may not trade ballparks. After a team vacates a ballpark, the next manager to choose it must use the current season's ballpark numbers.



## **SECTION SIX: Playing rules**

- 6.1. Both managers must keep a score sheet for both teams in every game and keep these score sheets until the end of the season to resolve disputes.
- 6.2. The league will use the super-advanced Strat-O-Matic rules, including pitcher rest rules, clutch hitting and ballpark effects. We do not use weather effects. Pitcher and catcher hold ratings are used for steals even if the runner is not held.
- 6.3. A starter/reliever used in relief must rest one game after a relief appearance before starting a game. A starter/reliever who starts a game must rest the required number of games before any subsequent appearance as specified on the super-advanced Miscellaneous Chart. If special circumstances force a manager to start a pitcher without proper rest, that pitcher will be weak for his entire appearance.
- 6.4. A starter can be used in relief only if all other eligible relievers have been used. This counts as a start, and the pitcher must rest the required number of games before his next start. A starter used in relief has a POW (1).
- 6.5. No pitcher may pitch more than 70 innings in relief in a season, including tiebreaker games.
- 6.6. No reliever can warm up until at least 2 opposing batters have faced the starting pitcher.
- 6.7. No reliever can start a game unless there are no eligible starters on the major or minor league rosters. A manager cannot deliberately manipulate starters to create a start for a relief pitcher. If he does, the opposing manager can ask the Rules Committee for a forfeit.
- 6.8. Managers must announce which relievers are warming up. Relievers must warm up the required number of batters before entering the game or enter tired. Only 2 pitchers may warm up at a time. Time between innings counts as one batter for warm-up purposes. An already fatigued pitcher does not need to warm up.
- 6.9. A manager must announce any pinch-hitter before a runner tries for his lead. If a runner fails to get his lead, he cannot then pinch-hit. Once a runner tries for a lead, the opposing manager cannot change any defensive player or positioning prior to the attempted steal.
- 6.10. The offensive manager must announce the batter before the defensive manager must announce his defensive alignment. If the offensive manager pinch-hits, his opponent manager may adjust his defense. A player is in the game once he's announced.
- 6.11. All runners trying for a steal, even if forced to steal on a botched hit-and-run or squeeze bunt attempt, have a minimum 1 chance and a maximum 19 chance.
- 6.12. A double steal can be attempted only with runners on first and second and third unoccupied. When a double steal is announced, the runner on second must get his lead to attempt to steal third. The runner on first automatically gets his lead, whether or not he's an asterisk stealer. His chances to steal second are calculated as his first steal number plus or minus the catcher's arm only (pitcher's hold is not included). The defensive manager can then throw to either base; regardless of the result, the runner at the other base is automatically safe. A roll of 1, 2, or 3 is a T rating as in a normal steal, and if a throwing

error occurs, both runners will move up an extra base.

6.13. Hitters cannot pitch. The so-called "Cannon Fodder" card cannot be used.

6.14. Both teams should use the home team's dice if either manager so requests.

6.15. No player may be used at a position for which he does not have a defensive rating unless there are no other players available at that position.

1. Managers have the right to pinch-hit or pinch-run for the last non-pitcher player at a position. The last available pitcher on your roster, currently pitching in game, can NOT be pinch hit for or subbed out. But players used at any position they are not rated for (including outfielders playing an unrated outfield position) have the worst possible fielding range, error rating, and throwing rating (+4 arm for outfielders, +5 arm, T-20 and PB-20 for catchers). All ground balls and fly balls hit to a position manned by an unrated player become X chart plays, and any 5 that is rolled for an X chart result is considered a roll of 1, not a rare play. Lineout maxes hit to an unrated player become simple lineouts.

If an unrated player is catching:

- a. P/F and P/P plays on the Catcher X chart are automatic passed balls
  - b. FOs on Catcher X chart are dropped with the batter remaining at the plate
  - c. The pitcher's WP number is increased by 10
  - d. All strikeouts must be followed by a D20 roll. If 1-10 is rolled, they turn into dropped third strikes with the batter reaching first on a strikeout and passed ball.
2. If an injury occurs during a game which results in a player being forced to play at an unrated position, that player shall have the worst possible fielding range, error rating, and throwing rating (+4 arm for outfielders; +5 arm, T-20 and PB-20 for catchers). But none of the other penalties shall apply for the rest of that game. If your last pitcher playing is injured and cannot return to finish the game, it will be considered a forfeit.
  3. If all players at a position are injured, and there is a player in the minors who can play that position, the team must call him up before the next game if the injury extends beyond the game.
  4. If an injury occurs that results in only one player remaining at any position for a subsequent game or games, a manager is not required to use the DL or to call up a player from the minors as a backup. However, if the sole remaining player at a position is then himself injured in a subsequent game, the replacement unrated player is subject to the penalties detailed in (a) above.
  5. A pitcher cannot be used to play any other position in a nine-inning game, unless no other position players are available due to injuries or it is an extra inning game. This is a unique one game situation ONLY.

## **SECTION SEVEN: Courtesy rules**

- 7.1. The cards should be face up so that each manager can easily read the results. Each manager should check all rolls and results because it is easy to misread dice or cards. Pointing to the result on the card can help. If a manager is playing too fast, the other manager should ask him to slow down.
- 7.2. Managers should agree before the game what constitutes a valid dice roll, whether to roll again if dice are leaning, off the table, or unreadable. A manager can roll the D20 separately or with the other dice.
- 7.3. A manager may ask at any time to see the players remaining on the other team, who's warming up, upcoming rotation, player eligibility limits, or injuries.
- 7.4. Request "time out" to consider strategy or pitching changes. Allow the other manager time to consider his strategy. Normally, the offensive manager should ask about infield or outfield positioning and whether a runner is held, especially in a possible bunt situation.
- 7.5. Allow time to score the result before rolling the dice for the next batter. Ask if there are any defensive changes before the next inning starts, especially in the later stages of close games.
- 7.6. Once the dice have been rolled, the offensive manager cannot change batters and the defense cannot change the pitcher or defensive positioning.
- 7.7. Disputes during a game may be resolved by calling any member of the Rules Committee.
- 7.8. Any game situation not specifically addressed by these rules will be governed by the Strat-O-Matic super-advanced rules and the MLB official rules.
- 7.9. RCBL is a face-to-face league. Distance Dice (DD) are allowed only if both teams agree and if there are special situations that prevent travel, but no more than 20 DD games for any team. The Rules Committee can waive this limit if a serious illness or injury befalls a league member or a close family member.

## **SECTION EIGHT: The Playoffs**

8.1. Format: The winner of each conference and the three teams with the next best records in each conference will make the playoffs. First place teams will have byes for the first and second rounds. Second place teams will have a bye for the first round. The third and fourth place teams within each conference will play each other in the first round. If a team does not complete its season, the next-best qualifier takes its place in the playoffs. A game 84 shall only be played to determine whether a team makes the playoffs. Seeding of playoff teams with the same overall record shall be determined by head to head results in the regular season. All tiebreaker games are considered regular season games for statistics, injuries, and player usage calculations.

8.2. Schedule:

- Round 1: The third and fourth place teams in each conference play round 1, the third place team with home field advantage. Round is best of 5, in a 2-2-1 home/away/home format.
- Round 2: The winners of Round 1 in each conference will play the second place teams, which has home field advantage. Round is best of 7, in a 2-3-2 home/away/home format.
- Round 3: The winners of Round 2 in each conference will play the first place teams, which have home field advantage. Round is best of 7, in a 2-3-2 home/away/home format.
- Castro Cup: The winners of Round 3 play the finals. The team with the best record has home-field advantage. Round is best of 7, in a 2-3-2 home/away/home format.

If teams are tied with the same record in any round, home field advantage goes to the team that won the season series.

8.3. Playoff roster: The 25 players on the major-league roster in game 67 are eligible for the playoffs, even any who have exhausted their usage limit. If a player is injured after game 67, he can be replaced on the playoff roster. If a player is on the DL in game 67, he can replace any player on the playoff roster. Teams in contention must submit their playoff roster before their team plays game 68.

8.4. Injuries and rest: Between the end of the season and the first round, and between each round of the playoffs, a rest day occurs. An injured player must complete a regular-season injury during the playoffs if he's not replaced on the playoff roster. Teams with a first or second round bye have a five-game rest.

8.5. Regular season playing rules apply during the playoffs with the following exceptions:

1. A player injured during the playoffs can be put on the DL and replaced. Once he is off the DL (3 games or longer as in the regular season), any player may be optioned to the minors to make room for his return. A team gets one option for each round of the playoffs.
2. Players are limited to 10% of their MLB plate appearances or innings pitched in each round.
3. Teams must have four starting pitchers in each playoff series. Playoff teams will have a rested starting pitcher, with innings, available for all playoff games.
4. All starters are considered asterisk starter/relievers with a relief POW (3).
5. A starter/reliever is limited to 9 innings over 3 games. A pitcher used only in relief can pitch 7 innings over 4 games. After reaching those limits, the pitcher is tired. These limits are not affected by previous regular-season or tiebreaker games.

## **SECTION NINE: Enforcing and changing the rules**

9.1. A Rules Committee interprets all rules and handles proposed amendments to the rules. The committee will enforce rules and penalties. Committee members can be nominated and voted in during the annual draft and can be any size.

9.2. Once the season starts, no rules can be adopted that affect the play of any games that season, including the playoffs.

9.3. Any proposals for a rule change or a new rule must be submitted in writing at least 30 days prior to the annual draft and must have the support of at least 3 managers.

9.4. To pass, a proposal must gain a simple majority in the annual rules ballot vote.

9.5. At the request of 5 or more managers, a special league meeting may be called to raise significant and extraordinary issues.

9.6. No new rules proposals or amendments may be submitted on draft day.

**Appendix 1 – Modified Catchers for 2020**

The following players have more than 500 plate appearances of which 75% were as catchers. They are subject to the modified injury rule in Section 3.1:

- Yasmani Grandal
- Wilson Ramos
- J.T. Realmuto
- Christian Vázquez

**Appendix 2 – Revision History**

Revision Date	Rule	Modification
03/2020	1.3	Changed season end date.
	1.5	Added penalties for missed deadlines regarding games played.
	1.7	Defined deadlines for reporting team statistics and added penalties for missing those deadlines.
	5.5	Defined tie breaker criteria for determining draft order.
	1.2; 8.1; 8.2; 8.4	Updated playoff format and schedule to reflect the league restructure.
	App 1	Updated modified catchers list.
	App 2	Added a revision history table.