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MLB highlights unique features for 2020 season

First Workouts of 2020 Summer Camp presented by Camping World to Be Held Friday

June 29, 2020



Major League Baseball today announced some of the unique features that will be a part of the 2020 regular season, including health and safety protocols that will impact play on the field as well as revised operating procedures away from it. Summer Camp presented by Camping World begins on Wednesday, July 1st, the mandatory reporting date. All Players and Club staff will be required to go through medical testing and screening processes before entering Club facilities. Full baseball activities and first workouts will be allowed on Friday, July 3rd and each Club's Opening Day will be held on either Thursday, July 23rd or Friday, July 24th. A sampling of the modifications for the 2020 season, which are documented in the comprehensive Operations Manual that has been distributed to the 30 Major League Clubs, includes:

On-Field Rules

- **National League games will include the use of the designated hitter** for the first time in history.
- **An extra-innings rule will begin each extra inning with a runner on second base.**
- The batter (or a substitute for the batter) who leads off an inning shall continue to be the batter who would lead off the inning in the absence of this extra-innings rule.
- The runner placed on second base at the start of each half-inning shall be the player (or a substitute for such player) in the batting order immediately preceding that half-inning's leadoff hitter. By way of example, if the number five hitter in the batting order is due to lead off the tenth inning, the number four player in the batting order (or a pinchrunner for such



batting order. Any runner or batter removed from the game for a substitute shall be ineligible to return to the game, as is the case in all circumstances under the OBR.

- For purposes of calculating earned runs, the runner who begins an inning on second base pursuant to this rule shall be deemed to be a runner who has reached second base because of a fielding error, but no error shall be charged to the opposing team or to any player.
- As previously announced, the new **three-batter minimum rule** will require the starting or any relief pitcher to pitch to a minimum of three batters, including the batter then at bat (or any substitute batter), until such batters are put out or reach base, or until the offensive team is put out, unless the substitute pitcher sustains injury or illness.
- Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in OBR 4.03(c) or MLR 2(b)(2), **any player may appear as a pitcher** at any point during the game (i.e., no extra inning requirements or six-run rule, as were once planned for 2020). However, all players eligible to participate in the game, regardless of position, must be included on that game's lineup card.
- Prohibitions against **unsportsmanlike conduct** will be strictly enforced to prevent unnecessary physical contact and support physical distancing between individuals on the playing field. In this respect, players and managers should maintain physical distancing from all umpires and opposing players on the playing field whenever possible. Players or managers who leave their positions to argue with umpires, come within six feet of an umpire or opposing player or manager for the purpose of argument, or engage in altercations on the field are subject to immediate ejection and discipline, including fines and suspensions.

Procedures for Health and Safety

- Each Club must submit a written **COVID-19 Action Plan** for approval by MLB.
- **Spitting is prohibited** (including but not limited to, saliva, sunflower seeds or peanut shells, or tobacco) at all times in Club facilities (including on the field). Chewing gum is permitted.
- Pitchers may carry a small wet **rag** in their back pocket to be used for moisture in lieu of licking their fingers.
- Clubs must provide **expanded dugout and bullpen space** at their ballparks.
- Players, umpires, and other on-field personnel should **practice physical distancing** to the extent possible within the limitations of competition and the fundamentals of baseball. Examples of ways in which physical distancing can be incorporated without disrupting the basics of the game include:
 - When the ball is out of play, fielders are encouraged to retreat several steps away from the baserunner.
 - If the batter is in the batter's box and the catcher needs to stand to relay signs to the infielders, the catcher can step onto the grass towards the mound to give the signs before assuming his position behind home plate.



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- There will be **no pre-game exchange of lineup cards**. Instead, each Club will input their lineup card into a mobile application provided by MLB.

Scheduling

- Clubs may schedule **up to three exhibition games** before the end of Summer Camp. Clubs may consider scheduling games against their opening opponent in the days leading up to Opening Day. There is no limit on the number of intrasquad games permitted.
- A **regionally-based schedule** will feature each Club playing 40 divisional games and 20 Interleague games against the corresponding geographical division.

Revised Procedures for Transactions

- **All player transactions** that had been suspended resumed this past Friday.
- Yesterday, each Club submitted a list of up to 60 players who will be eligible to participate in Major League games during the 2020 championship season ("**Club Player Pool**").
- **Roster rules** include:
 - By 12:00 p.m. (ET) on the first date of the revised 2020 regular season, each Club must submit to MLB an Opening Day Active Roster with a maximum of 30 players, and a minimum of 25.
 - The maximum Active Roster limit shall be reduced from 30 to 28 on the 15th day of the regular season.
 - The maximum Active Roster limit shall be reduced from 28 to 26 on the 29th day of the championship season for the remainder of the championship season and postseason. There shall be no expanded rosters in September.
 - The limitations on the number of pitchers on the Active Roster otherwise required by MLR 2(b)(2) shall not apply.
 - In the event that a doubleheader takes place while the Active Roster limit is 26, both Clubs may use an additional player.
 - A Club is permitted to carry **up to three additional Taxi Squad players** from its Club Player Pool on all road trips with the Major League team. If the Club elects to carry three additional players, at least one must be a player whose designated position prior to the season is catcher. Players on the Taxi Squad are permitted to workout with the Major League Club but are not permitted to be in uniform and in the dugout during games. Upon the conclusion of each road trip, players on the Taxi Squad will return to the Alternate Training Site.
- August 31st will be the **2020 trade deadline** and September 15th will be the **2020 Postseason eligibility deadline**.
- Standard **Injured List placements** will be for either 10 days or 45 days, with the latter replacing 60. A **COVID-19 Related Injured List** will allow for placements that will not require a confirmed positive test for COVID-19. A player may be placed on the COVID-19 Related I