

ORIGINAL FRANCHISE BASEBALL LEAGUE

LEAGUE GUIDE – YEAR 19

INTRODUCTION

The Original Franchise Baseball League (OFBL) is a unique APBA Baseball for Windows (BBW) league that uses a retro structure with current players. The league's purpose is to see what baseball might look like today without expansion, the DH, inter-league play and wild cards. The OFBL will also have a strong correlation to Major League Baseball (MLB), because OFBL teams will always have first rights to the players from its MLB affiliates.

A. THE LEAGUE

The OFBL is comprised of 16 teams with 8 teams in the American League and 8 teams in the National League. Team names will come from the current locations of the teams that existed before expansion in 1961. OFBL teams are listed below.

American League

Baltimore Orioles
Boston Red Sox
Chicago White Sox
Cleveland Indians
Detroit Tigers
Minnesota Twins
New York Yankees
Oakland Athletics

National League

Atlanta Braves
Chicago Cubs
Cincinnati Reds
Los Angeles Dodgers
Philadelphia Phillies
Pittsburgh Pirates
San Francisco Giants
St. Louis Cardinals

The Designated Hitter rule will NOT be used in either league.

OFBL franchises have a strong affiliation with their MLB counterpart. See Section F for additional details.

B. SCHEDULE

Each team will play a 154 game schedule, 77 home games and 77 road games. Teams will play 22 games (11 home, 11 road) against the other teams in its league. Weekly series will be 5 or 6 games. The Commissioner will publish the schedule prior to the start of each year's play in a commissioner file.

C. EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

The following equipment will be required of each OFBL team:

- 1) A Personal Computer that is capable of running the Baseball for Windows programs. Internet access is required. A CD-ROM drive and printer for printing game results and league reports are highly recommended.
- 2) APBA Computer BASEBALL for Windows, version 5.75.
- 3) An original copy of the current season's APBA Season Data diskette (OFBL-19 will use the 2017 season).
- 4) A copy of each OFBL "Approved" micromanager.
- 5)

D. DUES

OFBL dues will be determined by the OFBL Commissioner. No dues are required for OFBL-19.

E. COMMISSIONER

The OFBL Commissioner will be responsible for all league matters including (but not limited to):

- 1) Maintaining and enforcing league rules.
- 2) Setting of trading periods, roster decision dates, and league dues.
- 3) League file handling duties.
- 4) Verification of trades between teams.
- 5) Conducting the annual draft.
- 6) Arbitrating league conflicts (protests are discouraged).
- 7) Changing league rules (as needed).

F. ROSTERS

Each team will have 40 players (or less) on its roster at all times. During the season teams will have 26 players on its major league roster and 14 players on a farm club roster. Roster changes will be permitted at the start of each scheduled series. Major league rosters will increase to 40 players during the last month of the OFBL season (after game 132). The Advanced DRAFT program can be used to make roster changes.

The OFBL will differ from most BBW leagues in the manner in which rosters are filled. Each season's roster will be the result of 3 events or phases. The phases are described below:

Phase 1

OFBL teams will have initial rights to all players on its MLB affiliate (based on the data disk) regardless of which OFBL team owned the player in the previous season. A commissioner file will be sent to the league with all MLB affiliated players on their OFBL counter part (all MLB Braves will be on the OFBL Braves). Each team can and must keep 20 of these players, release the rest and submit a franchise file with these 20 players on its team.

Phase 2

Based on the previous season's OFBL rosters, all players that were not kept by OFBL teams in Phase 1 will be returned to their OFBL team of the previous season. These players will be placed on OFBL farm team rosters and a second commissioner file will be sent to the league. Each team may keep up to 10 of these players, release the rest and submit a second franchise file to the commissioner.

Phase 3

All players not on OFBL rosters after Phase 1 and 2 will be made available to any OFBL team in a 10 round draft. The draft order will be determined by each team's MLB (not OFBL) record from the previous season. This is the OFBL's form of "revenue sharing." The team with the worst record will draft first. If teams have the same MLB record, the team with the worst OFBL record will pick first. Any players not acquired in Phase 1, 2 or 3 will be available during the season if a team needs a player to fill a roster spot because a player has reached or surpassed his limitations. To obtain one of these "unaffiliated" players, the team must release a player from its current roster. If you release a Phase 1 player, you must acquire a Phase 1 player. If you release a Phase 2 or Phase 3 player, you may acquire any unaffiliated player but, you will not have the ability to keep this player in Phase 2 of the next season.

G. MANAGER COMMITMENTS

Managing a team in the OFBL involves certain commitments and responsibilities. These are highlighted as follows:

- 1) Roster Management: Participate in the 3 phases that determine OFBL rosters. Phase 3 will be an annual draft, which will be conducted by email.
- 2) Instructions: Playing instructions will be submitted on a weekly basis during the season by revising and submitting a franchise file to the league offices via email. If a file isn't sent or the league is not notified that no changes are desired, the commissioner will make whatever changes he deems necessary to benefit that team for that week.
- 3) Playing of games: Each manager is responsible for ensuring that his team's home games are played during the scheduled week and that the resulting franchise file is sent to the league office in time to arrive prior to the deadline established by the league. Late files will be ignored and the league will play the series using two micromanagers (one for each team). Games may not be played in advance of the current cycle.
- 4) Reporting of Trades: Each trade made by your team must be reported to the league commissioner. For a trade to be validated it must be made within the approved trading period. Trades will be allowed during the playing season. See Section H for additional details.

H. TRADING

Because of OFBL rules (especially Phase 1 above), trading will have to be carefully considered by both managers involved. Managers must be certain they understand OFBL rules before they make a trade.

- 1) Trading will be allowed at times designated by the Commissioner. Only Phase 2 players and draft picks can be traded from the previous year's World Series until the Phase 1 keeper deadline. No trading will be allowed from the time Phase 1 begins until Phase 2 is completed. Trading will be allowed during the Phase 3 draft. No trading will be allowed from the Game 132 mark until after the OFBL World Series.
- 2) Draft picks may be traded only during the period between the end of the 77 game mark of the current season and end of the 132 game mark of the current season, and then again AFTER the World Series is completed. Only draft picks for the upcoming season may be traded.
- 3) The trading deadline for trades made DURING the season will be 8:00PM (Eastern Time), Wednesday evening of the current week.
- 4) All managers involved in a trade must report the trade to the commissioner prior to the trade deadline before the trade will be considered official.
- 5) After a trade is made, no team may exceed its 40 man roster limit.
- 6) No trades will be allowed between two teams managed by the same league manager, including the OFBL Commissioner.

I. PLAYING OF REGULAR SEASON GAMES

Schedule

The regular season will be comprised of a 154 game schedule, 77 home games and 77 road games. The league office will provide the schedule prior to the start of the season on the league organization file.

Pitching Rotations

Rotations are set for each team when weekly franchise files are submitted. The A.I.M. program will control how often a pitcher can start, and how many starts he can get during the season.

Stolen Bases/Hit and Run Plays

Stolen Base attempts will be limited to the player's actual attempts plus 10 for the season. Hit and run plays are allowed at any time during the game, as long as the software allows it. Once a player reaches his stolen base attempts limit, his SSN rating will be revised to "N0" for the remainder of the OFBL season. It is the individual manager's responsibility to monitor his players in this regard and inform the league of when a player's SSN needs revision. Failure to do so may result in penalties and/or the need to replay league games where the overused player was used.

Injuries

ALL injuries will count for their specified duration. Injuries may occur as part of the game play or from overuse by the AIM program. Injured players may only be removed from the team's active roster between OFBL series.

Rain Outs

Rain outs occurring prior to the game becoming official will be replayed at a time to be established by the commissioner. Rain outs will be rescheduled for a subsequent series between the two teams, but if none are available, then an off day in the schedule will be used. The rain outs may be played by the Commissioner when necessary to keep the league schedule current. These games will be played using a micromanager for both teams. Rain outs occurring after the game is official will count with the resulting win-loss being official as determined by the BASEBALL game.

J. ADJUSTING APBA RATINGS

APBA ratings will not be adjusted in the OFBL. Since the league will only be using 640 of the players from each season disk it is unnecessary to increase pitcher grades, PR ratings or maximum batters faced (MBF) limits. The OFBL will use the PR930 rule. Each manager should fill his roster with players that have enough usage to complete a 154 game regular season.

K. PLAYER LIMITATIONS

Starting pitchers will be limited to their actual maximum batters face (MBFs) as rated on the annual disk. The A.I.M. program will determine starting pitcher readiness for each of his starts.

A starting pitcher cannot be removed from a game by the home manager unless he has pitched 3 full innings, allowed 3 runs or is injured.

A starting pitcher for the home team must be removed if he has allowed 10 runs.

Relief pitchers will be limited to their actual MBFs as rated on the annual player disk. The A.I.M. program will dictate reliever readiness for use.

"Everyday" players will be limited to the number of MLB plate appearances as determined by the A.I.M. program. Once a player reaches his limit for the season he will be "Worn Out" and unavailable for further league play.

A player may only be used at defensive positions for which he was rated. The only exception will be if a player is injured and no one else is left to replace him at the "carded" position. Although players may be used at any rated position, it is expected that players will be used at their normal positions on a regular basis. Players are limited to actual games plus 50 for non-primary defensive positions.

L. OFBL WORLD SERIES

The champions of the American League and the National League will meet each year in a best of seven series to determine the OFBL champion. The World Series format will be 2-3-2 with the team with home field advantage hosting games 1, 2, 6 and 7. There will be two days of rest between the regular season and the World Series. Additional days of rest will occur after Games 2 and 5. Home field advantage is alternated between the American League and National League champions. The National League champion will have home field advantage in OFBL-19.

If two teams tie for their League title a best of three series will be played to determine the league's representative in the World Series. The team with the better record between the two teams will host games 2 and 3. If more than 2 teams tie for a League title, the Commissioner will decide how the World Series representative will be determined.

Each manager will determine the 26 man World Series roster.

Starting pitchers are limited in the number of games they may start during the World Series. Actual starts during the OFBL regular season is the limiting factor. Pitchers with 0 to 5 starts in the OFBL regular season cannot start a World Series game. Pitchers with 6 to 14 starts can start 1 World Series game. Pitchers with 15 to 24 starts can start 2 World Series games. Pitchers with 25 or more starts can start 3 World Series games.

Starters must rest 3 days between starts. Travel days are counted as rest days.

Relief pitchers will be limited by AIM rules.

Injuries will run for the duration of post-season play, as indicated by the game result.

A rain out during the post-season will count. If the game is tied or not a regulation game then it is simply replayed the following day and all other games will be pushed back one day. Injuries occurring prior to the rain out still stand and during the rained out game will also count, regardless of whether the game is official or not. Starters used in a rain out are required to rest for 3 days.

M. INSTRUCTIONS

Each OFBL season will start at a time determined by the league Commissioner. The season will run for 28 weeks and will usually commence around April 1 and run through mid October. Each OFBL team will submit its default instructions in the form of franchise files. These files will contain a team rotation, at least one lineup for each game, and a default road micromanager to be selected. The franchise files will be named as directed by the league office.

N. MICROMANAGERS:

Use of Micromanagers for the visiting team is required, unless the teams are playing in face-to-face or PC-to-PC format. The Micromanager to be used will be specified by the visiting team in the weekly Default Franchise file.

Only AIM-enabled Micromanagers can be used in the OFBL. The following Micromanagers are pre-approved for OFBL use. All teams must install all of these Micromanagers, so that opponents can use any of them. The league offices can provide the most current versions of these micromanagers on request.

- Duke Robinson
- Riverboat Durham
- Dan Murphy
- Felipe Hernandez
- Tony Anderson
- Buck Miller I, II, III, IV & V
- Butch Kelly I & II

OFBL teams may create their own Micromanager to manage their team on the road. If this option is chosen, then that team must provide a copy of that Micromanager to league opponents and to the Commissioner.

O. SPORTSMANSHIP

The intent of the OFBL is to maintain the interest of all team managers. The foundation of the OFBL, as with any league, has to be based on good sportsmanship and fair play. The ideal OFBL manager has just as much enjoyment from managing a losing team as he does with a winning team. The rules of the OFBL will add a certain amount of stress to each manager. Some teams will be “haves” and some teams will be “have-nots” and any team may lose a franchise player to another team because of what happens in MLB (see Section F again).

Protests are discouraged. If a protest is deemed necessary, forward your written protest along with related information to the Commissioner. The Commissioner will make a ruling based upon the evidence submitted and the position of the other manager. Protests involving a Commissioner-managed team will be arbitrated by the three team managers with the most OFBL seniority. The most important rule of the OFBL is to be fair. The league is designed to simulate major league baseball front office strategy, front office ulcers, and on field strategy.

P. CHANGES TO LEAGUE RULES

Changes to these rules will be considered from time to time and any league member may submit a proposed change. Changes affecting the playing of games in the current season will not be allowed but will be addressed for subsequent seasons. The Commissioner reserves the right to decide if a league vote is appropriate. If so, then the proposed change will be submitted to a league vote and the majority will rule. It is not the intent of this league to make major changes from year to year, so changes must be very carefully thought out before being submitted.