

Nationwide APBA Baseball League- Established 1985

League Constitution (updated March 6, 2020)

PREAMBLE

The purpose of the NABL is to provide its members with a hobby for relaxation and enjoyment. Its goals are to promote friendly competition among its members by playing APBA Major League Baseball Game (basic game) and to simulate real life baseball as much as possible.

The primary responsibility of all managers is to keep the league's purpose and goals in mind while engaging in all league activities. All are expected to play the game in the spirit of the rules and to maintain an atmosphere of gentlemanly sportsmanship and competition. In addition, the managers are expected to be punctual. The league commissioner will penalize managers that are not punctual. Serious offenders have been and will be dismissed.

SECTION ONE- LEAGUE MANAGEMENT

A. Game Type

The NABL is a cards & dice basic game league. The APBA Major League Baseball Basic Game will be used. No other game shall be used to play any NABL games (computer 'Master game' etc.), even if both managers agree. The current version of the Basic game is to be used in exclusivity. This version utilizes the bound play result boards (introduced in 2006 and updated in 2011). The “big white boards” and 1990’s tri-color boards are no longer used in the NABL.

B. League Schedule

This list of events constitutes a league cycle. The game schedule is on the web site, and will typically be distributed in April, prior to the start of the season.

MARCH/APRIL – Rookie draft is held on Saturday in late March/early April. Draft time and location, both physically and on the web, is left to the discretion of the commissioners. The trading of the next year’s draft picks can commence after the draft is finished, with the exception of the first round picks, which cannot be traded until September first.

MAY 1 – Start of NABL season. Rosters cannot exceed 40 players, active rosters set to 26.

MAY 21 – First waiver period. Unclaimed (waived) players can be picked up according to the procedure described in Rule G below. Claims are due on May 20.

JUNE 1 – Announcement of Second waiver period.

JUNE 21 – Second waiver period. Claims are due on June 20.

JULY 1 – Announcement of Final Waiver period.

JULY 21 – Final waiver period. Claims are due on July 20.

SEPTEMBER 1 – First day that 1ST round draft picks for the next season may be traded.

OCTOBER 31 – Deadline for traded players to be used in post-season.

JANUARY 1 – Last month of regular season play. Prior to January's games, rosters expand to 30 players.

FEBRUARY 1 – Playoffs begin. 26-man playoff rosters must be turned in to the commissioner's office

FEBRUARY 15 – Rosters are cut to 30 players

C. League Organization

The NABL is an 18-team league composed of three divisions of 6 teams each. Teams are generally aligned by fictional geographic location, however preferences of individual managers are considered. Each team completes a 162 game schedule.

League Commissioner- Responsibilities are as follows:

- Spokesperson for the league
- Arbiter in all disputes (in disputes involving the commissioner, one of the other officers will act as arbiter)
- Enforce all league rules
- Dispense all messages to the league, and will be the contact person for the league on all matters
- Maintain accurate rosters, draft picks, waivers and transactions
- Maintain a copy of all teams' emergency instructions, and distribute as needed
- Enforce the tardiness rules and apply penalties when necessary

League Webmaster- Responsibilities are as follows:

- Maintain the league website including update and post standings, stats, and other messages as given to him by the commissioner and/or statistician

Draftmaster – Responsibilities are as follows:

- Conduct the draft lottery
- Host and conduct any dispersal drafts
- Host and conduct the annual rookie draft

D. Playoffs

Six teams make the playoffs, the 3 division winners, and 3 wild card teams with the best records from any division. The teams are seeded by record, with the division winners with the two best records getting a first round bye. In each round, bracket teams with the highest seed will have home field advantage.

Wild card teams with better W-L records will not be seeded higher than division winners. The top seed will be in a bracket with the two wild card seeds. The second seed will be in a bracket with the other division winner and the lowest wild card team. Bracket reseeding will not be done after each round.

All playoff series are 7 games, and follow the 2, 3, 2 format. Rotations can reset since the last game of your season. The schedule is game 1, game 2, travel day, game 3, game 4, game 5, travel day, game 6, game 7. There is only 1 travel day between rounds, meaning if Team A uses their #1 starter in Game 7 of their round one series, there is one travel day before Game 1 of round 2. Proper rest needs to be observed AND a 4-man pitching rotation must be used in the playoffs.

If Team A sweeps the first series in 4 games then there is the rest period of what would have been Game 5, travel day, Game 6, Game 7 and the travel day before Game 1 of Series 2

- Likewise for other total series game scenarios.

The playoff series are expected to be played by the managers involved, unless the commissioners have granted prior approval.

Detailed reports are expected for each playoff segment.

A schedule will be established by the commissioner for the completion of each round of the playoffs. Games not completed on time will result in penalties in the upcoming draft. At his discretion, the commissioner can delegate another individual to play the games for the delinquent manager, with the first choice usually being the opponent who has been delayed by the tardiness.

E. Playoff Usage

Each team in the post season must choose a 25-man roster for the entire post season (no substitutions or replacements allowed once the playoffs begin). The playoff roster is comprised of players on the 40-man roster as of the 2/3 mark of the season (10/31) and must include at least one backup at each position. If a team does not have at least two players available for each position then the Commissioner or his designate will assign one player a fielding rating below minimum (1B1, 2B4, 3B2, SS5, C4) in order provide a backup. The player chosen will be the one with the worst hitting card available.

J-0, J-1, J-2, and J-3 relief pitchers are limited to 7 innings per series.

J-4 relief pitchers may only pitch 3 innings (for each series)

J-0, J-1, J-2, and J-3 split grade pitchers may both start and relieve, making a maximum of 2 starts and pitching a maximum of 7 relief innings in the series so long as the following rest rules are followed; 3 games rest after each start, 1 game rest after any relief appearance before a start.

J-4 split grade pitchers must be declared to be a starter or a reliever for the playoffs and are then governed by J-4 rules for playoff usage.

J-0, J-1, J-2, and J-3 position players may start all 7 games in series.

J-4 position players may play up to the amount listed in the table below (for each series):

1-19 games in carded season = 1 game

20-39 games in carded season = 2 games

40+ games in carded season = 3 games

J-4 starting pitchers may start playoff games if they started at least 17 games in their carded season. If a player has run out of games or innings in the regular season but otherwise meets all criteria above, their stats are reset to zero and they are eligible to play once again in the playoffs.

F. Tie Breaking

If teams are tied for the purposes of determining playoff bracket positions, seeding is determined using the following tiebreakers:

- 1) Head-to-head record
- 2) Record against common non-divisional opponents
 - a. If teams in question are from same division this includes all teams from the other two divisions
 - b. If teams are from two different divisions this includes only those teams in the third (non-common division)
- 3) Record against divisional winners

Teams cannot be eliminated from post-season eligibility through tiebreakers. If two or more teams are tied for the final playoff spot, the commissioner will conduct one game playoffs as necessary to determine the post-season participants. If a round robin is necessary, seeding (including any necessary byes) will be determined by the bracket seeding criteria listed above.

G. Unclaimed Players (Waiver Wire)

There will always be some carded players not on any team's roster. These players may be added to a team's roster as long as the roster never exceeds the player limit (40). They can be added in season during the May, June, and July waiver period. To make a waiver claim, a manager submits a list of players they are interested in and players to be cut (if necessary) to keep the team at or below 40 players. Claims must be received by the 20th of the month. On the 21st of the month, the waiver claims are executed, according to the draft order of the previous rookie draft, one player per team per round, until all claims are awarded. A team may give specific instructions as to how many players to get from the list, which players to cut for each acquisition, etc.

H. Trading Players

Trading is allowed throughout the year. Any combination of players and draft picks may be exchanged between teams providing trades are made in the spirit of the preamble.

First round draft picks cannot be traded until September 1st prior to the draft in question. All other picks can be traded in the season prior to the draft in question beginning at the end of the previous rookie draft.

Teams may not exchange one set of players and/or draft picks and then return the same players/draft picks to the same team in any trade that includes a first round pick. As an example; Team A trades Jones and a #2 to Team B in April and then in October, Team B trades Jones and the #2 back to the original Team A for Team A's #1.

Commissioner will veto any trades which attempt to defeat the spirit of the rule.

Players traded after 10/31 are not eligible for post-season play. All trades must be reported to the commissioner.

If a trade takes place that would affect a set of instructions that has already gone out to opponents, the trade is not executed until the following month when correct instructions can be sent.

No team is allowed to make a trade unless he has played and posted all game results or is within one month of being current.

I. Roster Size

NABL rosters fluctuate during the course of a year. During the season, each team is allowed to keep 40 players, 26 at the major league level, and 14 at the minor level.

On January 1st, the Major league roster is expanded to 30. On February 15th, (unless another date is announced by commissioner) each team is required to cut down to 30 players; the 10 cut players go into the rookie draft.

Rosters may go over 30 or below 30 due to trades after the cut to 30. There is no requirement to cut another player if a team trades for a 31ST player, likewise, there is no provision to pull back a cut player if a team trades away a player and drops below 30.

Rosters may temporarily expand to over 40 at the conclusion of the rookie draft and during the trading period after the draft. However, rosters must be trimmed to 40 players either 14 days after the draft or April 15, whichever comes first. Players may be exchanged between the major and minor league rosters at any time between series, but never in the middle of a series.

J. Uncarded Players

Each year there are some players that do not receive a card from the APBA Game Company that have received cards in the past.

If a team holds the rights to such a player, the team may retain the rights to the player. Such a player must be treated as a carded player with regard to roster spots, they count against roster limits at all times during the season.

There is no limit to the number of uncarded players a team may retain, and these players may be traded. If an uncarded player is cut in the pre-draft cut down, he may be drafted and/or retained by the team that cut him at the conclusion of that team's draft.

Any uncarded player not on a roster at the conclusion of the draft is dropped from the league until he receives a card again, at which point, he will be available in that year's rookie draft. Uncarded players are not eligible for the May, June, and July waiver periods.

K. Rookie Draft

Each March/April, a draft is held to allow teams to restock their rosters and select the players first carded, or re-carded by the game company. All carded players not on a roster, and all cut players (carded or uncarded) are eligible for the rookie draft. The draft is held online and is traditionally the last Saturday in March or the first Saturday in April. However, the specific date and time is at the discretion of the Draftmaster. The draft is ten rounds long.

In any round for which a team has a pick, a team may announce that they are pulling back some or all of their cut players that are still undrafted, up to the 40-player limit [These players are designated with a "zz" in front of the team name, such as zzMission Viejo. This is done to help the Draftmaster sort and has nothing to do with pitcher ratings].

At this point, those players are put back on that team and are ineligible to be drafted by another team. In addition, they announce that the pullbacks forfeit the remainder of their draft picks. The pullbacks must be executed by using a draft pick. If a team uses its final draft pick for a player, they cannot pullback their cuts until after the draft is concluded.

A team may draft its cut players (zzPlayers) during any round without this being a pull-back decision so long as they draft such players one at a time and use a draft pick to do so.

If, after ten rounds, a team has less than 40 players they may claim some of their cuts (but may not go over the 40 man roster limit). This must be done on Draft Day. The claim can be made by email after the draft before midnight West Coast Time.

Alternatively, a team may keep the roster below 40 and attempt to claim players during the waiver period.

L. Rookie Draft Re-order (Wall Street Journal Method)

The draft order determination takes three different things into consideration:

- The order can not be determined strictly by won/loss record as to keep a manager from “throwing” games from the previous season in an attempt to get a high draft pick once the manager has determined that his season is not a playoff team
- The order is to be determined by a “lottery” type method
- The results must be able to be verified by any manager within the league and not strictly by the commissioner or someone else who is setting the draft

The NABL many, many years ago came up with a system to meet the above conditions which is known as the Wall Street Journal Method. The WSJ is a well known periodical whereas any manager that cares to do so can get a copy and verify the results that will be described below. Typically the February 1 issue is used for the determination.

First, the teams are sorted in order of losses from 1st (worst record) to 18th (best record). Next, the teams are divided up into brackets as follows:

Worst records 1-4

Worst records 5-8

Worst records 9-12

Worst records 13-16

Worst records 17-18

Any ties that would push one of the teams in question into another bracket are broken using head to head records to determine where the teams end up. If tied head to head overall division record is used as a next level tiebreaker. These become the lottery brackets.

The New York Stock Exchange results from the February 1 WSJ are used to determine where a particular team will draft within a bracket. The ending price of a particular stock is determined in numbers and .25 points.

The teams are assigned their place within the bracket by the following chart

.00-.24 Position 1

.25-.49 Position 2

.50-.74 Position 3

.75-.99 Position 4

(in a bracket with only 2 teams then only 2 positions are used)

Example: The first stock (AAR) finished at 11.15. This places team "A" in Position 1 (see the chart above). The next stock (ABM) finished at 18.53. This places team "B" in Position 3 (continues).

This process repeats until the entire draft order is determined. In cases where a position is already taken, the next stock is used until all teams are placed.

M. Amendments

At the conclusion of each season, the league will vote on any proposed amendments to the constitution. A 2/3 majority of those voting is required to pass an amendment.

N. Teams without Managers

The league will attempt to keep a backfill of managers to take over any team that is relinquished by a manager. If at the end of the season, two or more teams do not have managers, the players on these teams as well as their draft picks will be placed in a special pool from which the new managers will draft to create two new franchises.

SECTION TWO- LEAGUE MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES

Each manager has the responsibility to be prompt and fair.

A. Deadlines

Managers must meet the following deadlines:

- a) 30 man roster and cuts to the commissioner by FEBRUARY 15th
- b) 40 man roster and cuts to the commissioner by APRIL 15th
- c) A set of default instructions to the commissioner by MAY 1st
- d) A set of instructions for each road series to opponent by the 1st of the month

- e) Results, game descriptions, and statistics posted to the NABL website by the 15th of the month following the scheduled game play. Example: May game stats should be posted by June 15th, June game stats should be posted July 15th, etc.

Paper records of all games played must be retained by each manager throughout the duration of the entire seasons. These records may be destroyed only after the commissioner announces they are no longer needed after the season ends.

B. Timeliness

If a manager cannot meet the deadlines above or any other deadlines imposed during the year by the commissioner, it is his responsibility to contact the commissioner regarding the delay. Unexcused delays in sending instructions, posting results and/or statistics will be punished as follows—

1st offense - Warning

2nd offense - Loss of 5th round draft pick (if that pick is already traded, the pick lost will be the next higher pick)

3rd offense - Loss of 3rd round draft pick

4th offense - Loss of 2nd round draft pick

5th offense - Loss of first round draft pick

6th offense - Expulsion from the league

The commissioner's office reserves the right to expel someone prior to the 6th offense if it is in the best interest of the league.

C. Statistics

Each manager must keep the following statistics for his team:

Batters- G, AB, R, H, RBI, 2B, 3B, HR, BB, SO, SB, HBP, AVG

Pitchers- G, GS, CG, SH, W, L, S, IP, H, R, ER, BB, K, ERA

All stats are reported on the league website.

Pitcher HRs and Errors do not need to be reported.

D. Road Instructions

The purpose of this system is to keep the league running on time. Each team must furnish the commissioner with a set of default instructions by the beginning of the season. These instructions will be for all 81-road games. These instructions do not supersede the responsibility of the manager to have instructions to his opponents by the first of each month. If for some reason the manager is late getting instructions to his opponent, that opponent can contact the commissioner, who will, after making one attempt to contact the tardy manager, issue the default instructions.

Instructions will be sent by email and should be Excel, Word, or PDF files, and set to print without requiring the receiving manager to format them. They must contain the following:

- a) Lineups with position for player, and APBA fielding rating. Fielding will be totaled for infield and team (less pitcher).
- b) Rotations, including grade of pitcher, pitcher fielding rating, and all adjusters (K, W, X, Y, Z, ZZ)
- c) Bullpen, with grade of pitcher, and all adjusters
- d) Substitutes for injury or ejection for all positions
- e) Major league team in present card set for all players on active roster
- f) No more than 26 active players, which must include 5 starting pitchers

A split grade pitcher may not be declared as a starter for the purpose of (f) above and then used as a reliever during the series. The five starters listed should be those who are in the team's current rotation as in (b) above. If a split grade pitcher is on the team he is either a starter or a reliever for each series.

E. Player Restrictions

Batters may only play the actual number of games in which they appeared during the season for which they are carded. Starting pitchers are limited to the number of starts they had during the season for which they are carded. Relievers are limited to the number of innings they pitched during the season for which they are carded. Grade D pitchers may start any number of games (but still require rest - see below) and can relieve for unlimited games and innings.

Split grade pitchers are limited to both number of starts and innings pitched they had during the season for which they are carded.

- Grade "C" starting pitchers can be used in relief, and are limited to starts and innings pitched (same as split grade pitchers).

- Grade “B” and higher starting pitchers may be used in relief, however, they are limited to appearances and innings pitched. An appearance is defined as a ‘start’ or a relief appearance.

Team managers are responsible for monitoring these limits. The commissioner reserves the right to penalize teams in violation of usage limits.

F(1). Pitcher rest requirements - Starters

Starters must rest 3 games between starts. When determining rest days, teams may treat their home and away games as separate schedules (i.e. rest three games between home starts and three games between road starts)

F(2.) Pitcher rest requirements – Relievers

There is only one rest rule for relievers, however, they should be used in a realistic manner. Relievers must rest one game if they pitch 3 innings or more in a single game.

F(3.) Rules governing the use of Two-Way players carded by APBA

- 1) Pitchers who bat as a pitcher only - not eligible to bat in NABL (our current rule)
- 2) Pitchers who bat only as a P and a PH but never play in the field except as P - not eligible to bat in NABL
- 3) To be considered a 2-way player eligible in NABL, conditions (a) and (b) must be met
 - a. the player’s total games played for a season needs to be at least 10 games more than the number of games they pitched
 - b. they must have played in at least 5 games as a DH or position player (1B, OF, etc.)
 - c. if they meet these 2 conditions, then their limit for the number of games played at a position other than P (including DH, PH, and PR) will be the difference between their total games played for the season and the number of games they pitched
 - d. they are not eligible for the unlimited PR appearance rule which only applies to 1-way players who pitch – see (6) below
- 4) Position Players who get a pitcher rating by APBA - unlimited use if a D, governed by current NABL rules with any other grade
- 5) Players who only DH, PH, and/or PR - may play a position listed on their card but if listed only as a DH then only as a DH, PH, PR
- 6) Pitchers not covered in (3) above, may PR without any limitation

F(4.) Rules governing pitchers whose IP/GS statistics have been affected by use as an “Opener”

Pitchers are allowed to start as many games in NABL as they did in MLB regardless of their IP to GS ratios.

A pitcher with a starting grade of B or better will be treated like a split grade pitcher if his innings pitched per start is less than 3.0 (NABL will use websites to determine this)

G. Penalties for Violations other than Timeliness

If a manager fails to comply with the rules, responsibilities, or deadlines contained herein, including but not limited to voting, keeping stats in order and in given formats, providing legible and complete instructions, and following protocol with regard to league activities, the commissioner can at his discretion penalize the offending member in accordance with the penalty schedule contained in section TWO (B) of this constitution.

SECTION THREE- PLAYING RULES

A. Designated Hitter

The NABL uses a DH for all games. The NABL has modified the DH rule so that a DH may play a position in the field later in the game, and the position of the DH relegated to a new player in a different spot in the order.

B. Pinch Running

Pitchers may be used to pinch run. There is no limit to how many times a pitcher may be used as a pinch runner in a given season.

C. Base Coaching slow runners

Done in accordance with APBA Basic Game Rules as explained further below--

Rules governing the coaching of base runners (clarification of current NABL rule)

As explained in the APBA rules regarding Optional Base Coaching a manager may “play it safe” with one or more runners on base – this changes play results in the following ways;

- 1) On a single – said runner advances only one base
- 2) On a double – said runner advances only two bases

- 3) On a fly out – said runner holds his base
- 4) All stolen base results are negated - both SB and CS, this includes any double steal results involving runners not “playing it safe”

Playing it safe with a lead runner may result in a trailing runner not advancing the number of bases specified by the chart result – for example if a manager is “playing it safe” with his runner on first and the batter rolls a 15-11 this is a single runner to second. Since the runner never made it to third base, the batter cannot steal second base (as he would normally if the runner was not “playing it safe”

D. Advanced Fielding

With bases empty change play results 18, 19 and 20 with fielding one (after consulting Advanced Fielding Chart and making appropriate roll) to “out at first”.

Any time a play result may differ according to the fielding column, consult the Advanced Fielding Chart to determine which fielding column to use for that particular play.

E. Rare Play and Error Chart

In all situations with a Runner on Base, whenever a player’s card yields a result 23 or 36-41 (Rare Play Chart), consult the chart and roll the dice. Ignore rainouts, if a rainout is obtained, roll and consult the chart again. All injuries, even to J-0 players should be acknowledged for the game in progress only. The injured player may return to play in the next game, no matter what the board says about length of injury.

Ignore the Rare Play Chart with Bases Empty unless a W grade pitcher is on the mound.

The Error Chart is no longer used in NABL.

F. Pitcher Grade Advancement and Reduction

A pitcher’s grade is advanced in accordance with the rules as outlined in the APBA 66! Rule Booklet. [after 5 consecutive innings and no earned runs allowed a D becomes a C, after 6 consecutive innings no earned runs allowed a C becomes a B, after 7 consecutive innings no earned runs allowed a B becomes an A, and after 8 consecutive innings no earned runs allowed a pitcher cannot have his grade reduced].

A relief pitcher's grade is advanced whenever he enters the game, for the first batter he faces, regardless of the handedness of the pitcher or batting side of the batter. This advancement is for one batter only.

A starting pitcher's grade is reduced one grade (for the remainder of the game) if one of the following occurs:

- a. If he gives up 5 earned runs in 3 consecutive innings, or
- b. If he gives up 6 earned runs total in the game, or
- c. If he gives up 7 total runs in the game.

Once a pitcher's grade is reduced (through rule #1 above) it is reduced again every time another 2 earned runs are given up. A starting pitcher must be removed after his grade has been reduced 3 times in the same game.

A pitcher drops a grade for every inning pitched in excess of 9. Therefore, a starter is reduced a grade entering the 10th inning and is reduced again entering the 11th inning. He cannot go more than 11 innings, because his grade would be reduced a third time entering the 12th, and therefore must be removed as his grade has dropped 3 times.

A relief pitcher is reduced one grade for each inning pitched over 3 in a single game and is reduced one grade for each run given up over 3 in a single game. There is no rule requiring a relief pitcher to be removed due to multiple grade reductions or innings pitched.

G. A&B and A&C pitchers

Every time a batter gets an extra base hit against an A&B or A&C pitcher, roll one die. If the roll is a 1, 2, or 3, the hit stands. If it is a 4, 5, or 6, change the result to a 7- single.

H. Player Positions

Players may only play positions on their current cards. Players with a secondary fielding rating of 2B-5, 3B-2, SS-6, and C-5 may not play that position in the field until the 5th inning.

A player with any of these ratings as his primary fielding grade is not prevented from starting at his primary position.

I. Hit and Run

The hit and run play may be used 3 times in a 9 inning game, and once more in extra innings. The batter must have 2 31's on his card to be used on the hit and run.

J. Use of Relievers

In order to minimize unrealistic early use of relief pitchers, starting pitchers cannot be removed unless one of the following has occurred:

- He has pitched 5 innings
- He has allowed three or more earned runs
- He has been reduced
- He is injured or ejected as result of a rare play

Remember, in the NABL, a reliever is upgraded for the first batter he faces, regardless of handedness or whether he enters at the beginning or middle of an inning.