

Official Interpretation of Commonly Misunderstood Pitching Rules

Forfeit Due to Ineligible Pitcher: Per rule 11.05(4)(j) of the 2017 Babe Ruth rulebook (page 28), a pitcher who with no remaining pitches is **not in violation of the rules until he or she delivers a pitch in the game.** If the mistake is caught and the pitcher is removed before delivering a pitch (e.g. after being announced as the new pitcher and/or beginning to warm up), there is no penalty and the game is not forfeited.

“Twice in an Inning”: Per rule 11.05(5) of the 2017 Babe Ruth rulebook (page 28), a pitcher removed the game by a second trip to the mound in an inning is ineligible to pitch for the remainder of the game. That player may remain in the game at another position, and can re-enter the lineup if able to do so, but cannot return to the mound in that game.

A pitcher may leave the mound, assume another position in the field (or be substituted), and return to the mound **once** per inning (per rule 3.03); **the pitcher is credited with one inning pitched toward the innings limit despite having made two separate appearances on the mound in that inning.**

Any pitcher removed from the position (not by a second mound trip) may return to pitch later in the game, provided that players’ innings limit was not exceeded.

Unintended Pitching Substitutes: There is no definitive rule to cover what happens when a position player steps onto the rubber and delivers a warmup pitch before the pitcher – i.e. if the position player is required to become the new pitcher.

Per rule 3.08(a)(1) of the 2017 Babe Ruth rulebook (page 48), a player is deemed to be an unannounced substitute pitcher upon taking to the pitcher’s plate, but there is no indication if this applies to warm-up situations or not until a pitch has been delivered to a batter, nor does it clearly apply to position changes between players already in the game.

Rule 3.05(d) defines when the pitcher from the previous inning is required to start the inning (if not at bat or on base, it is once the pitcher enters the field of play).

Given the precedent of rule 11.05(4)(j) (page 28 of 2017 BR rule book), where an ineligible pitcher (exhausted number of pitches limit) may be removed without penalty while warming up, and that umpires have discretion to invalidate “improper substitutions” per rule 3.05(c), it is reasonable to conclude that, should this scenario occur, **the position player will not be required to become the new pitcher.**

With Respect to the Pitcher of Record: The Babe Ruth rulebook does not include Section 10 (“The Official Scorer”), so there is no clear definition of when a starting pitcher becomes the pitcher of record. As such, a parallel will be drawn with the rule governing when a six-inning or seven-inning game becomes official.

Rule 10.17 of the Official Baseball Rules states that the starting pitcher must complete five innings to be eligible to be credited with a win. Per rule 4.10(c), a nine-inning game becomes official after the losing team has batted five times (i.e. during or after the fifth inning). A regulation Cal Ripken Baseball game, however, must last at least four innings (page 19 of 2017 Babe Ruth rulebook). A regulation Babe Ruth Baseball game, must last at least five innings (page 19 of 2017 Babe Ruth rulebook).

By extension, a starting pitcher must pitch long enough for the game to become official (i.e. complete four innings in a Cal Ripken game or five innings in a Babe Ruth baseball game) to be eligible for the win. To remain

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the pitcher of record and be credited with the win, the team must be ahead when the starter leaves the game and must also not relinquish the lead at any point.

If the starting pitcher is ineligible for the win, rule 10.17(a) states the winning pitcher shall be the pitcher who is in the game when the team takes the lead for good. Per rule 10.17(c), however, the official scorer has the discretion to credit any relief pitcher with the win if one is seen to be more effective than the pitcher who would otherwise be credited with the win.

All points regarding forfeited games (regarding both pitchers of record and innings limits) are covered in the “Forfeited Game” section found on page 20 of the 2017 Babe Ruth rulebook.

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