

2026 Ohio Cup Rules of the Games

There have been some questions surrounding the rules and I wanted to clarify a few things before the weekend festivities begin. We will not be playing by a specific "date" for the rules, but more of an era. In our case early 1860's and as such we will be playing by what are commonly called "Muffin Rules."

1) NO SLIDING

2) Absolutely no metal cleats will be allowed. If a player is wearing metal cleats, they will be asked to change them. If they are not able to change shoes, they will need to find a replacement player.

3) Base tenders should be within one or two reasonable strides of their base. The shortstop may play anywhere they feel is advantageous. The outfielders may play a reasonable open outfield. Meaning they can shift as necessary, but we don't want all three outfielders in left field (Trust me, I've seen it happen).

4) Base runners may take one or two reasonable strides to lead off and must remain stationary until the pitch crosses the plate.

5) Runners may advance on a muff, which means the ball is not caught on the first bounce or in the air.

6) The force is always on. Example: Runner on first and the ball is hit sharply to the first base tender. They may step on first and throw to second to force out the advancing runner.

7) Under no circumstance is a runner allowed to advance on a foul ball. No matter what happens. The runners must return to their base and stay there until the next striker is at the line.

8) If a foul ball is struck, the runners can be forced out at the base they occupied if the ball first settles in the hand of the pitcher and a play is made before the runner returns to the base.

9) Intentional fair/foul balls are not allowed. If the Umpire, at his sole discretion, feels the ball was intentionally hit as a fair/foul, the ball will be called foul. The Umpire may warn the striker after several intentional fair/foul attempts and can begin to call them as strikes.

10) The ball is determined to be fair or foul where it first touches the ground. A player is not considered part of the ground. Example: A ball is struck and the third base tender, in fair territory, attempts to catch the ball. It bounces off his hands and first touches the ground in foul territory. It is a foul ball.

11) A swinging miss on a third strike is a fair ball and the striker must attempt to make first base. All forced runners must attempt to advance as well. However, if the ball is caught on the fly or the first bound, the striker is out and the runners are no longer forced.

12) **The Umpire should only call foul balls** and balks. The players involved should determine if a runner is safe or out. Only if the players involved cannot decide should the Umpire make the final determination.

13) If the third out of the inning is a force out, that shall end the inning and no aces will tally. This may be the most contradicted and debated rule, and the Muffins want to prevent any lengthy discussions during the games. Example: Two outs. A speedy runner on third base, a slow runner on first base. The ball is hit sharply and is muffed by the fielder. While the fielder recovers the ball the runner on third is able to cross the plate. However, the fielder is able to throw to second and force the runner from first out. The inning is over and the ace does not tally. There could be, and have been, hours of discussion on this and the Muffins decided to just set a standard for the Ohio Cup.

Team Captains (or a representative) should check in at the Welcome Tent upon arrival. The Hospitality Tent will be open to all participants and families, so feel free to stop in and grab some snacks and visit with friends. And if you are so inclined, say thank you to Meagan and her team of volunteers. It takes a great deal of work to feed us ball players and the Hospitality Team does an incredible job of making it look easy.