



SFBI 2021 Rulebook

Baseball/Softball

GENERAL RULES FOR SFBI

1. Game time – All umpires are REQUIRED to be at fields 15 minutes before game time, they are to be ready and dressed to meet with managers at home plate 5 minutes before game time.
2. Time and length of games –When a timed league starts, time will start after the first pitch has been thrown, the umpire is to record the time. When determining if a new inning will begin, the time of the last recorded out in the BOTTOM of the inning is used as the official time. This is when the umpire will determine if time has been reached and if the game is over. Example: It's the bottom of the inning, the Yankees ground out to pitcher and the 3rd out is made. The time is 7:48, a new inning can start.
3. Game Lengths:
 - 1st/2nd Grade – 6 innings OR 2 hours, no new inning after 1:50
 - 3rd/4th Grade – 6 innings OR 2 hours, no new inning after 1:50
 - 5th/6th Grade – 6 innings OR 2 hours, no new inning after 1:50
 - 7th/8th Grade – 6 innings OR 2 hours, no new inning after 1:50
 - 1st/2nd Grade Softball – 6 innings OR 2 hours, no new inning after 1:50
 - 3rd/4th Grade Softball – 6 innings OR 2 hours, no new inning after 1:50
 - 5th/6th Grade Softball – 6 innings OR 2 hours, no new inning after 1:50
 - 7th/8th Grade Softball – 6 innings with NO TIME LIMIT
4. Last Inning Rule: The 2 managers will meet as close as possible to the 30 minutes point, before the no new inning time. This meeting will be at the start of a new inning. The team that is behind in the game will be the team that declares the LAST inning. In the event of a tie, BOTH managers MUST agree on last inning, or game is under time limit if no agreement is made. Once LAST inning is CALLED, it cannot be changed; even if the inning can be completed before the end of game time. The start of a new inning will be the last recorded out of the previous inning. After the declared last inning of the game the following will occur:
 - If the visiting team is **WINNING**, they will be limited to the capped number of runs the division allows or 3 outs, whichever occurs first. The home team will then bat to win the game.
 - If the home team is **WINNING** by 4 or more runs (5 for the Junior division), the visiting team will be allowed to score only as many runs to tie the game plus 1 run or 3 outs. The half inning ends at this point. The home team then bats to win the game.
 - If the game is tied, both teams are limited to the capped number of runs during their at bats. If the game ends up tied, no extra innings will be played.
5. Bats – In baseball ALL bats 1st grade and above must display a USSSA Bat sticker. Without a USSSA Bat sticker, the bat is not legal. For Softball and TBall NO TAPE IS NEEDED. Managers are responsible for Bat rules.
6. Sliding – SFBI expresses to managers that players must slide on all close plays. Sliding should be done when necessary to avoid collisions during a play however, there is risk

involved, players should be aware of this risk. This is a JUDGEMENT CALL on behalf of the umpire. If the player DID NOT SLIDE and it resulted in either a collision or the threat of a collision, the player will be called out for violating the rule. Umpire calls are final and are based on reasonable actions and their circumstances.

7. Games – If SFBI cancels a game due to weather, it will be announced by 5 PM on weekday games, and 9 AM on Saturday mornings. If the game is not cancelled by SFBI, you are expected to be at the fields to play. If the fields are not suitable for play, due to weather, the umpire will confer with the 2 managers and after agreement, will decide to cancel or play the game.
 - **When lightning is seen OR thunder is heard, all games are IMMEDIATELY suspended.** All managers, coaches, players, fans and umpires are to take shelter in a building or vehicle.
 - **Under no circumstances are the players to be outside of vehicles.** Do not take shelter in unsafe areas including picnic shelters, canopies or under trees.
 - All activities shall be suspended for 30 minutes after the last observed lightning or thunder is heard. If the lightning lasts 30 minutes, the game is cancelled.
 - **If a tornado siren sounds, all games are to be suspended IMMEDIATELY.** Leave equipment and find shelter in the nearest substantial building. Games will be suspended until the “all clear” has been issued by the National Weather Service.
8. In the event that a player is injured and cannot continue with the game or the practice, a SFBI incident report must be completed by the coach and given to the **Safety Officer or president within 48 hours of the incident.**

DEFINITIONS

Infield Fly Rule – The infield fly rule applies only when there is fewer than two outs and there is a force play at third (runners on first and second, or bases loaded). If a fair, fly ball is hit that in the umpire’s judgment could be caught by an infielder with **ordinary** effort, the batter is out regardless if the ball is caught or not. The runners may run at their own risk, but if the ball is caught, they must tag up.

Intentional Walk – An intentional walk is when the pitcher deliberately pitches the ball away from the batter in order to issue a walk. If in the umpire’s judgment a pitcher is deliberately trying to walk a batter, a warning will be issued. If the pitcher continues the action, the umpire will award two bases for the first occurrence with all runners on base moving up the same amount. After the first incident, a home run will be awarded each time the same team attempts an intentional walk in the same game. This call is **NOT SUBJECT** to Discussion.

Hit by Pitch – Batters must attempt to get out of the way of a pitched ball. Batters that are hit by a called strike are not considered hit by a pitch. If a batter is swinging at a pitched ball and is

hit by a pitch, it is not considered "Hit by pitch". A pitched ball that hits the ground then hits the batter is considered hit by pitch, but only if an attempt is made to get out of the way.

Home Plate- Home plate is in fair territory. Balls that hit the plate and bounce into fair territory are fair balls. A ball is fair or foul based on where it comes to rest, not where it initially hits the ground, unless it is beyond the first or third bases or when touched.

Balk Rule- The pitcher must come set by coming to a complete stop before he throws a pitch home. Once the pitcher is set he can't move his shoulders or move around unless they step off the back of the rubber. If the pitcher stops a balk will be called. As a result, any men on base are awarded the next base, and the pitch (if it was thrown in the first place) is waved off for a dead ball.

Interference/Obstruction – It is the runner's responsibility to avoid defensive players when involved in a play. Defensive players that are not involved in a play must not obstruct the base runner. There is no blocking of a base.

Dropped third strike - A dropped third strike occurs when the catcher fails to cleanly catch a pitch for the third strike. A pitch is considered uncaught if the ball touches the ground, or the ball is dropped after being caught. A dropped third strike does not exist if first base is occupied with less than two outs. If there are two outs, it does not matter if first base is occupied or not.

The batter becomes a runner and must be tagged or thrown out at first base. If the play is not made, the runner is safe at first and becomes an active base runner.

PENALTIES:

- The intentional walk penalty is explained under intentional walks.
- The penalty for the illegal use of a pitcher, either age/count rule is an automatic forfeiture of any game(s) the player was involved in.
- Interference by the runner in the umpire's judgment will result in the runner being called out.
- Interference by the defensive player in the umpire's judgment was intentional will result in the runner being awarded as many base(s) as the umpire deems necessary.
- Any manager or coach ejected from a game will result in an automatic one game suspension and forfeiture of the game. See Umpires section for a more detailed description of this rule.
- Batting out of turn **not related to an injury** will not result in a penalty. But a team will not gain an advantage from batting out of order. Therefore, a player who bats out of order is recorded as out. The out will stand and play will continue. If batting out of order results in a hit, walk or hit by pitch, the play will not count and the order will be reset. This must be caught in the inning it occurs in, and cannot be more than 1 batter past the out of order, otherwise lineup continues.
- **Throwing a bat while batting will result in one warning per game, not team.** After the warning, any bat thrown will result in an out.

UMPIRES

Umpires should arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled game time. You should have your meeting at the plate 10 minutes before game time. If an umpire is not present, both teams should ask for volunteers from the bystanders. Substitute umpires will be paid. Please report the name and phone number to the league director. The director will pass the information on to the Umpire Director.

Questions regarding a clarification of the rules must involve the other manager. A manager should ask the umpire for a time out and call the other manager over for a consultation. All conversations with the umpire will be in a normal tone of voice and controlled emotion. If a manager believes the umpire has misinterpreted a rule or otherwise erred in the application of a rule, the manager can confer with the umpire to clarify the ruling. If the ruling is to be overturned, the opposing manager is to be informed. Judgment calls are not to be changed. Sometimes it is best to let the umpire's decision stand during the game, and then talk to the umpire after the game.

You are NOT to question balls and strikes, nor make comments regarding these calls. Please share this philosophy with your fans as well.

DO NOT intimidate, disrespect or argue with an umpire. No verbal abuse or physical contact in any form will be tolerated. Umpires are instructed to eject all violators of this rule, whether it is a manager, coach, player or spectator. Fans (parents and friends) that are seated behind the backstop must refrain from calling balls and strikes and from trying to persuade the umpire.

Umpires may ask the manager to clear the area behind the backstop if there is a problem. If an umpire ejects a manager or coach for any reason, that manager or coach's team will forfeit the game. A manager will be given one warning prior to ejection. It is the manager's responsibility to control the behavior of all coaches, players and themselves. A coach will be anyone who assists in the dugout or on the field regardless if in uniform or not. In addition to the team, TEAMS' spectators will be given one warning if their behavior is unacceptable to the umpire. If a second warning is given, the team associated with the spectator(s) will forfeit the game.

If ejected, a manager or coach will be suspended for the next game. If a second violation occurs, the manager will be suspended for the remainder of the season. The league director will investigate all complaints involving managers, coaches and umpires. If the investigation finds any of the rules were violated, the manager or coach could be suspended for the remainder of the season, depending on the severity of the incident.

3rd/4th Grade Softball

Base length: 60 Feet

Home to 2nd Base: 84 Feet, 10 Inches

Pitching Mound: 35 Feet

Ball Size: 11 Inches

Bat Restrictions: 2 ¼ barrel max, no longer than 33 inches.

Safety:

- Cages are required on batting helmets and all infield players must wear face protection.
- An inning is 3 outs or 4 runs maximum.
- Teams must have at least 8 players to start a game.
- Teams may borrow a player from the other team to play right field only. The player borrowed will be the last player at bat in that inning.

BATTING

- The batter will begin with a 1-1 count.
- There is no on deck circle, batter must keep one foot in the batter's box. Exceptions are avoiding being hit by pitch and avoiding defensive play at home plate.

PITCHER

- A pitcher may pitch 2 innings per game. However, they do NOT have to be consecutive innings.
- If a pitcher hits 2 batters in a game, she shall be removed from pitching in the game.
- One foot must be on the pitching rubber when the ball is released. No leaping.
- Managers are allowed 2 visits to the mound per pitcher per game. The 3rd visit requires removing the pitcher from the game.
- Relief pitchers will be given a minimum of five and a maximum of 7 pitches for warm-up.
- Pitchers will get 7 warm-up throws to start an inning.
- BOTH FEET MUST START ON RUBBER AND ONE FOOT MUST REMAIN ON THE RUBBER DURING THE RELEASE OF THE PITCH, DRAGGING OF FOOT AFTER RELEASE IS APPROVED. No stepping backwards, only forward movement.

RUNNERS

- A lead off is allowed after the pitched ball crosses home plate or the batter's shoulder. If the runner is leaving early, the umpire will give one warning and after that the runner will be considered out.
- Runners may steal 2nd and 3rd base unlimited times during the game, home plate is able to be stolen ONE TIME per inning.
- Once the ball has been thrown, in attempts to get a runner out, the ball is live and the play does not end until it's in the hands of the pitcher.
- We want our young catchers to throw and learn offensive and defensive plays.

- The runner shall run at their own risk on overthrows at first base that stay in play.

INFIELD RULES

- When a ball is hit to the outfield with base runners on, as soon as the ball is in CONTROL by the PITCHER, the base runners will stop at the base they are heading to, no advancing to any additional bases.
- The ball in the pitcher's hands ends the play.
- As soon as a ball is thrown or hit, the ball is live and any base runner may run the bases at their own risk.
- Catchers are learning to throw to bases and we want throws to be accurate and show runners how the game is fast and strategic with their aggressive base running.
- Runners may advance and score at home after one steal per inning, the pitcher walks batter when bases are loaded, the batter puts the ball in play or the catcher attempts to throw out the base runner.
- AS SOON AS THE CATCHER THROWS TO THIRD IN ATTEMPTS TO MAKE AN OUT, THE BALL IS LIVE, EVEN IN THE EVENT OF AN OVERTHROW.
- The key is infield control, yes, a catcher is an infielder if play is home and he misses it, it's still a live ball until the pitcher has the ball back in the circle.

SOFTBALL RULES ALLOWED

Bunting – NO SLAP BUNTING ALLOWED

SOFTBALL RULES NOT ALLOWED

Intentional walk, Balks, Dropped third strike, Infield fly rule

CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

South Farmington has adopted the following policies for the safety and well-being of its members. These policies primarily protect youth members; however, they also serve to protect adult leaders. Parents and youth using these safeguards outside our program further increase the safety of their youth. Baseball/Softball leaders in positions of youth leadership and supervision will find these policies help protect youth in those situations as well.

One-on-one contact between adults and youth members is prohibited. In situations requiring a personal conference, discipline or corrective behaviors, the meeting is to be conducted with the knowledge and in view of other adults and/or youth. Discipline must be constructive. Discipline used in SFBI must be constructive. Corporal punishment is never permitted. Disciplinary activities involving isolation, humiliation, or ridicule are prohibited. Examples of positive discipline include verbal praise and high fives.

Two-deep leadership and no one-on-one contact between adults and youth members includes digital communication. Leaders may not have one-on-one private online communications or engage one-on-one in other digital activities (games, social media, etc.) with youth players. Leaders should copy a parent and another leader in digital and online communication, ensuring no one-on-one contact exists in text, social media, or other forms of online or digital communication.

The buddy system should be used at all times. The buddy system is a safety measure for all Baseball/Softball activities. Buddies should know and be comfortable with each other. Self-selection with no more than two years age or significant differences in maturity should be strongly encouraged. When necessary, a buddy team may consist of three players. No youth should be forced into or made to feel uncomfortable by a buddy assignment. Privacy of youth is respected. Adult leaders and youth must respect each other's privacy, especially in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers at Tournaments. Adults may enter youth changing or showering areas only to the extent that health and safety requires. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.

No secret organizations. South Farmington does not recognize any secret organizations as part of its program. All aspects of our programs are open to observation by parents and leaders.

No hazing. Hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included.

No bullying. Verbal, physical, and cyberbullying are prohibited. Incidents requiring an **immediate** report to the South Farmington League Executive Board must be reported to the board president:

- Any threat or use of a weapon

- Any negative behavior associated with race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability
- Any abuse of a child that meets state reporting mandates for bullying or harassment
- Any mention or threats of suicide