

2026 Spring Season-DFW Adult Baseball Association
Condensed Rules

These rules supersede NABA Rulebook and MLB Rulebook
Revised: January 19, 2026

Conduct - Fighting, physical abuse of players, umpires, or spectators, or abusive language directed at players, umpires or spectators will not be tolerated.

Alcohol - Alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited. The DFW ABA expressly prohibits any alcoholic beverages in the vicinity of any field used by the League. Umpires have the authority to stop and/or forfeit games because of alcohol abuse.

Contracts - A player cannot play until a completed on-line contract is on file with the league and on the team's roster. All players should carry a picture ID in the event his age or identity is questioned. Any player unable to produce a valid ID will be ineligible to continue in the game. Any substitute will enter the game under the rules governing player ejection.

Eligibility - A player must be 18 years or older. A player in the 25&Over, 35&Over, 40&Over, 50&Over, 55&Over or 60&Over league must have reached their 25th, 35th, 40th, 50th, 55th or 60th birthdate respectively by the end of the current season's calendar year (December 31st). No player may play in the same age group in different leagues simultaneously. Players must be on the roster of the team in which they are playing to be eligible. Teams using ineligible players risk forfeiting their game.

Playoff Eligibility - Players must be on the roster prior to the approximate 3/4 mark of the season. Since this could vary among age groups, the league will establish a firm date and notify all managers. A player must be on the roster by the playoff eligibility date to be eligible for playoffs. If a team does not have a minimum of 8 players registered on their roster the team will be ineligible for the playoffs.

Adds/Drops/Transfers - Players may not be added or dropped by phone. Managers should use the web site for all adds. The League President must be involved in transfers and drops.

Player Movement - Same league: player must sit out one game each time he moves. 1st game of a double-header satisfies this requirement

- Different league: player must sit out one game upon transfer to a lower-level league. He may not return to the higher league during the season.
- A player may move up a classification without sitting out a game. He may return to the lower league, but he must sit out one game and cannot return to the higher league that season.
- A player transferring from a team that has folded after the playoff deadline is eligible for playoffs only if he has joined that team by the playoff eligibility date of the season. The first game of a double-header satisfies one game requirement for each case.

Fields - Some fields require maintenance upon completion of a game or practice. (This includes between each game). If rakes are available each team should rake the mound, plate area and base paths to help maintain the field after playing. Dugouts are to be swept and/or picked clean of trash and tobacco. Stands and bleachers must also be picked clean of trash.

If a field is wet, DO NOT HAUL DIRT OR ANY OTHER MATERIAL ON OR OFF THE FIELD! If the field cannot be made ready with light raking, do not play on it! Managers, umpires and teams will be suspended for violations. Do not climb or jump over fences to gain access to a field. If a field is locked and a team does not have the key, stay off the field. Do not cut locks, remove gates or doors to get on a field or get field equipment.

Dugouts - Only players, managers, coaches, and scorekeepers are allowed on the field or in the dugout. Friends, family, girlfriends, wives, children, or others not directly associated with the team must remain in the stands.

Bases - The HOME team is responsible for setting the bases on the field if needed. Home team of the first game of the double-header is responsible for the bases for both games.

- Games will not be played without bases. The responsible team has 1/2 hour from game time to get bases to the field or risk forfeiting the game.
- The game clock starts at the scheduled start, not when the bases arrive.
- Even if the bases are not at the field at game time, both teams must have 8 players at the field ready to play.
- Teams should be aware that they are responsible for their own equipment left at a field and should take care of any school equipment.

Umpires - Umpire fees are \$80 for 7 inning games (Exception: Any Monday through Thursday weeknight games are \$75 due to shorter 2 hour time limit). Each team pays one umpire in cash *before* the start of the game.

- Teams forfeiting games at game time are responsible for paying each umpire \$35 at the forfeiting game. Failure to pay the umpires will result in a \$10 fine and may result in a one game suspension for the manager.
- If only one umpire shows up for a game, he is to be paid one and a half times the regular fee for that game.
- Late umpires are to be paid when they arrive. However, no two teams shall be obligated for more than \$160 total for a 7-inning game.
- In the event that a game is postponed due to rain or field conditions before it becomes official, the umpires will return 1/2 the fee to each team. It is the responsibility of each team to get their money back, not the League.
- In the event of a Double-header and the 1st game is forfeited: The forfeiting team may elect to forfeit the 2nd game immediately after the first and pay only \$50 forfeit fee to both umpires for both games, (Total of \$100). If the team elects to play the 2nd game, they will be responsible for a full forfeit fee (\$70 to each umpire if the second game is forfeited. (Total of \$140 for both games).
- Teams knowing they will not be able to field a team for a particular game and need to forfeit may eliminate paying forfeit fees if the League President is notified by at least 72 hours prior to scheduled game time. Teams will be charged a \$10 cancellation fee. Managers must receive confirmation from the League President.
- Umpires are not to be abused. If you have a complaint about an umpire's call, explain it to him. If you are reasonable, they should be reasonable. If a problem develops between you and an umpire, notify your league president with the umpire's name and his partner's name after the game -The League will not allow teams to dictate who will or will not umpire their games due to previous conflicts with umpires. - If both umpires fail to show, 1 or 2 unpaid substitute umpires may be chosen from the available players, if both managers agree. A player serving as a substitute umpire will be ineligible for that game. There are no substitutes for substitute umpires. Substitute umpires will call balls and strikes from behind the mound. Substitute Umpires must yield to the regular umpires should they arrive late to the game.

Baseballs - Each team is required to provide 3 new balls per game. Balls approved for play are Wilson A1036, 1010HS, 1010C, A1015,A1040, A1010; Rawlings RO, RO-A, RO-N, R-200, RRHS; Pro Nine CL, PRO, NFHS, OLA, NFHS, Diamond Pro D1 (all models), DHS, DOL-A, D1-NABA, DOL MVP. No rubber coated, plastic, blems, or Little League balls are allowed.

Bats - All wood, metal, graphite, and ceramic bats are allowed for league play as long as they comply to specifications described in rule 1.10(a) of the Official Rules of Baseball. Players must use the appropriate bat type for their league. Composite wood bats will be allowed. All non-wood bats must have a protective covering on the handle for safety. (tape, rubber, leather, etc.) Metal bats cannot exceed 3 oz differential between length and weight and must have the BBCOR stamp on the bat. Currently only the 18+ age group can use metal bats.

Uniforms - The minimum uniform consists of matching shirts with individual numbers, matching hats and some type of baseball pants. No shorts, sweat pants, or jeans are allowed. Teams may be fined for noncompliance after a 3-game grace period; however, no game shall be forfeited for this reason.

Shoes - Metal cleats and plastic spikes are approved; however, players using deliberately sharpened cleats will be ejected. Metal spikes may not be used on any turf fields. Only turf shoes or tennis shoes will be allowed on turf mounds. No cleats including metal or rubber. Refer to the field information sheet for details of which shoes are eligible for each field. **If a player is found to be wearing metal spikes on a field that prohibits metal spikes the player will be called "out" for their next plate appearance and must change shoes. If the player refuses to change shoes he will be ejected and his vacated spot in the line-up will be called an out per the rules unless the team has an eligible substitute. The ejected player will also be suspended for the next game on the next scheduled date the team plays per the ejection rule. If the player is not in the batting order the next batter to have a plate appearance will be declared an out.**

Helmets - All batters must wear a protective helmet that has an ear flap facing the pitcher. All players must wear a helmet while running bases. All catchers must wear a protective helmet while playing their position. Umpires will strictly enforce this rule.

Game times - No new inning may begin after the 2 1/2 hour mark of a scheduled 7 inning game or 2 hour mark of a weeknight game Monday through Thursday. Any inning started before the time limit mark must be completed. In a 2 1/2 hour time limit game, if any team is winning by 6 runs or more no new inning may start after 2 hours and 20 minutes. For a weeknight 2 hour time limit game, no new inning may start after one hour and 50 minutes. A forfeited game occurs when one team is unable to field enough players (8) at game time. There is a 15-minute grace period with a run being assessed at game time to the opposing team. If the game does become a forfeit the forfeiting team is responsible for paying both umpires.

8-Man Start/Finish - A team may start and complete a game with 8 players without penalty of forfeit. If any or both teams start with 8 players, both teams pay the umpires as if it were a regular game. Teams with only 8 players teams do not accept an out each time the 9th spot in the order comes to bat. When the ninth player arrives, he may be added into the line-up only in the 9th position and may bat when that position comes up. He may also take his position defensively when he arrives but must wait until the current batter has completed his at bat. If a team starts a game with 9 players and has no more substitutes and a player vacates their spot in the line-up, the vacant spot in the line-up will be recorded as and out the first time through the line-up. After the first time it will not be declared as an out. The game is declared a forfeit if there are less than 8 players under the 8-man start rule.

Forfeits – Any team that has an outstanding balance of fees due to the DFWABA due to a fine, forfeit, or any other reason and plays a game and is determined the winner, that team may not receive credit for their win. This could continue until the balance is paid off or the team has been expelled from the league.

Lineup Cards - Each team is to provide a lineup card to the umpire and opposing manager, with each player's first initial, last name and jersey number. The lineup card must include all substitutes expected to be available for that game. A player in the game found not to be on the lineup card will be removed from the game per Major League rules. An incomplete lineup is not grounds for a forfeit unless it involves any ineligible players. Managers should request a complete lineup at the plate conference. **If a line-up card is not complete at the plate conference with a last name and first initial the opposing team will be awarded one run at that time. And then one run each inning beginning the top half of each inning until a complete line-up is given to the opposing team.**

Offensive Lineup - A team may elect to bat any number of players with a minimum of 9. (Exception: 8 Man Start rule). Teams may add players to the bottom of the order at any time. A player may vacate his spot in the batting order at any time. Unless there are available substitutes the vacated spot will be declared an out the first time it is vacated. All remaining at bats for the vacated spot will not be penalized. (Exception: Playoffs: The penalty will be an out in the vacant spot in the order each time he was supposed to have a plate appearance).

A/B Batter Option - A team may declare at the time that lineups are exchanged prior to the start of play that any batting order position (i.e. 8, 9, 10, etc.) can be occupied by two (2) players in each such batting position. That is, 8A/8B, 9, 10A/10B, 11, etc. The first time that position 8 has a plate appearance, 8A would hit and the next time this slot hits, 8B would be up. Then 8A hits the third time this spot in the order comes up, and so on, alternating between these two players throughout the game. Once a team declares the use of this A/B system, it must continue using it for the remainder of the game. If due to injury or absence of one of the alternating hitters, the player present may hit in the A/B slot without penalty. Playoffs and championship games if one of the hitters cannot bat it will be declared an out. Hitters in the A/B position may be pinch hit for, just as any other player.

Substitutions – All substitutions must be on the line-up card. If an opposing team contests the offending team's ability to supply an eligible substitute, the offending team has 5 minutes to produce an eligible substitute.

Starter Re-entry - A starter in the batting order may be removed and a substitute may bat in his place. The starter may return to the line-up, but only in his original position one time. The substitute cannot re-enter in the game once removed unless under the injury substitution rule. The starter and substitute are locked into the same spot in the order and may not bat anywhere else or the game may be forfeited for use of an ineligible player. The starter and substitute are considered "in the game" and cannot be used as pinch runners. A pinch runner (as opposed to a courtesy runner) must be someone who has not been in the batting order. A starter (not designated as a non-runner) who is replaced by a pinch runner is removed from the batting order and may re-enter only after the runner has had at least one plate appearance.

Non-Runners – In the 18+ teams may have 3 players designated as a non-runner. Two non-runners must be indicated on the line-up card. The other runner must be the catcher of record. In the 25+/35+ four players per game may have another player run for them in the event they reach base. Two non-runners must be indicated on the line-up card and teams may use a courtesy runner for the pitcher and catcher of record anytime. The replacement runner will be the last recorded out – (not necessarily the last batted out.) If the change is made, it must be at the furthest base the player reaches on that play. The courtesy runner must enter the game before the next pitch, or the use of the non-runner rule is forfeited. In the event a non-runner is awarded first base and there is no other action involved in the play, he may retire to the dugout without touching first base and the correct runner may obtain the base. Any improper use of a courtesy runner including the use of the wrong replacement shall result in the non-runner being scored as an out and the runner will be removed from the base. This protest must be done after the timeout and the game is put back in play. If there is a runner on base and he is "in the hole" to bat, he may be replaced with the next correct non-runner. **Teams can use a runner for the catcher at any time with two outs for any league at any time and it must be the last recorded out.** The 40+, 50+, 55+ & 60+ have special non-runner rules designated in their league supplemental rules.

No Collision Rule - A runner trying to advance to a base must avoid deliberate contact. Meaning they must either slide to the base or attempt to go around a fielder if the fielder has the ball in their possession, or in the umpire's judgment is about to receive the ball. A runner who, in the judgment of the umpire, collides into a defensive player in an intentional attempt to jar the ball loose or injure the player, or employs an "illegal slide" will be called out and ejected from the game. The umpire may eject any player who initiates contact with another player with the intent to injure. **The no collision rule is solely the judgment of the umpire.** Malicious contact supersedes obstruction. **This is not a "must slide or must peel out" rule. If a runner peels out to avoid collision, that does not mean he is conceding the out and still has the right to the base.**

Defensive Lineup - All teams have the option to substitute freely on the field in any defensive position except the pitcher. A pitcher may leave the mound for another position on the field, or go to the bench, but may return only once as pitcher. Free substitution on the field does not affect the batting order. The DFWABA will not enforce the MLB shift rules or the pitch timer rule.

Injury Substitution - If a team is unable to bat the original number of hitters (or built to) that began the game due to the injury of a player, a previously used player not currently in the batting order may take the injured player's place in the order. It is an umpire's judgment whether or not a player can continue to play with that injury. If a team has no more than the original number of batters in uniform at the game at the time of the injury, then the game is continued with the injured player's spot in the batting order recorded as an out the first plate appearance only. (unless it is a playoff or championship game, it is an out each time). The game is declared a forfeit if there are less than 8 players.

Declared Intentional Walk - A team may declare a batter intentionally walked and without throwing 4 balls by notifying the umpire of the decision.

Run Rule - A 10-run mercy rule is in effect after the completion of the 5th or any ensuing inning in a scheduled 7 inning game.

Practice games - If a game is forfeited, the umpires can opt to work a 5 inning or 2-hour scrimmage game as long as there are enough players to field two complete teams. This game must be played as a regular game but will be counted in the standings as a forfeit. This is not a game to tryout inexperienced catchers.

Double-headers - Doubleheaders are 7 innings for all age groups and divisions. If the first game is forfeited at game time, the second game of the double-header will begin 2 1/2 hours after the scheduled start time of the first game unless both managers agree to start earlier.

Game Schedule – Teams cannot request schedule changes.

World Series Tournaments - Any DFW ABA team or player may participate and attend any tournaments. For any World Series Tournaments the manager must notify the league president the dates the team will not be able to play in the local league due a large number of players that will be participating. This notification must be emailed to the league president by July 15th of the calendar year. If a team fails to communicate the dates needing off by July 15th they will play or forfeit their games that are scheduled.

Rainouts - If a game is not postponed the night before the game or prior to game time, both teams must be dressed and ready to play. A team not prepared to play is subject forfeit. If the field is unplayable, both umpires will make the decision at that time. Consideration should be given to the condition of the field after the game. Decisions on the field should be made for the sake of the field and the League, not the convenience of the teams or umpires. Teams and umpires are subject to suspension for play on a field that effectively makes the field unplayable after the game. Umpires are to wait 30 minutes if it appears there may be change in the weather conditions.

Completed/Suspended Games - A game shall be considered a complete game under the Official Rules of Baseball. For 7 inning games an official game is 4 innings or 3 ½ innings if the home team is leading. There shall be no suspended games in the DFWABA. For any game considered a suspended game under the Official Rules of Baseball for any reason (weather, light malfunction, etc), the score shall revert back to the score of the last completed inning unless the home team has taken the lead during the incomplete inning. If the home team ties the game in the incomplete inning and was leading in the last complete inning, they shall be the winner. **If a team is winning by 10 runs or more after any completed inning or inning where the home team is ahead prior to an official game they shall be declared the winner.** There may be rare exceptions where a game may be continued due to unforeseen circumstances. Determination will be made by the Lge Pres.

Tie Games - If there is a tie game and the time limit has not been reached we will be utilizing the runner on 2nd rule. The runner placed on second base at the start of each half-inning shall be the player (or a substitute for such player) in the batting order immediately preceding that half-inning's leadoff hitter. By way of example, if the number five hitter in the batting order is due to lead off the tenth inning, the number four player in the batting order (or a pinch runner for such player) shall begin the inning on second base. However, if the player in the batting order immediately preceding that half-inning's leadoff hitter is a declared non-runner, the runner placed on second base at the start of that half-inning will be the player preceding the non-runner in the batting order. This will continue until there is a player not designated as a non-runner. Any runner or batter removed from the game for a substitute shall be ineligible to return to the game, (unless using the starter re-entry rule).

Protests - Protests must be filed in accordance with the Official Rules of Baseball, rule 4.19. There will be a \$100 fee for all protests. Only if the protest is upheld the fee will be returned. **Player eligibility protests must be protested at the game. Any ineligible players will be removed at the time of the protest. All offensive and defensive plays until the ineligible player is removed will stand. Any removed players can be replaced with eligible substitutes. If at any time a team gets below 8 players the game will be declared a forfeit.**

Ejections - A game in which a player ejection prevents a team from placing a minimum of 8 defensive players on the field shall be considered a forfeit. An ejection in which a team cannot substitute for a player in the batting order will be considered an out when that spot is due to appear at the plate. If an opposing team contests the offending team's ability to supply an eligible substitute, the offending team has 5 minutes to produce an eligible substitute. An ejected player will serve a minimum one game suspension which will be served the next scheduled play date and may be considered to have more games suspended depending on the circumstances of the ejection.

Playoffs - All DFW ABA rules apply to playoff games. The mercy run rules still apply. There cannot be a tie in a playoff game.

Championships – All DFW ABA rules apply to championship games. If there is a 3rd game in a best of 3 series there will not be a time limit for the third game. Mercy rule still applies. There cannot be a tie in a championship game.