

Fort Collins Baseball Club, Inc.

NORTHERN COLORADO ROOKIE LEAGUE (NCRL) **GUIDELINES**

(2010 Season -Version 1.5 – Revised March 8, 2009)

BACKGROUND

The Fort Collins Baseball Club (FCBC) operates one competitive youth baseball league for teams in the Northern Colorado Region:

1. The FCBC Northern Colorado Rookie League (NCRL): A Division II (aka ‘AAA’) League

The FCBC Competitive Baseball Program is directed by the Competitive Committee. This committee consists of 6-9 members, including a Chairperson, 1 NCRL Commissioner for each age group, 1 High School Summer Baseball Commissioner, and several ‘at large’ Commissioners with specific assignments such as organizing the end-of-season playoffs or FCBC tournaments. Competitive Committee members can be contacted directly or by sending an email to the FCBC at: Director@fcbcmail.org.

NCRL PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

1. Provide an extended playing season consisting of more league games than a typical youth recreational league program.
2. Provide an outlet for players (and coaches) with higher skill levels, a strong desire to improve those skills, a strong dedication to the sport of baseball, and the desire to compete against others based on their skill.
3. Provide the above goals in a regional league that keeps travel at a minimum.

It is the intent and goal of these leagues to provide an environment of good sportsmanship which requires proper conduct and self-discipline by all involved: players, coaches, umpires and parents.

Important note: the NCRL does not FORM teams; rather it ACCEPTS teams that choose to affiliate with NCRL. The teams themselves are formed in the cities and towns where the players live. (The formation of Ft. Collins-based teams is facilitated by FCBC, but that process is outside the scope of this document.) Each city and town will have its own guidelines for what it means to be an NCRL team. However, the following points are reflective of the philosophy of all teams in the league.

1. Playing positions and playing time will generally be based on factors such as skill, work ethic, etc. and will be determined at the discretion of each team's coaching staff (within these guidelines and other NCRL guidelines such as the Standards of Conduct). The NCRL, as part of FCBC’s Competitive Program, is explicitly NOT a “full-participation” (i.e., NOT equal playing time) league as are many recreational league programs. That being said, league coaches are strongly encouraged to use a philosophy that simultaneously develops players while fielding a strong, competitive team for each game throughout the season.
2. Each coaching staff will determine its own team's playing philosophy, goals and policies (within these guidelines and other NCRL guidelines such as the Standards of Conduct). FCBC strongly encourages league coaches to communicate directly and frequently with their players and parents regarding these goals, and to allow for their input to maximize team cohesiveness.

Overall, the intent of the NCRL is on creating an environment that fosters development of a high level of playing skill and character values while at the same time teaching the players how to compete with good sportsmanship.

COACHING STAFFS

1. Each team's official coaching staff will consist of a minimum of two and a maximum of four official (i.e., registered with FCBC) coaches. These coaches must be listed on the FCBC Team Profile Form used to affiliate a team with FCBC.
 - a. Team profile/application forms can be downloaded from the league's website at: <http://www.fortcollinsbaseballclub.org/>.
 - b. Each coaching staff will provide a single 'Team Goal and Policy Statement' to the baseball office as part of their application to join the league. Once a team is accepted for affiliation with FCBC, the team's submitted information will be posted on the FCBC Web site.

TEAMS & DIVISIONS

1. The NCRL is operated on an "Age Group" basis, with teams formed from players of essentially the same age.
 - a. NCRL: In 2010, there will be six single-age group divisions in the NCRL: 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14.
 - b. **Teams that are particularly strong are encourage to 'play up' one year in Rookie League to get the desired level of competition.**
 - c. The 'Age eligibility cutoff date' is **APRIL 30TH** of that playing season. This means that the child will play in the 'xx' age group based on his/her age ('xx') on April 30th of that season. For example, if a child turns 12 on or before April 30th, then that child plays in the 12 year-old age group for all of that season. Alternatively, if a child turns 12 on May 1st or later, then that child plays in the 11 year-old age group for all of that season.
2. Each team should carry a minimum of eleven players.
3. Coaches are required to submit the following information on their players at the Coaches' Kickoff Meeting in March:
 - i. Official Roster (All Players and Official Coaches) (See below for Roster Management)
 - ii. Certified Copies of Birth Certificates of all Players
 - iii. Coaches' Standard of Conduct forms signed by all Official Coaches
 - iv. Parents' Standard of Conduct forms signed by at least one parent/guardian of each player.

SCHEDULE

1. Northern Colorado Rookie League (NCRL)
 - a. The NCRL will consist of about 14-16 regular season games PLUS 2-4 games in the 'End-of-Season' League Playoff, for a total of 16-18 games. Note that there may be a slight difference in the number of games played in different age-group divisions due to the varying number of teams in those age-groups and the realities of scheduling different numbers of teams. However, all teams within the same age-group will play the same number of regular season games. The number of games played in the 'End-of-Season Playoff' depends on how each team does in the playoff.
 - b. Games will be scheduled by FCBC according to the field availability schedules submitted by the Field Administrators of the various clubs with teams that play in the league.
 - i. Where possible, preference is given to weekdays (especially Monday through Thursday) to allow the weekends to be free for tournaments. However, some Saturday and Sunday games are to be expected given the short time frame for the season although rarely is a game scheduled on a weekend with a major tournament in the region.

Each team MUST communicate their weekend availability (i.e., weekends on which they are free, for sure, to play league games) to FCBC on or before the deadline for paying League Fees, which is usually around January 15th of each year. This allows the league scheduler to avoid conflicts with tournament play. If you do not communicate your availability by the deadline, your team will be considered 'available' for all weekends during the league season.

Once the league schedule is PUBLISHED, games CANNOT be rescheduled for conflicts. NO EXCEPTIONS – THINK AHEAD ABOUT TOURNAMENTS, END OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, ETC.

- ii. In general, the ‘front-end’ of the schedule usually involves more games per week than the ‘back-end.’ This allows room in June for makeup games. In reality, once makeup games are figured in, the season is usually pretty balanced.
 - c. All NCRL teams are strongly encouraged to participate in the NCRL ‘End-of-Season’ Playoff. Teams electing not to participate will NOT receive a refund of any portion of their league fees.
2. The regular season for the NCRL will start during the week of April 5th, 2010. This early start is required in order to leave time in mid- to late June for makeup games. All regular season games, including make-up games, will be completed by June 19th; 2010. The NCRL League Playoff will be completed no later than June 27th 2010.
 3. The coach of the winning team is responsible for entering the score of the game, and pitcher innings, as soon as possible after the game using the Coach Login to the FCBC website. If a game is not entered within 48 hours of completion, it will be scored as a 0-0 tie, and that tie will become part of both teams’ record for determining end-of-season playoff seeding.
 4. Tournament play and pickup games for each team may occur any time before, during or after regular season play, but will be a team-based cost and not that of FCBC.

MAKE-UP GAMES

When a league game is cancelled, it must be made up. When a league game is suspended, it must be resumed and played to completion. **All game rescheduling is handled by the FCBC office – coaches are not allowed to reschedule a make-up game on their own.** The FCBC office will contact the Field Administrator of the home team of the game to be rescheduled, and will arrange a makeup date as soon as possible after the original game. In the case of a conflict in preferences for the day of the make-up game, preference is given to the home team.

NOTE: In years that are exceptionally wet (such as 2005 with 187 Rainout games, 2008 with 122 and last year in 2009 156 Rainout games), it may be impossible to make up all games that are cancelled due to weather. This should be a rare occurrence, but it may happen.

In such situations, FCBC reserves the right to modify the procedure used to determine the winner of the league season, and the seeding of the other teams in the NCRL Playoff, based on as fair a method as possible, given the circumstances. In particular, it is possible that teams in the same division may play an uneven number of games due to cancellations. A league winner and league-based seedlings will be provided nevertheless.

Coaches are responsible for informing their parents and players of the date, time, and field (which may be different than the original game field) of a rescheduled game. They should NOT depend on the rescheduled games to be posted on the website since in most cases this is not feasible.

NCRL ‘END-OF-SEASON’ PLAYOFF

1. An ‘End-of-Season’ Playoff will be held for each age division in the NCRL during the last full week/weekend of June. Teams will be seeded based on their records in regular season play. Seeding rules vary slightly by age group due to various structures imposed by the different number of teams in a given age group. PLEASE REFER TO THE SEEDING PROCESS THAT IS DESCRIBED IN DETAIL AT THE TOP OF YOUR DIVISION’S SCHEDULE DOCUMENT PASSED OUT AT THE MARCH COACHES’ MEETING.
2. Teams should reserve Friday NOON through Sunday afternoon for games. Actual game schedules for the

Playoff will be available within a few days after the last regular season game is played. Teams should be prepared for the fact that if regular season games are still being made up in late June, there may be very little time between publishing of the Playoff schedule, and the first game of the Playoff. Don't assume! Block out ALL the days of the end-of-season playoff as possible game days until you see the playoff schedule.

3. Awards will be given to the winner and runner-up in each age bracket.
4. We strongly encourage EVERY team to participate in the end-of-season playoff. If for some reason you choose not to participate, you MUST let your commissioner know at least one week prior to the end of the league season in order to allow time for playoff bracketing and scheduling. In no case will any money be refunded for non-participation in the end-of-season playoff.

Post-Season USSSA & Triple Crown Tournament BERTHS AWARDED

Each age-group division of the NCRL will be awarded two PAID berths to post-season tournaments. 'Paid' means that the tournament fee will be paid by FCBC. However, travel and other costs are not paid by FCBC.

Berths will be awarded as follows:

1. NCRL
 - a. In 2010, the overall winner of the regular season (based on winning percentage of games played, which may differ across teams in exceptional circumstances) of each age group division will be awarded a berth to either 1) The Triple Crown Sports Colorado State Championships (NOT the Triple Crown Sports World Series), or 2) The USSSA Colorado State Championships. The choice of which tournament to choose is up to the age group winner.
 - i. The league winner MUST choose and communicate the choice of tournament to their age group commissioner PRIOR to the End of Season Playoff. This allows us to determine the berth for the playoff winner right away, which is important since these tournaments take place very soon after the NCRL playoff.
 - ii. If the regular season age group winner elects not to accept EITHER berth, then the 'first choice' of berth is 'passed down' to the second place team for that age group, and so on.
 - b. The winner of the End-of-Season Playoff for each age group will be awarded a paid berth to the tournament listed above that is NOT selected by the regular season winning team for that same age group.
 - i. If the age group winner of the playoff elects not to accept the remaining berth, then the choice is 'passed down' to the 'runner-up' team in the playoff for that age group.
 - ii. If the 'runner-up' team elects not to accept the remaining berth, then the choice is 'passed over' to the team with the best record in the league regular season that has not already been awarded a paid berth per 1.a above.
2. What if your team is awarded a paid berth by FCBC, per the above, but you have already qualified for, and paid for, a berth in that tournament? Here's what will happen:
 - a. For the USSSA State Tournament: Your team will be reimbursed for your entry fee directly by FCBC – no interaction with USSSA is necessary.
 - b. For the Triple Crown State Tournament: Triple Crown will refund your entry fee directly to you, and you will use an FCBC prepaid tournament berth.
 - c. Under no circumstances will a team be awarded more than one PAID berth from FCBC in the same year.
3. Depending on the number of teams in a particular division, additional NON-PAID USSSA State Tournament berths may also be available. If they are available, they will be given out as follows: 1st non-paid berth goes to the #2 league seed; 2nd non-paid berth goes to the #3 seed, and so forth for as many or as few non-paid berths are made available to us. The exact number of berths, both paid and unpaid, for each age group will be on the master schedule for that age group that is passed out at the Coaches' Meeting in March. Tournament berths awarded may change from year-to-year. Please be sure to have the latest version of these guidelines to access the correct information.

AFFILIATIONS

There are no individual team affiliations for NCRL teams. FCBC will affiliate the overall NCRL including all teams in each league, with USSSA, at the appropriate level ('AAA' for NCRL teams)

BASEBALL RULES & MODIFICATIONS

The 2010 NCRL shall be governed by latest edition of the National Federation of High School Baseball Rules except as modified for safety-related aspects (which can be imposed by the Commissioners) and any addendum determined by the Competitive Committee for each age group. See separate handout for the current list of rule modifications.

PLEASE NOTE: THESE RULE MODIFICATIONS ARE VERY IMPORTANT AND MUST BE READ AND UNDERSTOOD BY ALL COACHES. FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE NCRL, WE DO NOT BAT ALL PLAYERS – WE BAT 9 PLAYERS, SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION BY THE DH AND EH RULES. Topics covered include DH/EH rules, game time-limits, game-ending procedures, scoring in 'called' games, suspended games, and pitching regulations to name some of the most significant. **IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, ASK YOUR AGE GROUP COMMISSIONER FOR CLARIFICATION BEFORE THE SEASON BEGINS. YOU DO NOT WANT TO BE LOOKING AT THESE RULE MODIFICATIONS FOR THE FIRST TIME WHEN ITS 10:00 AT NIGHT AND THE FIELD LIGHTS GO OUT MID-INNING!**

CONDUCT

The Ft. Collins Baseball Club, Inc has published Standards of Conduct that must be signed by all official coaches and at least one parent/guardian of each player in the NCRL. Failure of a player's parent/guardian to sign this document will prevent their child from participating in the NCRL.

As a private, non-profit organization, FCBC reserves the right to exclude parents, players or coaches from participation in any activity sponsored by FCBC if the Standards of Conduct are violated. For players and coaches, violations of the Standards of Conduct can lead to suspension or removal from participation in the league.

Decisions on disciplinary action are taken by the FCBC Competitive Committee in conjunction with the FCBC Executive Director. Any such action may be appealed, in writing, within two weeks, to the FCBC office. In such a case, a hearing will be convened within two weeks of receiving such appeal.

ROSTER MANAGEMENT

The goals of the Roster Management Process for the NCRL include:

1. Ensuring that players are treated fairly,
2. Ensuring that teams stay essentially intact throughout the season to enhance competition
3. Providing some early-season flexibility to resolve unanticipated coach-player incompatibilities
4. Provide a mechanism to deal with exceptional circumstances such as a player moving out of town during the season.

Roster Management Rules are as follows:

1. Each team should carry a minimum of eleven players at all times. If a team's official roster drops below nine (9) players, the team is ineligible to play, and will forfeit all scheduled games until the official roster is brought back to nine (9) or more players.
2. Each team must submit an official roster of at least nine (9) players to FCBC no later than the Coaches' Kickoff Meeting in March 2010. Copies of certified birth certificates are required at this time for all players listed on the official roster. Rosters should be submitted ON LINE prior to this date.
3. Any team that does not submit an acceptable roster, or whose roster becomes unacceptable according to these guidelines, during the season, will not be allowed to play in the league. Games will be forfeited for the period of time that the roster is unacceptable.
4. 'Roster Management' for the 2010 season starts with the official roster status as of the Coaches' Kickoff

Meeting in March, 2010.

5. After Roster Management begins, the following rules apply
 - a. Note: As all NCRL teams are required to be registered ON LINE with FCBC and with USSSA by mid February, All USSSA roster manager rules apply. Follow the link from the FCBC website to the USSSA site to see these rules. In the following points we highlight the major rules – if a conflict exists with the USSSA official roster management rules, these FCBC rules will govern. In rare circumstances, this may affect the eligibility of the team to play in future USSSA tournaments later in the season.
 - b. Note: TRANSFERS require a DROP and an ADD form.
 - c. Adding a 'new' player. A 'new' player, i.e., a player not already listed on the roster of another NCRL team, can be added at any time during the season up to **May 15, 2010**, provided that the player has not played at a higher USSSA classification during the current season, the maximum number of players is not exceeded, and the following information is sent to, and acknowledged by, the FCBC office.
 - i. A printed, completed, and signed USSSA BASEBALL 'Roster Add Form' (available on the FCBC website).
 - ii. A Parental Standard of Conduct Form signed by at least one parent/guardian of the player to be added.
 - iii. A certified copy of the player's birth certificate.
 - iv. FCBC On Line Roster with added player
TO EMPHASIZE: A 'new' player will not be considered as added to the team's official roster until 1) 7 days have elapsed since the 'ADD' form was received by the FCBC office, and 2) an email or written confirmation has been sent back to the coach from the FCBC office confirming correct registration.
 - d. Dropping a player. An existing player, defined as any player on a team's official NCRL roster on file in the FCBC office, can be dropped at any time during the season up to **May 15, 2010**, provided that
 - i. A printed, completed, and signed BASEBALL 'Roster DROP Form'. (available on the FCBC website) is sent to the FCBC office AND
 - ii. An email or written confirmation has been sent back to the coach from the FCBC office confirming the 'drop.'
 - e. Adding a player previously on the roster of another NCRL team in the same year. Adding a player previously on the roster of another NCRL team in the same year IS ONLY ALLOWED UNDER THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES:
 - i. The player being 'added' has been previously, or simultaneously, 'dropped' from the sending team as described in step 5d above.
 - ii. The player has not played at a higher USSSA classification during the current season.
 - iii. A printed, completed and signed copy of the 'Add Player' form (available on the FCBC website) is sent to, and received by, the FCBC office no later than May 15th, 2010.
 - iv. The player being 'added' has not previously been 'added' to another NCRL team during the same season (i.e., only one team move allowed per year per player, and, once a player leaves a team, he/she may not return to that team in the same season.).
6. Roster rules apply to both regular season league play and the 'End-of-Season' Playoff.
7. In exceptional circumstances, exceptions to these rules may be allowed. Coaches should contact the FCBC Executive Director if they believe they have a situation which warrants consideration. In such cases, the Competitive Committee will review the situation and arrive at a ruling within a week.
8. For adds and drops, the team with the change is responsible for settling all financial matters with the affected player and his/her family. For transfers, the sending and receiving teams need to settle all financial matters between themselves as part of the transfer process. FCBC will not be involved in any financial issues associated with adding, dropping, or transferring of a player.
9. The penalty for playing an ineligible player will be to forfeit each game played with that player, plus possible ejection from the league if the age-group commissioner and the Competitive Committee determine that such action is appropriate.