BULL BASEBALL LEAGUE

MANAGER'S GUIDE

FEBRUARY 2018

CONTENTS

TABLE OF AMENDMENTS

Version	Date	Amendments
1.00	January 2017	Initial release

1.01	August 2017	Updated organization chart – *p. 5*
		Updated team nicknames – *p. 6*
		Changes to organization: - *p. 7*
		   - Florida Rookie League now a spring league
		   - Added **Tournaments** section
		Added sim schedule chart for sim days – *p. 8*
		Trade deadline rules added – *p. 10*
		References to OOTP17 updated to OOTP18 throughout

1.02	February 2018	Updated cover logo Font updates References to former BOL (Bull Oceanic League) removed – *p. 4* Updated to team names in organization chart – *p. 6* Added "off-season" sim schedule – *p. 8* 2012 CBA Rules Updated – *p. 9* Update to Gambling section – *p. 10* Clarification to AI/Human Trades and right of the league to disallow or reverse trades made in bad faith – *p. 11*

COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for joining the *Bull Baseball League* as one of our human GM/managers.

You are joining a fictional baseball league with a very long history, originally formed out of a youthful passion for baseball with a strong element of whimsy and satire to add a layer of fun and enjoyment.

The league was started in **1989**, first using *Earl Weaver Baseball* on the Amiga computer platform. This game was ground-breaking for the time, allowing full customization of players, teams, stadiums and leagues, and quickly became popular not only for rebuilding historic baseball teams from bygone eras, but for fun fictional baseball teams and leagues, as well.

A core group of high schoolers ran the Bull League and its original core of teams by simulating one full game at a time, recording the results and manually updating player stats at the end of each season, as the EWB game didn't save season histories beyond the current year. Regular updates were sent out to the managers by *mail*, and occasional meet ups. One such meet up was an awards ceremony, where actual trophies were handed out to the championship teams, and most dedicated owner of the year.

Eventually the league evolved, and not long after most of the baseball fan world lost interest in baseball – during the aborted 1994 "strike" season, the Bull League petered out and sat dormant.

Until *OOTP17* was discovered. With this highly evolved platform available, and in the age of the Internet, the idea to reform the Bull League was sparked once again, and here we are today. The 1995-2015 seasons were simulated to make up for the lost years, retire out some of the crazier-named players, and evolve the league into a modern fictional online baseball league. The league now runs on OOTP18, the latest version of this incredible game simulation platform.

We recognize the OOTP platform allows for limitless game simulations and league evolutions, but at our core we have always wanted the Bull League to be as close to real baseball, but in an fun alternate universe, as possible. Some teams are in real MLB cities, some teams are in cities that could barely qualify for a beer league team, but all are treated as though they are in "the show" and the beauty of OOTP is that the stadiums will still fill up, and the fictional financial system can still make small market teams relatively competitive.

As a human GM/manager in our league, you join a league of possibilities. We have a framework, but we encourage your participation. Add to our wiki. Suggest team relocation or renaming if you like. Listen to our podcasts or even send in your own audio clips and commentary. You are not just limited to what the OOTP game allows you to do but take advantage of what the game *does* allow you to do.

We look forward to your participation! And hopefully we'll see you in the playoffs!

Ray Morrell
Commissioner, Bull Baseball League

CORE VALUES

Our league has four core values:

<div align="center">

HAVE FUN

COMMIT

RESPECT

COMMUNICATE

</div>

We want our participating GM's/Manager's to **have fun** with our league. A large part of this is good humour and a genuine enjoyment for baseball, both the simulation side and the sport side.

We look for a high level of **commitment** from our GM's/Manager's, in meeting deadlines and participating in major stages of the league's history.

We also hope to instill mutual **respect** through friendly, earnest competition. Not every team can win, but we hope for an honest effort in achieving goals from every team. Throwing games and colluding with other GM's/Manager's is a quick was to ruin the experience. Everyone should strive to field their best possible team and to respect others participating in the league.

Finally, we want open, honest **communication** between everyone, so that our GM's/Manager's feel welcomed to participate, contribute and enjoy the league.

OVERVIEW

Each player takes the role of a <u>General Manager</u> or both a GM and <u>Manager</u> of one of the league's teams. This includes at least a high-level management of that club's minor league teams.

The league drafts players from two feeder systems, one College and one High School. Teams in these leagues are not managed by any team, and they run independently from the other leagues.

The league organization chapter explains further the levels of the various leagues within the Bull Baseball League.

ORGANIZATION

The **Bull Baseball League** is the all-encompassing name for our fictional baseball association. It refers to our baseball "world" and currently includes our primary major league, 5-levels of farm leagues, and our off-season short-schedule independent international league.
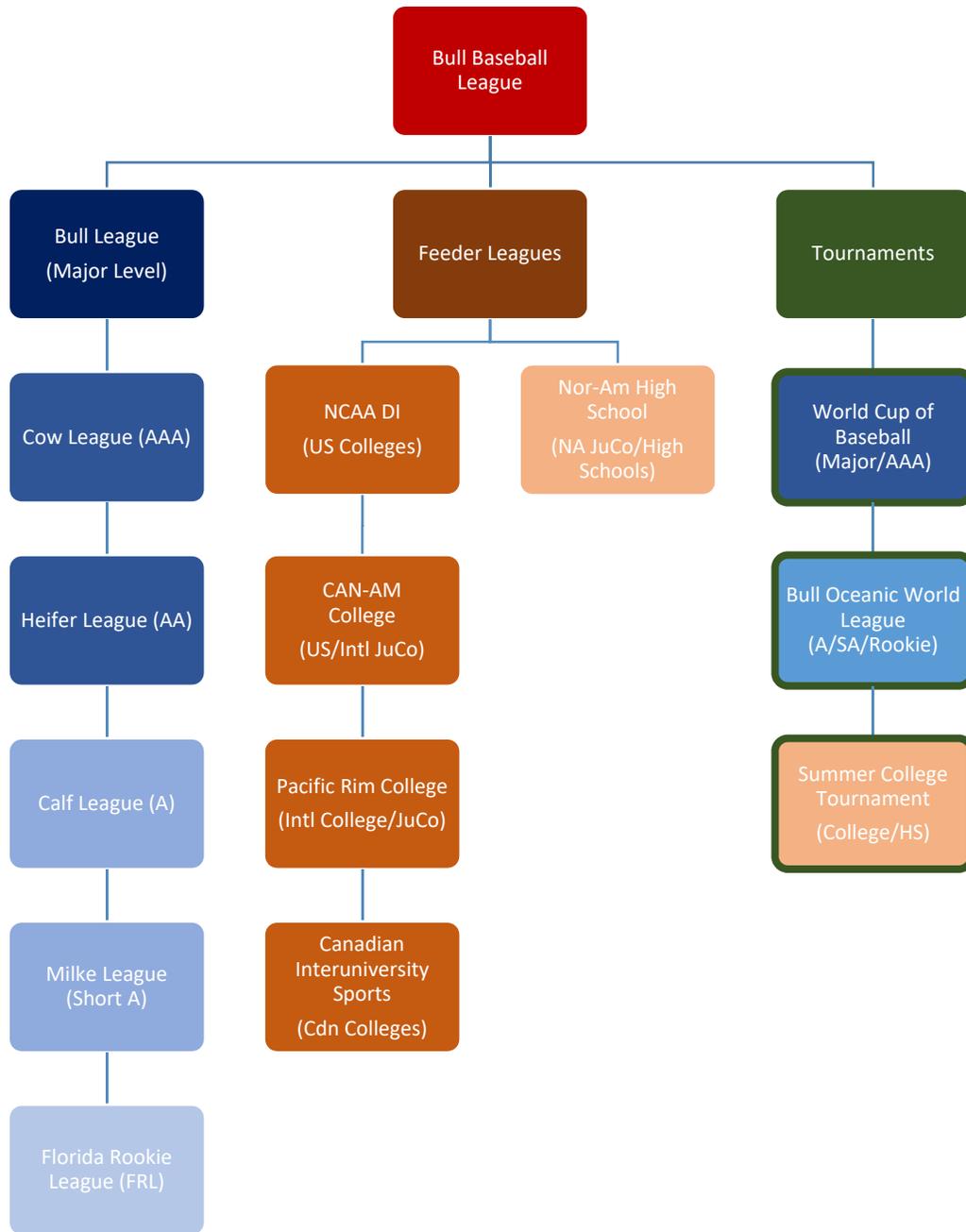
Figure 1: Bull Baseball League Organization Chart

Bull League

Our main league is the **Bull League**, which is our "major league" equivalent association. It is divided into two subleagues, both of which date back to 1991. Each subleague contains ten teams, divided up into two divisions of five teams each.

The **Lake League** teams are Canadian and U.S. teams based around the Great Lakes basin, and includes teams situated on the eastern seaboard.

The **American Eagle League** are predominantly mid-west, south-west and west coast teams in both the U.S. and Canada. Recently reorganization has added or relocated teams to the eastern U.S.

The Bull League teams play a regular season schedule of 100 games (starting in 2017).

Playoff rounds are a best-of-five format, with 4 entries in each league (league leaders plus two wild cards).

For more information on the league levels, rules and playoffs, see the Wiki (wiki.bullleague.org).

Lake League (LL)		American Eagle League (AEL)	
East Division		**East Division**	
• Boston Brawlers		• Dallas Deputies	
• Montreal Metros		• Denver Danger	
• New York Minutemen		• (Miami)	
• Rimouski Fighting Moose		• Norfolk Sharks	
• Toronto Nomads		• St. Petersburg Admirals	
West Division		**West Division**	
• Chicago Pit Bulls		• Arizona Cowboys	
• Detroit Motorheads		• Calgary Inferno	
• Louisville Sluggers		• California Tidals	
• Minneapolis Ravens		• Nevada Speeders	
• Ohio Oxen		• Seattle Salts	

Figure 2: Bull League subleague, division and team organization

Each of the Bull League teams has a logo and colour scheme. See the appendix for the current logo and colour scheme.

Cow League

The **Cow League** is the Triple-A level equivalent professional farm league which is used as the top developmental level for the Bull League.

It consists of 20 teams divided in a similar way (2 subleagues, each with 2 divisions, 5 teams in each division) as the parent league, and each team is affiliated with a Bull League team.

Players on teams in this league are primarily the top performing prospects who are destined for big-league play at some point, or are experienced veterans on rehab assignments, or otherwise waiting for full-time roster spots, or in some cases, just playing because they want to continue but who are not quite good enough to be at the top level any more.

Heifer League

Prior to the 2013 season, the league decided to round out the farm system by added the final two missing league levels, the Double-A and the Rookie level.

The **Heifer League** was adopted as the Double-A level developmental league sandwiched between the Triple-A Cow League and the Single-A Calf League.

Calf League

The Single-A **Calf League** was formed in 2004 to complement the existing Triple-A Cow League, providing an entry point into the farm systems for international free agents and first-year drafted players.

Milk League

The **Milk League** is an early developmental level for the Bull League, started in 2013 in order to round out the full farm system for the leagues. Originally, this was the lowest level and was classed as a Rookie League. As a Short Season A league, the schedule runs from about June to August.

Florida Rookie League

New for 2017 is the **Florida Rookie League**. This league offers an opportunity for teams to hone player management skills – and develop players. The schedule runs from April until June.

Tournaments

There are three regular competitive or developmental tournaments operating in the Bull League universe.

World Cup of Baseball

This annual tournament runs **October-November**. A total of 16 national teams are represented, divided into four "Groups" which are roughly geographical. Players who are at the major or AAA level in the Bull League may qualify to be on their national team roster. The schedule is a round-robin followed by a knock-out phase for the top 2 teams in each Group.

Summer College Tournament

From **July-August**, the college and high school players who remain undrafted, unsigned, or who are below draft age, may qualify to play for their national college-level team in a short format tournament. To qualify for a team, a nation must have at least one of the various school teams in one of the five college/high school leagues.

Bull Oceanic World League

A developmental tournament designed to give rookies and young professionals an opportunity to further their development in the off-season, prior to spring training, the BOWL features ten teams that are split between an Africa Division and the Australia/NZ Division. Schedule runs from **January-February**.

SIMULATIONS

In the Bull League, the games are simulated on OOTP18 (Out of the Park 18). Managers must use OOTP to perform all managerial functions.

While most games are "fast-simmed" – meaning the computer system gives an instant simulation, the league frequently runs "real time" or "live" sim games using the built-in feature in OOTP. These games provide results in near real-time on a webpage displaying linescores, with links to the game box scores and the game play logs.

Sim Schedule

The simulation schedule varies depending on the time of the season/year. Generally, during the off-season (including Winter Rookie League) simulations are 1-2 times per week with 3 or 4 games simulated at a time.

During the regular baseball season, the simulation schedule will remain approximately the same, and during some weeks may be as often as 3-4 times per week. The "normal" sim schedule is:

TUESDAY	THURSDAY	SUNDAY

Since the league is a "real time" league, the simulation date is no more than approximately one week ahead of the actual date. This pace gives managers more time to review and submit changes, review reports, perform scouting, etc. This also ensures that during the 2017 year, the league is actually playing out the 2017 season.

During the off-season (including pre-season), the sim schedule may change to 1 or 2 times per week.

This is in contrast to many OOTP online leagues, which frequently sim a week at a time, sometimes several times a week. There are many of these "fast sim" leagues and we chose to be unique by having our league run in close to "real time".

GAME RULES

While modern baseball has nearly universal rules, a baseball league operates with additional rules to ensure fair and active competitive participation by all clubs.

Championship Season

The regular season (sometimes referred to by the official name, a "championship season") in the Bull League is currently scheduled for 100 games. Each team plays the other teams in a round-robin schedule, with more games played against the four teams within their own division (14), and less games against teams in their opposing division (8) within their league. In addition, a 4-game series is played against an inter-league rival.

At the end of the championship season, the top four teams in each league complete in a three-round playoff, to determine an overall champion.

The season starts in mid-May and lasts until the first week of September.

The minor leagues play shorter schedules according to their level. For the latest information on their schedules, check the league's Wiki or the league blog.

Playoffs

The Playoffs are three rounds consisting of four seeded teams in each league. A total of eight teams (out of 20) reach the playoffs each season.

The division leaders in each of the four divisions, plus the two teams with the next highest win-loss records in both leagues, are seeded into the **Elimination Round**, which is a best-of-five series.

The **League Championship round** takes place afterwards, consisting of the two teams in each league that win their series in the Elimination Round. This round determined the overall league champions for both the American Eagle League and the Lake League. This is also a best-of-five series.

The **Bull Cup Championship** is the final round, and is consists of the two league champions playing off in a best-of-five series.

Bull Cup

There is an actual **Bull Cup** trophy on which the name of the winning team is inscribed each season. A commemorative wall plaque which is permanently kept by the winning team is also under consideration.

First Year Player Draft

The **First Year Player Draft** (known as a Rule 4 draft in MLB) occurs in June each season. Amateur players from the College and High School leagues may be drafted by teams and placed on the rosters at any level currently. Just as in real life, players may decline to sign and can return to school, particularly High School players.

Rule 5 Draft

In 2016, the league introduced the **Rule 5 Draft**. Unlike the First Year Player Draft, only minor league players with some playing experience may be drafted, usually at least two years.

Teams do not have to make a selection, and any player they select must remain on their top-level (Bull League) roster for the following season. They cannot be traded or demoted, otherwise they return to their original team.

The Rule 5 Draft occurs during the Winter Meetings, during the off-season.

2012 CBA Rules

The 2012 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) rules in OOTP were adopted prior to the 2018 season.

Roster and Age Limits

Each league level generally allows 25 players on the roster with no age limit. However, certain lower levels have higher roster limits and lower age and experience limits.

See the Wiki for the latest league rules at each level.

OWNERS, CITIES, NICKNAMES, STADIUMS

Each team has a pre-existing owner, city and stadium. Owners are completely random and already determined by the game, however, to mimic real-life, ownership changes can occasionally occur. If a playing GM/Manager makes a request, usually due to an overly restrictive owner or punitive conditions, such as low budget, etc., a change of **ownership** may be considered.

Each team is in a predetermined **city** location. Generally, the league is limited at the top level to cities in the United States and Canada. At lower levels, depending on the league, other countries may be considered. A request to relocate will be honoured during the off-season, generally. Teams do not have to be located in real "baseball" cities, and most cities will be considered. However, the market size will generally correspond to the city. For example, New York, NY = Hugh Market. Battle Creek, MI = Small market, etc. If a GM/Manager find it particularly difficult to progress or compete due to market size, a request to move will be considered and prioritized.

Team **nickname** changes can be requested and will generally be honoured. GM/Managers doing so should already have an idea of what their logo and uniform will be. You can use ootputilities.com to produce your own proposed logos/uniforms/ballcaps.

Stadiums have been preset. However, again, reasonable requests will be considered for new stadiums and new capacities. Stadium capacities vary, and generally correspond to market size, however, once again if a GM/Manager find it difficult to compete because of poor attendance revenue, requests for new stadiums will be prioritized. Generally, stadium changes should occur during the off-season.

PARTICIPATION BONUSES

GM/Managers who show extra effort in participation – for example, contributing to or by podcasting, v-logging, writing blog articles, wiki entries and edits, or other acts contributing to the league overall, will be recognized on an ongoing basis with participation bonuses.

This can include player creation and customization, player rating/personality adjustments, and other benefits.

MANAGING YOUR TEAM AND PLAYERS

Participating GMs/Managers have free reign to manage their teams as they see fit. In addition, owners cannot fire GMs/Managers, unless they consent to have this feature turned on.

Trading

Trading with human-managed and AI-managed teams is allowed. Currently OOTP supports player trading, cash trading, and draft pick trading. Three-way and multiple-team trades are not possible.

Human GM/Managers may work out trades using Slack or other communications with other GM/Managers. For AI-controlled teams, trades must be offered through the league office (the Commissioner).

GM/Managers may opt to negotiate trades openly or in private, provided there is no "fixing" or collusion involved to unfairly affect competition.

All trades, whether between human GMs or human and AI GMs, are subject to final approval by the Commissioner. Trades may be reversed by the commissioner should they later be found to have been made in bad faith or involving collusion.

AI teams are considered to "always" be open to negotiations, and all players on AI teams are regarded as "available" for trades. Human GMs are free to make offers for AI players at any time and trades are subject to approval of the commissioner.

Trade Deadline:

The non-waiver trade deadline is July 31 each year. After this point, trades may still occur, but proposed trades must be announced on #Tradetalk (in Slack) and other teams may make a claim. Claim priority is current league standings beginning with teams within the league, worst record to best record, and then the alternate league, worst record to best record. If a claim is made, the waived/proposed player may be recalled and the trade nullified, or the trading team may allow the player to be claimed and the original trade nullified.

Contracts

GM/Managers are free to offer contracts and extensions to players and personnel as they see fit to do so. This includes offers of cash/salary, team/player options, vesting options, incentive bonuses, and any other criteria permitted within OOTP, within budgetary limits.

Rosters and DFAs

The Commissioner reserves the right to release players who are on DFA and cannot be moved to a team within an organization due to roster rules or limitations.

GM/Managers must manage rosters wisely to ensure players who are DFA'd can be placed on a roster at the end of the DFA period. If they have a major league contract, for example, and the major league roster is full, then a DFA player can and will be released or retired at the discretion of the Commissioner.

If roster rules limit participation in a league, for example not having enough "rookies" with less than 2 years pro time, to staff the Rookie league roster, then the Commissioner will generate AI-created players to fill necessary roster spaces.

ABANDONMENT

If a GM/Manager is unable to or unwilling to export their team file for three consecutive simulations, without notice or explanation to the Commissioner, may be deemed to have abandoned their managerial responsibilities, and may be removed from participating in the league.

The Commissioner reserves the right to deem a GM/Manager to have abandoned their team under other adverse circumstances, and as the Commissioner retains ownership over their installation of the game, and all of the league data is produces or manipulates, the Commissioner also retains the right to adjust these guidelines, league rules, and remove GMs/Managers without cause or notice.

GAMBLING

A vote was taken at the end of January, 2018, and the GMs overwhelmingly voted against website-based league betting.

SOCIAL MEDIA

GMs/Managers are encouraged to apply their in-game persona to social media interactions. The league maintains and operates a Twitter account (**@bullleague**), a YouTube channel, and a Facebook page.

Teams and GMs/Managers may also have team-related social media accounts – the commissioner's team, the Toronto Nomads, maintain a Twitter feed.

Active social media participation is encouraged, and promoted friendly rivalries, participation and good-natured competition.

You may use team logos, images, etc. and link to league websites, HTML pages, and other social media profiles, etc. to enhance the experience. Frequent use of the **#BullLeague** hashtag and the **#OOTP18** hashtag are encouraged.

HOW TO COMPLETE LEAGUE SET-UP

1. Using a browser, go to our league website: www.bullleague.org
2. Download the League File (bl.tar.gz), which is a ZIP-style archive of the necessary files. Extract the contents into this folder, which if it doesn't exist, must be created:

<div align="center">(OOTP 18 folder) > saved_games > Bull League.lg</div>

3. When you open the game, select your name from the manager list. Your team should already be assigned. **Request your password from the Commissioner** if it has not already been provided.
4. If your name does not appear in the list, you must wait until you have been added into the league settings.
5. Ensure that you also download and extract the **settings.zip** archive into the following folder, which will enable you to upload your team exports and have the game automatically download league files from within OOTP:

<div align="center">(OOTP 18 folder) > saved_games > Bull League.lg > settings</div>

USING STATSLAB

Many of the statistical and game results and reports are available using the StatsLab utility. You can find the StatsLab portal using the "GM Login" link from the main menu of the website.

Select your name from the drop down list, and enter your password, which will be provided by the Commissioner

See our YouTube channel for videos related to using StatsLab.

THE BULL LEAGUE WIKI

Any one may view and edit the Bull League wiki. You do not need to be a GM/Manager. However, new users and those who are not signed in will have their edits reviewed.

The wiki maintains an ongoing, organic history of the Bull League universe, dating from pre-OOTP times to the present. The wiki adds depth to what we consider an immersive gaming experience. While much of the data is available in OOTP or in StatsLab, the freely based editing capabilities, multimedia capabilities and limitless nature of a wiki allows for a wider scope of user experience. We want the wiki to evolve with the league, and in particular if you have managed or used a wiki before, particularly a MediaWiki (like Wikipedia) your talents are encouraged.

Participation bonuses will be awarded for active, positive wiki participation.