

CSYBA Sparrow League Rules
Sparrow: 3rd-4th Grade
Updated 4/8/2024

General Rules

1. CSYBA Sparrow League is primarily for kids that are in the 3rd and 4th grade. During Summer it is for kids who just completed the 3rd and 4th grade. During Fall Ball, it is for kids just entering the 3rd and 4th grade. Any exceptions to player eligibility can be requested and will be reviewed by the commissioner.

Stacked teams, all-star teams, travel teams, or any preformed teams are strictly prohibited from participating at the Raven division. All participating communities are required to have an open-registration where everybody plays. Any exceptions to this rule must be requested and approved by the league commissioner.

Communities with multiple teams participating in the Sparrow division must make every effort possible to assure teams are well balanced. This could be achieved through a draft, an evaluation session, or other means to assure competitive balance across a communities multiple teams.

If as the season progresses, it is determined by the league commissioner that a community neglected to make an effort to balance its teams, or have included an all-star caliber team in the league, the commissioner has the authority to take disciplinary action towards that particular team or community, including making that team ineligible to participate in post-season play.

No team can be made up of predominately older players. All teams must have at least 1/3 of its players comprised of 3rd graders. Exceptions can only be made to this rule if there are imbalanced registration numbers.

2. National Federation High School (NFHS) Baseball Rules, also commonly refereed to as IHSA rules, serve as the main rule book for the CSYBA. It is supplemented only by these Local Rules.
3. At the Finch, Sparrow, and Falcon age groups, many of the umpires that are officiating these games are teenagers, and depending on the age group, there could be umpires who are as young as 12years old. The CSYBA strongly encourages communities to hire and train youth umpires to officiate younger levels of play. The CSYBA has a **ZERO TOLERANCE** policy for any type of yelling, arguing, or displaying any sort of antagonistic or hostile behavior towards a youth umpire. This includes actions from the manager, assistant coaches, players, or any family members in attendance. The result of a judgment call or rule enforcement is not relevant as to how a youth umpire should be treated. Ultimately, the responsibility to keep the entire team in check comes from the head coach.

If at any point any such negative behavior is aimed in the direction of a youth umpire, the CSYBA strongly encourages the umpire NOT to engage, and instead, they should stop the game and leave the field immediately. This incident should be reported to the league commissioner. The CSYBA will investigate the situation and issue a ruling, which could result in a manager or team being banned from any further participation in the CSYBA for the remainder of the season, or future seasons

4. Base Distance: 60 feet.
5. Pitcher's Mound: 44 feet.
6. Home team supplies 2 new game balls to the umpire prior to the start of the game.
7. Rubber-cleated shoes are highly encouraged. No metal spikes of any kind are allowed.
8. All bats must have a USA Baseball Stamp on them. The barrel size or 'drop' is not important as long as it has a USA Baseball Stamp. All wood bats are also acceptable.
9. Teams must have at least 6-players to play a game. If a team is short players, they should call-up a 2nd grader from the Finch Division. During the Fall session in regular season play, teams can borrow a 3rd grader from another Sparrow team from their community.

10. Team can field ten (10) players in the field. When a team has 10 players on defense, four of the players must play outfield, equally spread across the outfield. A manager can elect to play 9 players in the field if they choose. Outfielders must play in an arc at a distance of at least 20 feet behind second base. Outfielders may not cover a base during a steal attempt.
11. Every available player on a team will bat in a continuous batting order in a game. A late arriving player will enter at the end of the batting order as the last batter in the score book. If a player shows up after the entire team has batted, they can still be added to the end of the batting order.
12. It is the intent of the league for all players to have the opportunity to play every position on a regular basis, within limits for their safety and capabilities (i.e., don't have a player pitch that can't throw the ball as far as home plate or have a player that struggled to catch the ball play first base). Players should rotate regularly between infield and outfield.

If a team has more than ten (10) players, all players must sit out at least once, before a player can sit out for a 2nd defensive inning.

13. Regulation games will be six (6) innings for the Mustang League. Each game will have a time limit and NO NEW INNING will start after 1 hour and 45 minutes has elapsed. When a game is tied at the end of regulation, it will be declared a tie. There will be no extra innings in regular season play.
14. The 5 run rule will be in effect for all games. The maximum number of runs that a team may score in one inning is 5 runs with NO continuation (i.e. during a play from a batted ball only runs scored up to the 5th run of an inning will count). If a team is losing 10 to 0, the most runs they can score in the inning is still 5 runs. This rule will apply for every inning except the last inning of the game.

5 Run Rule Regular Season (Last Inning) - The only exception to this rule is in the last inning of a game. The umpire will determine which inning is the last inning based on Rule 4.3 above. The visiting team may score 5 runs or up to 5 runs more than the home team, whichever is greater, in the last inning. The home team can then score runs until the side is retired.

The 5-run-rule per inning is still in effect for the full duration of the playoffs.

15. Mercy Rule. A game will end if a team has a lead of 10 or more runs at the end of 4 innings (i.e., at the end of 3 ½ innings of play or as soon as the 10th lead run is scored in the bottom of the 4th or 5th inning).
16. Any game with 4-innings played, (or 3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead), is considered a completed game. If a game is suspended/canceled due to inclement weather prior to becoming a completed game, it should resume from the point of suspension.
17. Slash bunting is not permitted. If a player squares around to bunt, they must either attempt to bunt the ball, or pull the bat back. If the player pulls the bat back and then takes swing, the batter will be called out and a dead ball is called.
18. The Dropped 3rd Strike rule does not apply in this League. The Batter is out on a swinging or called 3rd strike and runners may advance but not to home.
19. If a batter throws a bat, a warning is given. If a batter throws a bat a second time, he will be called out.
20. Pitchers may pitch a maximum of two (2) innings in a game. One pitch thrown is considered a full inning. A pitcher who has withdrawn from the mound will not be permitted to return to the mound as a pitcher in the same game.
21. There are no intentional walks. Pitchers must pitch to every hitter.
22. Any pitcher who hits three batters during a game will be immediately replaced and will not be allowed to pitch again in that game.
23. A pitcher may not throw a deliberate curve ball. If a curve ball is thrown, a warning will be given. If a second curve ball is thrown, the pitch will be called a ball, regardless of where it is in the strike zone, or if the batter swung. This is solely the umpires discretion and is not a matter that can be argued.

24. A base runner may steal only after there are two outs. The number of outs are determined before a pitch is thrown. If there is one out, and a batter strikes out on a pitch, a runner cannot steal on that same pitch. They must wait until the next pitch to attempt a stolen base.
25. Base runners may not lead off from any base until the pitched ball crosses home plate. If the umpire rules that the runner left the base before the ball crossed home plate, the runner will be directed to return to the base. If the ball is hit when the runner has left the base too early, the umpire will have the discretion to limit the number of bases which the runner may advance.
26. A base runner is not allowed to steal home. A runner may attempt to steal second base or third base, as long as there are two outs. If the throw by the catcher to second (or third) base is overthrown, the runner attempting to reach second (or third) base may not advance further. Similarly, if a runner is on third base at the time when the ball is thrown or overthrown by the catcher on a steal attempt, the runner on third base may not advance to home on the play. An overthrown ball by the catcher will be treated as a "dead" ball and returned to the pitcher to continue play.
27. Intentionally initiating contact at any base is prohibited. If, in the umpire's judgment, the runner either tries to make contact with the fielder or does not make an effort to avoid unnecessary contact, the runner is called out. A runner does not need to slide, but he should avoid any unnecessary contact.
28. Both the winning and losing team should report the game using the CSYBA form within 72-hours of the game. Game results and standings will be tabulated on the CSYBA website and used for playoff seeding for both Spring and Fall Ball.