

“Crib Sheet” for RBL Umpires in Fall 2020

RBL playing rules are based on N3 playing rules, and only a few rules are unique to RBL. In the summary below, the playing rules in black type are the same in both N3 and RBL, and the playing rules in red type are unique to RBL.

- 1. Prior to the start of a game, umpires should examine all bats that will be used in that game to ensure that they have an RBL-approved bat sticker.**
- 2. The penalty if a player hits a pitch with a bat that does not have a “Villages Softball RBL Approved” bat sticker is ejection from the game and an out every time that player is scheduled to bat.**

The penalty if a player hits a pitch with a double-wall aluminum, steel, or composite bat (e.g., a Miken bat) is his team’s game forfeit and a losing score of 7-0.

- 3 All players must play defensively for at least three innings. The penalty for violating this rule is a team’s game forfeit.**
- 4. Players who need a courtesy runner should be identified in the game lineup. When they come to bat, they should tell the home plate umpire they will need a runner, and this should be announced by both the game’s scorekeepers and the home plate umpire. Subs in RBL can get a runner.**
- 5. Pitchers in RBL are now required to wear a NOCSAE-approved protective face mask while pitching.**
- 6. A pitcher on base with two outs must get a runner if he wears more than a face mask for protection.**
- 7. A player who gets a runner can stop at first base or advance to additional bases, but, if he advances beyond first base, he cannot then get a runner.**
- 8. A batter will be called out for “batting out of the box” if either foot is completely outside the lines of the batter’s box (not the batting platform) when he hits the ball fair or foul.**
- 9. Infield flies are called in RBL. Before a game begins, the game’s two umpires should decide whether the home plate umpire, the base umpire, or either umpire will call infield flies.**

An infield fly is “a fair fly ball [not including a hard or soft line drive] that can be caught by any fielder [in or near the infield] with ordinary effort [umpire judgment] when first and second bases or first, second, and third bases are occupied with less than two outs. Any fielder can catch an infield fly.” If the ball is caught, runners can “tag up.” If the ball is dropped, runners can advance at their own risk.

- 10. The “catch up rule” in RBL is 5+1.**
- 11. The “mercy rule” in RBL is 12 runs.**
- 12. There is no time or inning limit in RBL games.**
- 13. Runner Interference: In both N3 and RBL, runners will be called out for contact with a defensive player if, in the umpire’s judgment, the contact was deliberate or the runner could have reasonably avoided contact and failed to do so. If the runner interferes with a defensive player making a subsequent play, the runner closest to home will also be called out.**

If the runner is already out as he approaches the base, or if he sees that he is very likely to be called out, he should “veer off” away from the base and/or defensive player to avoid interference. If the play becomes a “broken play,” the runner should run to the base.

- 14. Fielder Obstruction: Bases belong to the runners. Therefore, in both N3 and RBL, “Obstruction” will be called on a fielder who impedes the progress of a runner who is legally running in the base paths or to**

a base if the fielder is not in possession of the ball, he is not fielding a batted ball, or he is not about to receive a thrown ball at the base. An Obstruction call requires umpire judgment. When it occurs, the umpire should signal a “Delayed Dead Ball Call,” and, when the play is over, the umpire should award the obstructed runner and all other runners affected by the Obstruction the base or bases they would have reached if, in the umpire’s judgment, there had been no Obstruction.

15. A batter will be called out when he bunts or chops at the ball and does not take a full swing [i.e., fails to break his wrists] when hitting a pitched ball.
16. A fly ball past third or first base should be judged fair or foul based on the relative position of the ball and the foul line (that is, where the ball would have landed regardless of the fielder’s actions) and not whether the fielder is in fair or foul territory at the time he touches the ball.
17. Fair balls should be signaled with clear hand motions only—no verbal call. Foul balls should be signaled both verbally and with clear hand motions.
18. Runners should use only the orange bag at first base. Fielders should use only the white base at first base. Runners who touch the white base will be called out. Runners will be called safe if the fielder making the play on the runner touches the orange base. Exception: When, in the judgment of the umpire making the call, the runner or fielder went to the “wrong base” to avoid a collision.
19. If a runner leaves a base “before a pitched ball reaches home plate, is batted, or touches the ground before reaching home plate,” the runner should be called out by the umpire, the pitch should be declared “No Pitch/Dead Ball,” and all other runners should be returned to the bases they had reached before the pitch. This is an umpire call, not an appeal call.
20. There are no run-bys in RBL. A runner who overruns a base and then tries to return to it will be called out if a fielder with the ball tags either the runner or the base before the runner returns to the base. For the fielder, therefore, this can be either a tag play or a force play for an out.
21. By contrast, if a runner successfully achieves a base, but fails to “hold it,” he will be called out only if a fielder with the ball tags him before he gets back to the base. It must be a tag play for an out.
22. There are no run downs. If a defensive player is making a play ahead of the runner, the runner can reverse direction only once (unless the ball is overthrown).
23. A runner who slides or dives to a base will be called out, unless he is returning to the base.
24. A catch is valid when the fielder holds the ball long enough to convince the umpire that he has complete control of it and that his release of the ball is voluntary and intentional. Dropping the ball when transferring it from glove to hand is still a catch, if in the umpire’s judgment, the fielder had control of the ball after the catch.
25. Only these five situations can be appealed, that is, they require an appeal by a player or manager before an umpire makes a call:
 - A runner misses a base
 - A runner who is tagging up on a caught fly ball leaves a base before the ball is first touched by the fielder
 - A batter bats out of order
 - A runner attempts to advance to second base after making a turn at first base toward second base
 - An umpire must decide whether a runner reached home plate before or after a third out that did not involve a force play.
26. A “quick pitch” is a “No Pitch.” If it is done multiple times, each pitch should be called a ball.