

# SOUTHWESTERN BASEBALL LEAGUE

## 2016 RULES AND GUIDELINES

### PREAMBLE:

**This document contains the official rules, conditions and guidelines that govern the Southwestern Baseball League. All team owners agree to be governed by these rules, conditions and guidelines. Failure to comply may subject franchises to certain disciplinary action, even including the forfeiture of a franchise in extreme cases. This League was founded in the spring of 1988 on the very premise that we are “in league” with one another, as defined by Webster and that each member willingly subjects itself to the greater good (as defined by these rules and guidelines). Situations not covered by these rules and guidelines, or differences of interpretation are arbitrated by The Commissioner. In the end, the Commissioner’s decisions are final. SWBL uses only National League players and statistics because the National League is superior in every way, and because the National League is the only league that is somewhat faithful to the traditions that made our game great. We believe that if you build it, people will come.**

### SECTION 1---FRANCHISES:

**A.** The Commissioner is the ultimate authority over League matters. The Commissioner has broad powers in order to protect the interest of The League as a whole. The Commissioner serves for life. The Commissioner must always strive to be pretty fair.

**B.** The following franchises make up The League membership:

- **TAYLOR JETS**
- **RICHTER/CALDWELL RIFF RAFF**
- **ECKHART OYSTERS**
- **LANE TUFFYS**
- **REHM/LANE WORKS**

- **LOEHMAN/CALDWELL KNICKS**
- **CALDWELL MOOSE**
- **ALEXANDER/EASON/BROWN WHITE SOX\***

\*(Joined the League in 1993)

**C.** Owner relocations to another city must pay \$12 to The League as compensation to other owners for the loss of a potential expansion site and to cover League administration cost. In addition, there is a \$3 handling fee—for a total of \$15. The relocation of a full, half, majority or minority owner requires full payment. The relocation of a non-owner individual who is acting as an employee of a franchise in an executive capacity likewise requires full payment.

**D.** Applications for expansion franchises or replacement franchises must be considered by all existing owners and requires a two-thirds approval vote.

**E.** Franchise Fees are \$50 each season. All of the franchise fees will be used to pay League championship prize money.

**F.** Owners may take on minority or half owners by submitting an application in writing to the League Office. Since The League naturally wants to continue the high level of character associated with the original group, any owner may object to an application. The Commissioner must carefully consider the merits of the objection(s) before approval. There is a \$6 fee for adding partners.

**G.** Under unusual conditions, an owner may need to retain the services of hired help (i.e. General Manager) for a period of time. The Commissioner determines if the conditions merit such action. If the use of hired help is approved, there is a one time \$4 fee per employee.

## SECTION 2---HOW THE LEAGUE WORKS (OR, KEEPING STATS):

**A.** Each spring, around the time of Opening Day, The Owners will gather and draft players that make up his/her team. The statistics of those players in 10 major categories will determine each team's performance. The categories are:

- **HOME RUNS**
- **TOTAL HITS +WALKS**
- **RUNS SCORED**
- **RBI**s
- **STOLEN BASES**
- **PITCHING WINS**
- **TOTAL INNINGS PITCHED**
- **ERA**
- **HIT/WALK RATIO TO INNINGS PITCHED RATIO**
- **SAVES**

Note that there are five offensive and five pitching categories. Team results are a total of the individual members of each franchise's roster for each category.

**B.** League standings are determined by rank in the above categories. For example, if a team finishes first in HOME RUNS and there are nine teams in The League, the team gets 9 points. If a team is last in home runs, the team gets 1 point. The total of all categories determines the standings. If two or more teams tie in a category, the number of points normally awarded for those rankings are summed and divided by the number of teams tied for the category. For example, if two teams are tied for second in SAVES, both teams get 7.5 points.

**C.** Tracking of stats will be done by CBS SPORTS, and the standings will be updated on a daily basis. Retroactive adjustments based on owner errors or omissions may be made

from time-to-time as needed. Owners are responsible for submitting all player transactions, including players returning from the DL or minors.

**D.** Fielding is important in baseball, but is too hard to fool with in our league.

**E.** CBS SPORTS is now the official source of statistics.

### **SECTION 3---ROSTERS:**

**A.** There will be 23 players on each franchise's active roster. On opening day, those players must be divided as follows:

- **2 CATCHERS**
- **1 FIRST BASEMAN**
- **1 THIRD BASEMAN**
- **1 SECOND BASEMAN**
- **1 SHORTSTOP**
- **1 CORNER INFIELDER (“CIF”-UTILITY FIRST OR THIRD BASEMAN)**
- **1 MIDDLE INFIELDER (“MIF”-UTILITY SECOND BASEMAN OR SHORTSTOP) \***
- **1 UTILITY PLAYER (“U”- ANY OFFENSIVE POSITION) ·**
- **5 OUTFIELDERS**
- **9 PITCHERS** (A minimum of 5 Starting Pitchers (SPs), and 2 Relief Pitchers (RPs) and 2 additional pitchers of either variety)

**(23 TOTAL Players)**

\* (“Stupid Paul Lane Middle Infield Rule”)

**B.** In addition to the 23-man active roster shown above, each franchise will have a farm team roster of 3 players. Stats for these minor leaguers do not count toward the official standings. The minor league roster may be made up of any positions. The purpose of the farm team is to have players readily available to replace active players who go on the DL or get sent to the minors, and to give owners option of making shrewd voluntary player moves. Farm team players also make it easier for teams pull off trades.

**C.** The draft will be for the number of rounds needed for each franchise to have a total of 26 players. At the end of the final round owners must have drafted players whose positions meet the requirements shown under SECTION 3-A.

#### **SECTION 4---THE DRAFT:**

**A.** The draft is to be held as close as practical to Opening Day of the National League.

**B.** The order of the draft is determined by a drawing. The drawing is held using The League's sacred balls. The drawing is to be witnessed and be pretty fair. After the first round, the drafting order is reversed each round.

**C.** CBS SPORTS will determine the eligibility of players at one or more positions based upon a threshold of games actually played at the position to be determined by the Commissioner. The threshold number of games played at a position may be adjusted by the Commissioner to maintain pretty fairness. The current thresholds are as follows: Position Players are eligible for all positions for which they played 10 or more games last season, and they are eligible for additional positions in the current season after having played 3 or more games at the position. Pitcher eligibility thresholds are as follows:

**[Starting Pitcher (SP)]:** 5 or more started last year or 5 or more started this year; **[Relief Pitcher (RP)]:** 10 or more non-starting appearances last year or 10 or more non-starting

appearances this year; [**Rookie Pitcher/No Recent History**] are classified by CBS SPORTS based on past experience and expectations.

**D.** Drafted players hold the same position throughout the season unless they qualify for additional positions in accordance with the thresholds established for the season. Owners may utilize voluntary and/or involuntary moves to change player positions assuming the players qualify at the positions and roster integrity is maintained. For example, teams may move a MIF to shortstop or second base, or move a player from second base or shortstop to MIF (assuming the players were designated to play second base or shortstop prior to The Draft, or have become eligible by virtue of meeting eligibility thresholds) in connection with a voluntary or non-voluntary player move. Likewise, teams may move CIF to first base or third base, or move a player from third base or first base to CIF (assuming the players are designated to play first or third base prior to The Draft, or have become eligible by virtue of meeting eligibility thresholds) in connection with a voluntary or non-voluntary move. If a player is drafted who was listed at multiple positions and begins the season on the Farm Team, that player's initial position is determined by the owner the first time he is called up to the Major League roster.

If a player is called up from the minors or has otherwise yet to establish any position eligibility under these rules, his initial position shall be established as the one at which he played the most games in the minors or a prior season, as the case may be. This initial eligibility may be established by published reports or other satisfactory evidence. (The "Posey Postulate") CBS SPORTS initial determination of position for such players may be appealed using the above criteria.

**E.** An owner may draft players not currently on a National League roster, if there is a reasonable expectation that the player will show up on a NL roster in the near future. This option is intended to apply to injured players, holdouts or minor leaguers who are likely to be called up soon. The option to make more speculative drafts of players who are in the American League, but may come to the National League as a free agent or in a trade at some later date, is limited to one such draft a season ("Sneaky Sox Statute"). If owners draft a player who is on the DL or is in the minors at the beginning of the season, and assign that player to their active 23-man roster, they may replace the player with a temporary player, but that move is effective the following Wednesday (not retroactively to the beginning of the season). However, frozen players who begin the season on the DL may be replaced retroactive to the beginning of the season. Because of the liberal replacement rights for the U Position, teams must open the season with an active player at the U Position.

**F.** If a franchise freezes or drafts a player who, at the time of freezing or drafting, is: under a suspension for the use of performance enhancing drugs (PEDs) or other banned substances or activities, OR was suspended in the prior season for 50 or more games for

such use or activities, that franchise shall be required to keep the player on the active roster without replacement until (1) the end date of the player's suspension, or (2) the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday in May, whichever is later. Provided, however, that in the event the player successfully challenges his suspension, the penalties of this rule shall not be applied. ("Ryan's Rule").

#### **SECTION 5---PROTECTED (FROZEN) PLAYERS AND FREE AGENCY:**

**A.** No later than March 1 of each year franchises will name players from the previous season's roster to make the core of their team going into the new season. These are called protected or frozen players.

**B.** Owners retain the rights and obligations of these players after the season ends and until new players are frozen for the next season. Special rules cover these players during the season and during the off- season and will be described later.

**C.** In the event that a frozen player is seriously injured or traded to the AL after the freeze date but prior to the start of the National League season opener, the Commissioner may award a revised freeze selection from the prior year's closing roster of that franchise or the Commissioner may award an extra draft selection at the end of the first round as compensation should the franchise request to drop the injured player. However, for any injury occurring after the start of the National League season, there shall be no compensation. (The "Griffey Rule")

**D.** For the 2007 season each franchise must name a frozen player and may name 2 frozen players. The franchise must select 1 frozen player for a 2-year contract and, if freezing 2 players, a second player for a 3-year contract. The franchise can retain the rights to these players for the length of the respective contracts. At the end of a contract the player becomes a free agent ("Curt Flood Formula") and is returned to the pool of draftable players.

In 2007, If a franchise chooses to freeze only 1 player that franchise will pick a player at the end of the 2nd round of The Draft so that all teams have the same number of players before beginning the third round.

For the 2008 season, and for all future seasons, franchises must freeze 3 players. The player(s) added to the frozen list will have 3 year contracts, but any previously frozen players retained will become free agents at the expiration of their contracts.

Any frozen player who is traded is subject to free agency with his new team in the same manner as he would have been with the team who traded him. Any player previously under contract whose team does not renew his contract by refreezing him automatically becomes a free agent.

#### **SECTION 6---INVOLUNTARY PLAYER MOVES:**

A. Throughout the season owners will need to make “involuntary” player moves. Player moves are always made on Tuesday. The Tuesday date is historical. This date was coincidental with the Tuesday edition of USA TODAY which carries a listing of players on the Disabled List or sent to the minors. (In the early days of the League, USA TODAY published this list on Wednesday and that was the reporting date). While USA TODAY was at one time the only generally available compilation of player status, its accuracy and timeliness are no longer state of the art. Consequently, the CBS SPORTS is now the official source of player news and status. Player moves are made anytime a franchise has an active roster player leave the active National League roster for any reason for 15 days or longer. The most common reason for a player move is to replace a player who has gone on the Disabled List (DL), but involuntary moves may be necessary for many reasons, including players being sent to the minors. Bereavement Leave or other absences of less than 15 days are not justification for player replacement. Players who are released may be replaced, but if they subsequently are activated on a NL roster, they must be reacquired and the replacement player released. Owners are obligated to replace players who leave their National League roster. Owners should generally replace these players on the first Tuesday possible. However, owners may occasionally wait till the following Tuesday if there is some complication, but by then it is necessary for a team to have a full roster. Player moves should be submitted to the CBS SPORTS **League Website Bulletin Board** as early as possible each Tuesday, but in no event later than 7:00 PM on Tuesday, Central Time. For each move requiring a replacement player, franchises must submit a first choice and at least one alternate choice of a replacement player before the 7:00 PM deadline. Failure to submit an alternate choice may result in forfeiture of replacement rights for the week in the event of a conflict involving multiple claims for the same replacement player. Player moves submitted before the deadline will

be effective as of Tuesday. Owners may change player moves submitted early as long as the final moves are submitted prior to the deadline, and there is no need for franchises to “reserve their rights” to do so.

The time of submission of player moves has no significance in terms of the effective date of the move or a franchise’s rights to that player. In other words, it is not “first come, first served” when it comes to player moves. A player’s status is determined as of Tuesday, and players cannot be replaced if they are not on the DL or in the minors on the reporting Tuesday---even if they were temporarily sent to the minors during the week. (“Hitchcock Hiatus”)

In the event that more than one franchise claims a player, either as a result of a trade or on the regular reporting date, the priority of claims shall be determined in accordance with other provisions of these Rules.

**B.** Replacement players must be deactivated on the Tuesday following the original player’s return to a National League roster. If a franchise fails to report the return of a roster player (and/or the associated deactivation of his replacement) by the reporting deadline of the Tuesday following the original player’s return to a National League roster, the following penalty shall apply: No stats shall apply for the returning player until the Tuesday following the Tuesday of his return and all stats of the replacement shall be removed retroactively to the correct reporting Tuesday of the player’s return.

**C.** There is a procedure for selecting temporary replacement players:

Owners may select a member of their own farm team if that player plays the same position and is currently on an active National League roster. In the event a player on the farm is sent to the minors or on the DL, the replacement for that player is considered to be available for calling up in the same manner as the original player who was replaced. Alternatively, owners may select an undrafted player who plays the same position and who is active any National League team. For both voluntary and involuntary moves, inactive players may be chosen and called up if there is a reasonable expectation that they will play in the upcoming reporting period.

**D.** Priority for voluntary and involuntary move claims for the same player shall be given to the team losing a player drafted in the earliest round of the draft. In the event that

players were drafted in the same round, priority would go to the franchise lower in the standings according to the standings which appear on the Tuesday reporting date, except when a conflict arises with a franchise which has lost a player in a trade to the AL.

Mid-year draft picks are always considered last round picks.

**E.** Players changing National League rosters have no effect on SWBL rosters.

**F.** Members of the farm team can be temporarily replaced if they go on the 15 Day Disabled List (or longer), are sent to the minors, or are released. They are replaced using the same standard replacement guidelines described in SECTION 6-A, B, C, D, and E above, but they must be reactivated on the farm team or active roster if they return to an active NL roster. Unlike players on the active roster, owners have no obligation to replace farm team players.

**G.** In the event that a CIF or MIF needs to be replaced, a franchise may select a replacement that plays either of the combined positions; for example, if a MIF needs to be replaced, a 2b or a SS may be selected as a replacement player. Similarly, a RP or a SP may be chosen as a replacement for any pitcher provided the minimum roster requirements for SP and RP are observed. If a U needs to be replaced, any available offensive player on any team may be chosen. However, no player who is on the DL/Sent to Minors may be moved to the U position, and no player may be moved to the U position if in the judgment of the Commissioner that player was moved to improve replacement rights for the franchise.

**H.** In the event a player is hurt toward the end of the season after the National League allows teams to expand their rosters and the formal DL procedure is no longer in use, an owner may seek The League Office's permission to replace that player. "Virtual DL" permission is routinely given if evidence is presented indicating that the player is actually to be sidelined for the remainder of the season or for at least two weeks from the Tuesday reporting period.

**SECTION 7---FARM TEAM OPERATIONS (VOLUNTARY MOVES):**

**A.** Owners may make “voluntary” player moves between their major league active roster and their farm team roster. These moves are made effective on Tuesdays. The League Office is to be notified by posting the move on the website so that a report of all player moves can be made to The League, and so owners can comment on the moves.

**B.** The major league roster must meet position guidelines after making any voluntary moves

**C.** Each franchise has an unlimited number of voluntary farm team moves in a season.

**D.** Once chosen, replacement players cannot directly be replaced by another replacement player. However, if roster moves can be made which result in the demotion of the chosen replacement player, such moves are permitted. Additionally, if a player is first replaced with a farm team player, at a subsequent reporting period the farm team player may be returned to the farm, and an undrafted player at the same position and on the same team may be chosen, with no further flexibility allowed.

**E.** Voluntary moves may be utilized to change player positions on team rosters in the manner described in Section 4D.

**F.** Priority for voluntary and involuntary move claims for the same player shall be given to the team losing a player drafted in the earliest round of the draft. In the event that players were drafted in the same round, priority would go to the franchise lower in the standings according to the standings which appear on the Tuesday reporting date, except when a conflict arises with a franchise which has lost a player in a trade to the AL.

**G.** Mid-year draft picks are always considered last round picks.

**H.** As a general rule, replacement players and voluntary call-ups must be on an active NL roster in order to be placed in your lineup. If, however, there is a reasonable expectation that a player may be activated in the coming week, that player on the DL may be activated on a Tuesday reporting day.

## **SECTION 8—TRADES TO THE AMERICAN LEAGUE (THE “PENA OPINION”):**

**A.** In the event roster players are traded to the American League during the season, SWBL will use the following rules to compensate owners for their loss:

1. For compensation for a protected (Frozen) player or a player drafted in rounds 1 through 3, an owner may select any non-roster player in the National League. If the player selected does not play the same position as the protected player, the owner will need to release a player at a position that will cause the roster to conform to League guidelines. If the owner does select a player at a different position than the one lost to the AL, the owner will need to select an undrafted National League player at the same position as the lost player, and can do so from any National League team, releasing a player to conform to roster requirements.
2. For compensation for one of the 4<sup>th</sup> through Final Round draft choices, the owner may select any available roster player from any National League roster who plays the same position as the lost player.
3. Players acquired at the mid-year draft are considered last round selections.
4. Any drafted player involved in a trade to the AL who is on the DL or is in the minors at the time of trade will be considered an active roster player.
5. Any player who is on a franchise’s farm team at the time he is traded to the AL for any reason other than for the purpose of injury rehab will be consider a last round pick regardless of whether he was a protected (frozen) player or in what round he was originally picked. This is to protect against some undeserving owner being rewarded for having made a feeble freeze.
6. Players who were not on the farm team and are temporarily filling a roster spot for DL or sent to the minors player, and are traded to the AL are not considered roster players for the purposes of SWBL trade guidelines. The affected owner should replace the lost temporary player in the normal manner. Players who are serving as replacements on other teams are not available to be selected as compensation for a trade until they are released on Tuesday. (“Dontrelle Decision” aka “Tuffy Tough Call”)
7. In the event more than one SWBL player is involved in the same trade, the following rules apply:
  - The team losing the player drafted in the earliest round has first claim on replacements.

- If more than one team has a player involved who was drafted in the same round, the team lowest in the standing at the last official report has first claim.

- If a SWBL team has more than one player involved in the same trade, compensation will be as if each player was the only one traded.

8. In the event of multiple claims for the same player, a franchise losing a player in a trade to the AL has priority over a franchise claiming the player as a DL, sent to minors or voluntary move. If two franchises losing players via trades to the AL claim the same player, the team losing the player drafted in the earliest round has priority. (“Volquez Vindication”). In the further event that 2 teams lose players drafted in the same round, the team lowest in the standings has priority.

**B.** All player moves that are the result of a trade to the AL are effective the first Tuesday the trade is reflected on CBS SPORTS.

**C.** In the event a protected (frozen) player is traded to the AL during the off season, the owner will be compensated by having a bonus (additional) pick at the end of first round of the draft, or by selecting another player to protect. If more than one team loses a protected player, each team will get an extra pick at the end of the first round and the order will be determined by lottery.

**D.** Protected (frozen) players lost to the AL during the off-season through free agency, who retire, or are lost for all or most of the season due a “severe injury, illness or other dire circumstance” are covered by the compensation rules. The Commissioner will determine if the injury, illness or other dire circumstance is worthy of this compensation.

**E.** Unprotected players traded to the AL, lost through free agency, badly injured, etc., no matter how fabulous they performed, or how badly an owner wanted to freeze them, are not covered by the compensation rule (“Moises Memorandum”).

## **SECTION 9—SWBL TRADES:**

**A.** Trades between franchises are allowed under the following guidelines:

- Trades are effective on Tuesdays, and stats are effective at the same time.
- Stats compiled by the traded players prior to the effective date of the trade remain with their original team.
- The trading deadline is the Tuesday after Labor Day.
- The Commissioner has the duty and obligation to void any trade that is deemed to be a threat to the competitive balance of The League or violates the integrity of the pennant race.
- Trades involving future draft choices or changes in draft position are allowed but must be finalized and approved by the Commissioner by the first Tuesday in August.

## **SECTION 10—MID-YEAR DRAFT:**

**A.** There is to be a special mid-year League Meeting of owners near the time of the All-Star break. At the meeting a mid-year draft will be held. The following guidelines apply to that draft:

1. Prior to the mid-year draft all players that have been added to a teams major or farm team roster to replace DL/sent-to-the-minors players will be returned to the undrafted pool to be available for drafting.
2. Prior to the mid-year draft owners may protect 23 players from their major or farm team roster. The remaining players are eligible for drafting.
4. The first round of the mid-year draft will be in reverse order of the most recent League standings available at the time of the draft. Subsequent draft order will be determined by sacred balls lottery and will reverse after each round (in the same manner as the preseason draft).
5. Teams may draft players who are not currently on National League rosters as a result of injuries or who are in the minor leagues if there is a reasonable expectation that they will be activated or called up in the near future. Speculative selections such as drafting an American Leaguer who is rumored to be heading to the National League are limited to one per franchise (see “Sneaky Sox Statute SECTION 4E).

At the end of the Draft, each team must have a total of 26 players. Each franchise must have a minimum of 2 Catchers, 5 OF, 9 Pitchers (including at least 5 SPs and 2 RPs), one 1B, one 2B, one SS, one 3B, one MIF, one UP and one CIF

## **SECTION 11--MISCELLANEOUS:**

**A.** SWBL is a highly principled, ethical organization. Each franchise is charged with the responsibility of maintaining the good image of our League. Conduct by the players on an owner's roster is the responsibility of that owner. Acts deemed to be detrimental to the best interest of The League can result in fines. Abusing our fans, cheating, speeding, fighting, drugs, fits, gambling, women, alcohol, excessive political correctness, mound charging, umpire bumping and general tackiness are all examples of actions that can invoke fines. The Commissioner is the judge and jury for this matter, and must be pretty fair in all decisions. All fine money is paid to the League Comptroller and goes toward the championship prize money. The League Champion team is to designate the charity of its choice and all the prize money is given to that charity in the team's name.

**B.** From time to time owners may decide they want to change their team's name. Owners request for a name change must be submitted to The League Office and approved by The Commissioner. Approval should not be withheld if the name does not in any way harm the image of The League or doesn't seriously offend fellow owners. Name changes are \$4 apiece.