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## **Pigtails Bylaws**

The Virginia Beach Unified Softball League (VBUSL) is comprised of teams from various Virginia Beach Community Recreation Associations. The goal is to provide a wholesome, enjoyable activity, which develops character, skill, sportsmanship and goodwill.

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Rules will govern this league unless otherwise stated in these bylaws. The VBUSL Constitution and Code of Conduct will provide further guidance.

### **REGISTRATION FEE**

To help offset expenses, a team fee will be required (amount to be determined at the beginning of each season). Team fees should be paid to the coordinating association(s) prior to the first scheduled league game.

### **AGE GROUPS AND ELIGIBILITY**

1. This league is open to girls, 7-9 years of age. A player's age on September 30 of the current school year determines her eligibility for both the spring and fall seasons.
2. All players must be attending a public or private K-12 school, or be in an approved home school program to participate.
3. Players must register with their coordinating association, and teams must follow these VBUSL bylaws.
4. A player must meet the age requirement of the league in which she participates. Players are encouraged to participate in their own age group. Exceptions to "play up" to the next age group must be submitted by the parent and approved by their association's softball coordinator. Girls who turn 10 during the fall or spring season can play up in the Preteen league. Girls who turn 7 during the season in the fall or spring can play in the Pigtails division.
5. Players may only participate on one VBUSL team at a time.
6. Travel or independent teams are not eligible to participate in the VBUSL.
7. If eligibility of a participant is questioned, proof of age must be verified through one of the following (no copies): Original Birth Certificate, Military ID, or Passport.
8. Those who played on a high school softball team in the spring can still play on a VBUSL team in the fall season.



# VIRGINIA BEACH UNIFIED SOFTBALL LEAGUE BYLAWS – WWW.VBUSL.COM

9. Non-Virginia Beach residents must first register with a Recreation Association, and are subject to all of the Association's terms and conditions for participation. No Virginia Beach resident shall be excluded in order to accommodate a non-resident. No more than 2 non-residents on a team. Residents of Knotts Island, NC are eligible to participate and are considered residents.

## ROSTERS

1. Team rosters are limited to fifteen (15) players and four (4) game coaches.
2. A completed roster to include team name, team age group, coaches' names, and all player information (name, date of birth, jersey number) must be turned in by each team to their respective area coordinator prior to the first game of the season.
3. If player(s) are found to be playing on an incorrect team based on the eligibility guidelines set forth above, the player(s) will be removed from their team for the remainder of the season and the team **will forfeit the most recent game played by the ineligible player**. This also applies to any player information found to be invalid for any reason not in standard with the bylaws. Player information found to be false on a team roster may result in player ineligibility for one year.
4. A head coach who utilizes an ineligible player will be suspended for the remaining games of the season. Please note that the team may be required to suspend any coaches, additional players, or the entire team if VBUSL board determines that there was an intentional attempt to fraud the program. The Area Recreation Association may also impose additional penalties.

## SCHEDULING OF GAMES

1. Games will be played in accordance with the schedule developed by the VBUSL.
2. Any coach finding it impossible to play a scheduled game must notify their Area Coordinator as soon as possible. This constitutes a forfeit, and the team not at fault will receive credit for a win.
3. If games are postponed due to weather or other conditions, makeup information will be e-mailed to coaches by their Softball Coordinator and posted on the VBUSL Facebook page.
4. There will be no postponement or rescheduling of games to permit teams to prepare for or play in tournaments of any kind.
5. If a team forfeits two games in succession or three games in a season for not having the required number of players to start the game, the team may be dropped for the remainder of the season.

## VBUSL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The VBUSL assumes the following responsibilities:
  - A. Game site facilities.
  - B. Payment of officials.
  - C. Custody of rosters and authority to rule on player eligibility.
  - D. Awards to the league champions (team trophy/plaque).
  - E. Provision of game balls.

## STANDARD GAME AND PREGAME PROCEDURES

1. The contracted Officials Association will assign umpires; no team may refuse any



assigned official. Umpires may consult at any time the VBUSL bylaws in their possession for clarification.

2. Head coaches are responsible for maintaining proper conduct of their assistant coaches, parents, and players at all times. (See VBUSL Code of Conduct)
3. The home team will be noted on the schedule and occupy the third base bench.
4. **Starting of Games and Total Innings:**
  - A. Teams should arrive 30 minutes before scheduled game time. Games may start early only if both coaches agree.
  - B. No grace period. Game time is forfeit time. If a team does not have at least 8 players at umpire game time, the umpire will declare the game a forfeit.
  - C. Game time 1 hour, 20 minute time limit for all games. Starting time will be logged in the scorebook. The umpire's watch/mobile phone is the official time.
  - D. A regulation game is 6 innings, or when the time limit expires (whichever comes first).

Note: Any deviation of the above is at the discretion of the VBUSL.

5. **Coaches:**
  - A. Maximum four (4) Adult Coaches (1<sup>st</sup> Base Coach, 3<sup>rd</sup> Base Coach, and two Dugout Coaches/ Scorekeeper) and (1) Junior Assistant per team. These individuals are the only ones permitted on the field or in the dugout/bench area during the game. Coaches are responsible for keeping spectators off their benches and out of the dugout area. Only the head coach can approach the umpire during the game. The head coach must call time and ask to approach the umpire if he/she has a question on a play or call.
  - B. **Only coaches with a valid Virginia Beach Youth Sports League Volunteer Identification Card may occupy the player's dugout/bench area in addition to the limited number of players under contract certified by VBUSL. If at the start of the game, a team does not have an adult coach present with a valid Youth Sports League Volunteer Identification Card, the game will be declared a forfeit. The presence of a Junior Assistant (under age 18) at the start of the game is not an acceptable substitute if an adult coach is not present.**
6. **Scorekeeper:**

The home team shall provide an official scorer and furnish the official scorebook. It is recommended that the visiting team's scorer frequently check with the home team's scorer to avoid mistakes. The scorebooks of both teams must be filled out with all player's names and uniform numbers. If this information is not provided, protests will be denied. In the event of any keeper disputes that cannot be settled, the umpire will review both scorebooks immediately and make all necessary notations. The game will continue. As soon as possible, after the conclusion of the game, the official scorer (the home team) will present the VBUSL Area Coordinator with the scorebook and all pertinent scorekeeper dispute information.
6. **Pregame Warmup:**
  - A. Players and family on teams scheduled for the next game shall stay behind the bleachers to warm up and may not detract in any way from the game in progress.
  - B. For the pleasure and safety of spectators and fairness to the teams playing, **no**



**pregame loose-ball batting of any kind is permitted. Girls must have a helmet on any time they are swinging a bat. No hitting off a pole during the game, either in the on- deck circle or outside the playing field.**

- C. Due to the time limit, pre-game infield practice will not be taken.

**PLAYING EQUIPMENT**

1. Game balls to be used are as follows: use softballs provided by VBUSL (Dick’s 11 inch softballs), league provided only.
2. Game balls will be supplied by the home team – 1 new and 1 good (almost new) condition.
3. NFHS Bat Rules Apply.
4. Shoes with metal spikes are not allowed.
5. Catchers must wear a full helmet (no skull cap), with facemask, throat protector, chest protector, and shin guards. Hockey style masks do not require a throat guard.
6. Pigtail Batters and runners must wear helmets with earflaps, facemasks, and a NOCSAE warning label.
7. Teams must provide their own practice balls and uniforms.
8. Team members must all have the same color uniform and individually identifying jersey numbers. There shall not be duplicate jersey numbers.
9. The wearing of defender facemasks is required for all infielders when on defense for the Pigtail division. There will be no exceptions and teams will be given a forfeit when the rule is violated. In the event that a piece of required equipment is forgotten/broken, the individual’s team is responsible for correcting the discrepancy. Teams should bring extra facemasks to their games as a backup.

**PLAYING RULES**

1. **Base Distance:** 55 feet
2. **Pitching Distance** (Back point on home plate and the front side of the pitcher’s rubber): 35 feet.
3. **Team Makeup:**
  - A. A team may play with 8 players. If a team has only 8 players, the lineup will be one through eight, and the 9<sup>th</sup> position will be recorded as an out.
  - B. If additional players arrive late for a game, they can play and are added to the bottom of the batting order.
  - C. If a team loses a player for any reason, there will be no penalty if the team has at least 9 players. If a team loses the 9<sup>th</sup> player for any reason, the batting spot vacated by that player counts as an out.
  - D. In order to continue play, a team must always have at least 8 players.
  - E. The batting lineup will consist of every player in uniform in attendance at the game. The batting order will remain the same for the entire game.
  - F. Each player must play at least two innings in the field in a full 6 or 7-inning game. Any 9 players in the lineup may play in the field in any given inning. Both scorers should check players off in the scorebook when they play their required innings in the field.
4. **Run Rules:**
  - A. There is a limit of 6 runs per inning. The inning is over immediately when the 6<sup>th</sup> run is scored.



- B. The game is over and shall be declared so by the umpire after the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning and each half inning thereafter if either team leads by at least 15 runs.

**5. Playing Time:**

- A. If a Pigtales game has gone on for less than 1 hour and 20 minutes, a new inning will start and must be completed if the game's outcome has not been decided. The new inning will start the moment the third out is made completing the previous inning. The respective coaches can decide not to play the second half of the final inning if the game's outcome has been decided. No new inning shall start after the 1 hour and 20 minute time limit has expired. If a game is tied at the end of an inning and after time has expired, the game will count as a tie.
- B. Home and visiting team must leave the field and dugout immediately following the game to allow for the next game/practice.

**6. Pitching:**

- A. Pitchers are allowed a maximum of 5 warm-up pitches between innings.
- B. There can be intentional walks. The umpire should be notified of an intentional walk and no pitches will be made to that batter.
- C. The pitcher's pivot foot must remain in contact with the ground, either by staying in contact with the pitching rubber or by pushing off and dragging away from the pitching rubber, prior to the front foot touching the ground. The non-pivot foot needs to be close to, but does not have to touch, the pitching rubber at the start of the pitching motion. Techniques such as the "crow hop" (the replant of the pivot foot prior to delivering the pitch) and "the leap" (when both feet are airborne) are illegal. These actions, if and when they occur, are in the judgment of the umpire and may not be protested. See the figure on the next page, taken from the Virginia Beach Community Softball Bylaws (Fast Pitch). Only No. 1, 2, and 3 are legal pitches.
- D. Any step backward by the non-pivot foot shall begin before the hands come together. The step backward may end before or after the hands come together.
- E. The pitcher shall bring the hands together for not less than one (1) second before releasing the ball. The pitcher shall not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter. The pitcher shall not make a stop or reversal of the forward motion after separating the hands.
- F. All pitches must be underhand - no overhand pitches.
- G. Pitchers cannot use a full circle (windmill) windup. Any pitch thrown with a full circle windmill motion will be considered an illegal pitch. Standard underhand or slingshot style pitches are legal pitches.
- H. An illegal pitch shall be declared immediately by the umpire (delayed dead-ball signal). The batter is awarded a ball. Base runners will not be awarded one base. (Exception) – if the batter reaches first base safely and each other runner advances at least one base, the illegal pitch is nullified. All action stands and the illegal pitch is canceled. If runners advance beyond one base, though, the opposing team can try to get them out.
- I. A batter hit by a pitch will automatically be given first base as long as the pitch was



not ruled a strike and the batter was in the batter's box, even if no attempt was made by the batter to evade the pitch. The hit batter is given a walk under these conditions, even if the pitched ball hits the ground before hitting the batter.

- J. A coach will be allowed one visit on the field to meet with the pitcher per inning. The second appearance (in the same inning) necessitates the removal of the pitcher from the pitching position for the remainder of the game. If a player is otherwise removed from the pitching position, she may return to the pitching position a maximum of one time per game. A player can be brought from the bench or from any on-field position to the pitching position between innings or within an inning, as long as time is called.

**7. End of play:**

- Time is called by the umpire when the team has made a clear attempt to throw the ball to the pitcher. Intent is up to the umpire's discretion. Control of the ball by the pitcher is NOT required.

**8. Infield Fly Rule:** no rule in effect.

**9. Double First Bases:**

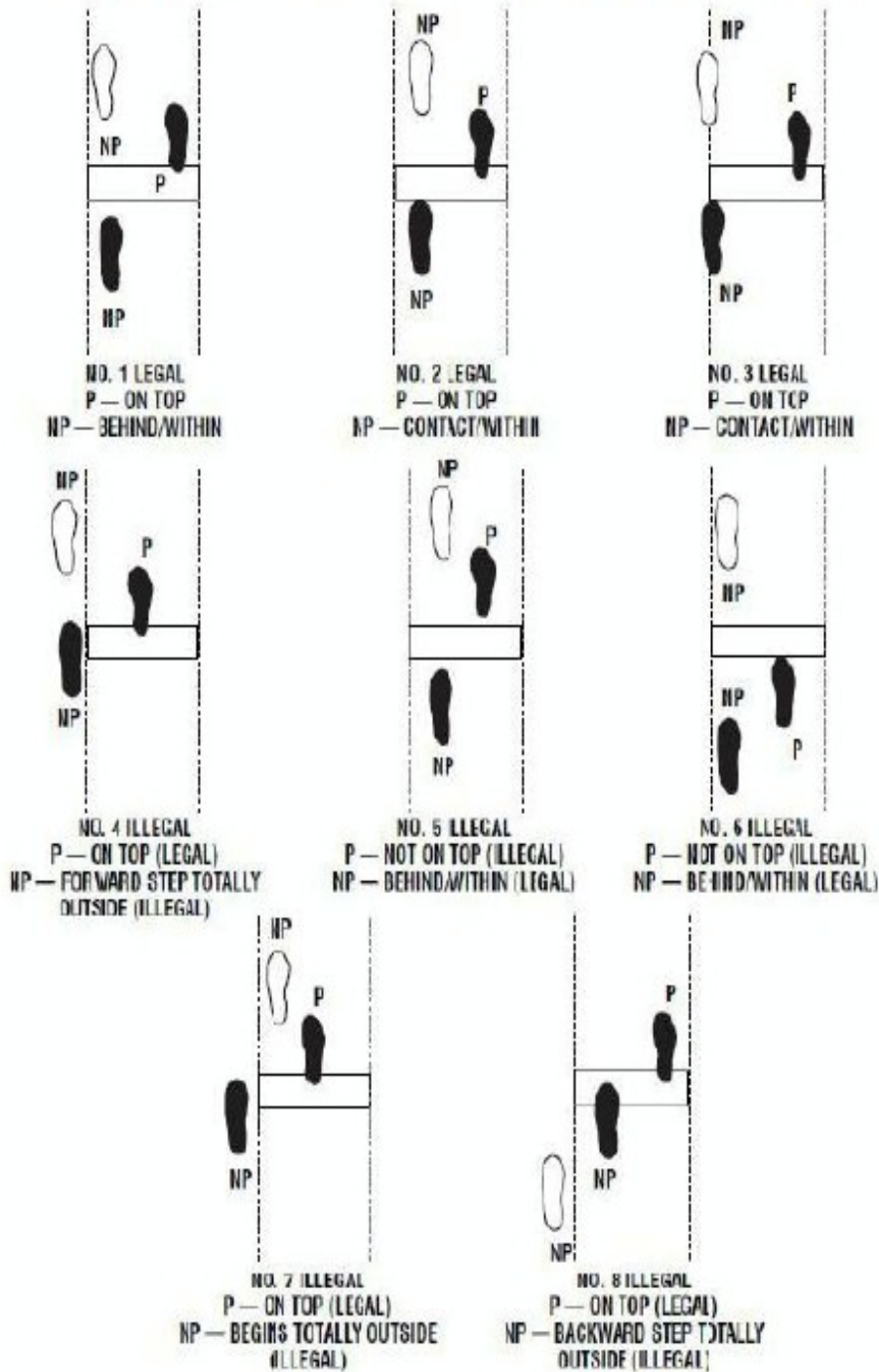
Double first bases will be used at all fields for league play. The following rules will be enforced, consistent with National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) guidelines:

- A. A batted ball hitting or bounding over the white portion is fair.
- B. A batted ball hitting or bounding over the orange portion is foul.
- C. The defense must use the white portion and the batter-runner the orange portion when a play is being made on the batter-runner.
  - i. The batter-runner is out when there is a play being made at first base and the batter-runner touches only the white portion if legally appealed by the defense during the live ball situation.
  - ii. The batter-runner is out for interference when there is a force play and the batter-runner touches only the white portion and collides with the fielder about to catch a thrown ball while on the white base.
  - iii. Obstruction is called on the defense when there is a force play on the batter-runner who touches only the orange portion and collides with the fielder about to catch a thrown ball, while also on the orange portion.
- D. The offense or defense may use either the white or orange portion:
  - i. On any force out attempt from the foul side of first base.
  - ii. On an errant throw pulling the defense off the base into foul ground.
  - iii. When the defensive player uses the orange portion of the double base, the batter-runner can run in fair territory when the throw is coming from the foul side of first base, and if hit by the thrown ball, it is not interference. If intentional interference is ruled, the runner is out.



P = PIVOT  
NP = NON-PIVOT  
STARTING POSITION = BLACK  
FINISHING POSITION = WHITE

**REFERENCE CHART  
FOR (F.P.) 6-1-1 AND 6-1-2**



- E. The offense or defense may touch the white or orange base:
  - i. On a fair ball hit to the outfield with no play being attempted or when the runner is returning to first base.
  - ii. On a fly ball tag-up play.
  - iii. On an attempted pick-off play.
  - iv. On a base on balls.
- F. If the base runner uses the orange portion at any time after safely reaching first base and is not in contact with the white portion, then she is considered off the base.

**10. Leading and Stealing:**

Runners must stay in contact with the base at all times until the pitched ball crosses home plate. Any runner leaving contact with the base prior to the ball crossing home plate will be ruled out. No stealing of home. Batters receiving a walk cannot continue to second base but must stop at first base after they are walked.

**11. Look Back Rule:**

When a runner 1) is legitimately off her base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing her turn at bat, and 2) is stationary when the pitcher has possession of the ball in the circle, the runner must immediately attempt to advance to the next base or immediately return to the previous base. The responsibility is completely on the runner. There is no obligation on the pitcher to look, fake or throw. Failure to immediately proceed to the next base or return to the previous base after the pitcher has possession of the ball within the circle will result in the runner being declared out. A runner who hesitates or “jitterbugs” is declared out. This is an umpire’s judgement and cannot be protested. Complete details for this rule are in the NFHS Rule Book.

**12. Courtesy Runner:**

- A. When there are two outs, the player who made the second out of that half inning can become the courtesy runner for the catcher as soon as she reaches base. Once a courtesy runner is designated, no other courtesy runner or the catcher may return to run for the original courtesy runner.
- B. Exception: Should an injury occur to the courtesy runner, the player that made the first out of that half inning may become the courtesy runner until she scores or is put out.
- C. If a player is injured during the game, a pinch runner can be used for that player. The injured player can return to the game at any time.

**13. Hidden Ball:**

There will be no hidden ball tricks or anything to encourage a delay. Umpires will inform players to put the ball into play immediately and make every effort to keep the game moving.

**14. Player substitution:**

Players can be substituted from the bench or moved to a different on-field position or back to the bench at any time for any position including pitcher, as long as time is called, with the exception of the limitations identified in rule 6J.

- 15. No infielder can be in front of the pitcher until after the pitch is thrown. Outfielders must be behind the base (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>) when the pitch is thrown.
- 16. Bunting is allowed in this league.





# VIRGINIA BEACH UNIFIED SOFTBALL LEAGUE BYLAWS – WWW.VBUSL.COM

## PLAYER/TEAM CONDUCT

1. All player parents are required to read and sign the VBUSL Code of Conduct. Each team will turn in completed forms to their Area Coordinator prior to the first game of the season.
2. Head coaches are responsible for their assistants, players, and spectators at games. Any team refusing to control a coach, player or spectator is subject to game forfeiture.
3. Unsportsmanlike conduct by any coach, player, or spectator will not be tolerated. Violators are subject to suspension by the VBUSL board.
4. Any player, spectator, or coach cited by an official for unsportsmanlike conduct can be suspended from both games and practices for a length of time to be determined following a review of the situation by the VBUSL board. One does not need to be ejected from the game to be at fault for unsportsmanlike conduct. No notice of this suspension shall be necessary. In the event a player or coach deviates from the VBUSL board ruling, it will constitute a forfeit for any game played during the suspension period and the team not at fault will receive credit for a win. The player, parent, or coach suspension will remain in effect until it is completed.
5. Any individual ejected from a game must leave the field immediately and not be within visual contact of the field. The length of any suspension will be determined by the VBUSL board.
6. Any player, spectator, or coach ejected from the game by an official for physical altercation will automatically be suspended from the league for the remainder of the season.
7. Any player, coach, or spectator who is guilty of striking an official in any manner before, during or after a game shall automatically be suspended indefinitely from the league.
8. Player/coach/team/spectator conduct following the game and during the end of game team line-up MUST follow the guidelines of the VBUSL Code of Conduct.

## PROTESTS

1. All protests must be submitted in writing or by email by the Area Chairperson to the VBUSL Lead Coordinator within 72 hours of the incident (see protests, item #3).
2. Player Eligibility Protests:
3. In the event a protest is lodged on a player's eligibility and the player proves to be ineligible, the player will be suspended from the league for the remainder of the season and the team will forfeit the previous game in which she has participated. See additional information under the Roster heading of this document. Protesting head coach must immediately notify the umpire at the time of the alleged infraction, and it will be announced that the game is being played under protest. Scorers will note in their scorebook the following:
  - A. Umpire approved reason for protest.
  - B. The exact time of the protest announcement from the umpire.
  - C. The inning.
  - D. Players on base(s), current batter, balls and strikes, etc.
4. THE GAME MUST CONTINUE.
5. The protesting head coach must submit the scorekeeper documented protest within the guidelines (see protests, item #1).
6. No protest involving umpire's judgment (ball or strike, fair or foul, safe or out, etc.) will be considered at any time.

## AUDIO/VISUAL

1. Any videos taken are for personal use only and cannot be posted for public viewing.
2. Head coaches/assistant coaches may not record during game time play.
3. Recording equipment may not be attached to any part of the field of play [i.e. backstop, fencing along 1st and 3rd base, dugouts, on the person of a coach within the area of play (i.e. spy goggles)].



## **VIRGINIA BEACH UNIFIED SOFTBALL LEAGUE BYLAWS – WWW.VBUSL.COM**

4. All recording must be done outside the field of play.
5. 1st offense: 2 game period suspension (including practices).
6. 2nd offense: suspended for remainder of season (including practices).
7. 3rd offense: Banned from coaching for life.

### **FIELD CONDITIONS/WEATHER**

1. In the event of rain or other inclement weather, updated information about the status of games will be posted on the VBUSL Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/VABUSL/>) by 7:30 am on Saturdays and 11:00 am on Sundays.
2. Once a game has begun, the umpire will determine if the field is playable. The umpire's decision will be final. If a game is halted, the teams will not leave the immediate area for a period of 15 minutes. After this period, the umpire will make a decision as to whether the game will continue or be called.

### **INSURANCE**

1. Players participating in the league should have accident insurance coverage. This is the player's (parent's) responsibility. Recreation associations do not provide insurance in case of injuries for the players, coaches, or spectators.
2. The VBUSL, and any participating recreation association, will not be held liable for injuries sustained by any person or group participating in our programs while they are playing, practicing or traveling to/from games/practices.

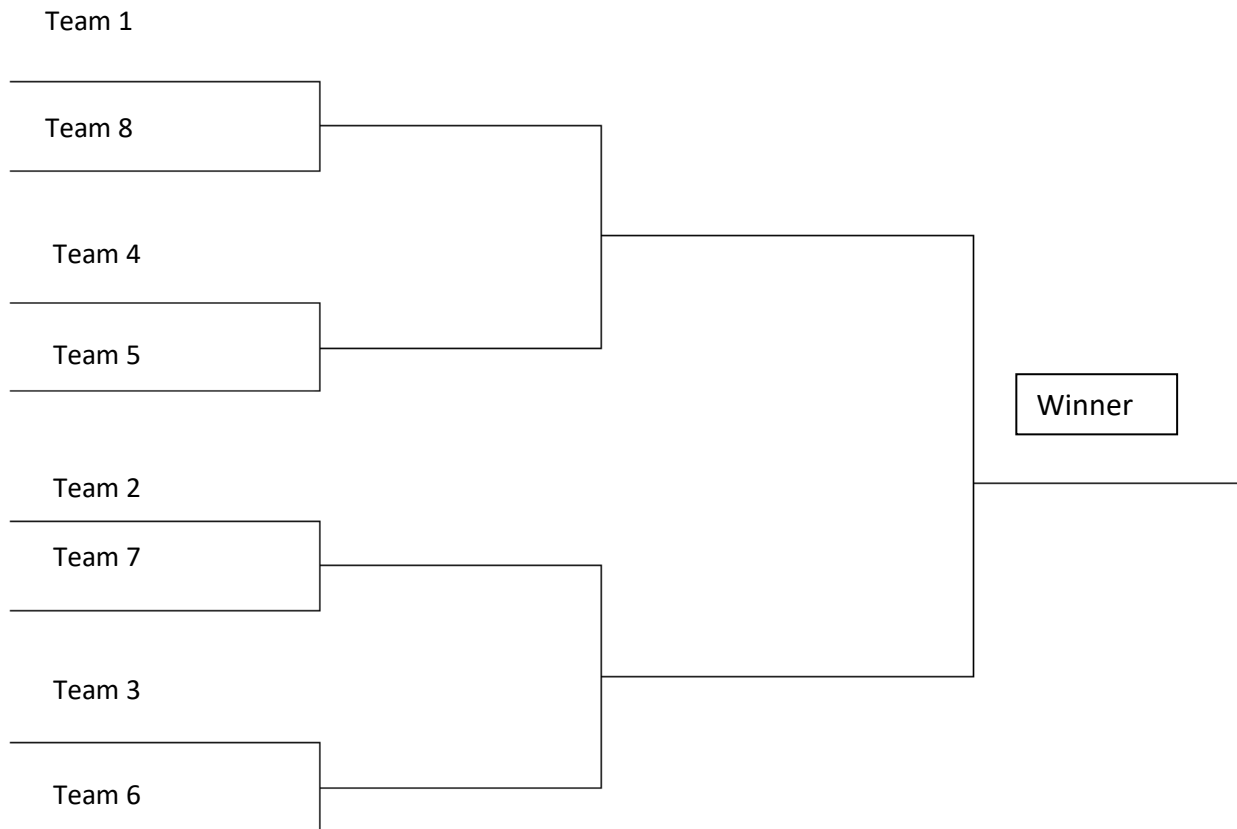
### **PLAYOFFS**

1. Regular season game time limit will be in effect for all playoff games except the Championship Game, which will be 6 innings.
2. Run rules are in effect for all playoff games.
3. Any playoff game halted will resume from point of interruption.
4. Be prepared to play all games on short notice, even during the same day.
5. Home team will be determined by a coin flip unless one team has a better record than the opposing team in the same division. In that case, the team with the better record, or a better head to head record if the two teams have the same record, will be the home team.
6. Game balls for playoff games will be provided by VBUSL.
7. Tied Playoff Game:  
If a playoff game remains tied after 6 complete innings, extra innings will be played to determine a winner, using the International tie-breaker rule.
8. Playoff International tie-breaker rule:  
Starting with the 7<sup>th</sup> inning, the offensive team shall begin their turn at bat with the player who made the last out of the previous inning being placed on second base. If the player who should begin the half inning at second base is absent, an out is not declared.  
Instead, place on second base the player whose name precedes the absent player's name in the line-up.
9. If there is one division, the top team will play the 8<sup>th</sup> place team, 2<sup>nd</sup> plays 7<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> plays 6<sup>th</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> plays 5<sup>th</sup> (see brackets on the next page). If there are 2 division, the top team in division 1 will play the 4<sup>th</sup> team from division 2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> place team from division 1 will play the 3<sup>rd</sup> ranked team from division 2. The winners of these 2 games will play each other. The top team in division 2 will play the 4<sup>th</sup> team from division 1. The 2<sup>nd</sup> place team from division 2 will play the 3<sup>rd</sup> ranked team from division 1. The winners of these 2 games will play each other. The winners of the 2 brackets will

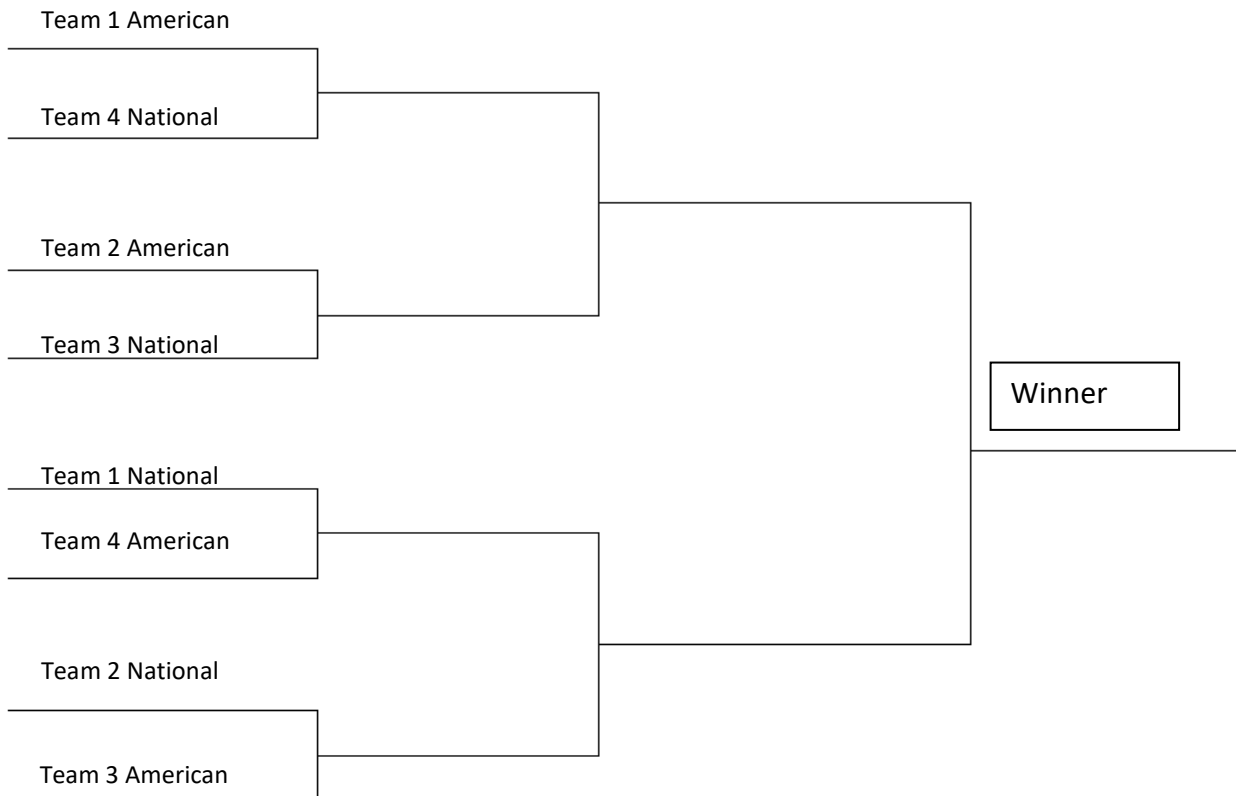


play each other for the championship (see brackets listed on the next page) .

**Team Playoff Bracket if One Division**



**Team Playoff Bracket if Two Divisions**



**SCORES/STANDINGS**

1. Winning Team Score:
  - A. The home and away scorekeepers are both responsible for providing the umpire at the end of a game the official final score, team names, and age group. The umpire is responsible for e-mailing scores, team names, age group, and playing field to [VBUSLScores@gmail.com](mailto:VBUSLScores@gmail.com) **no later than 11:59 P.M. the night of the game.**
2. Tie Game Score:
  - A. In case of a tie, the umpire shall e-mail game information from (Scores section #1) to [VBUSLScores@gmail.com](mailto:VBUSLScores@gmail.com) **no later than 11:59 P.M. the night of the game.**
  - B. This is necessary to maintain accurate standings.

**ALL STARS**

1. The team’s coaches will decide All Star representatives in the Pigtail division.
2. The naming of alternates is recommended.
3. All Star games will be played approximately one week after the playoffs are completed, weather permitting.
4. Teams will generally hold one or two practices before the game.



## **VIRGINIA BEACH UNIFIED SOFTBALL LEAGUE BYLAWS – WWW.VBUSL.COM**

5. Number of players from each team will be determined by the final rankings, with the higher-ranked teams placing more players than lower ranked teams on a weighted allocation basis. Efforts will be made to have the same number of players on opposing teams. If a league has 2 divisions, players will represent their division. Number of players from each team will be determined based on the total number of teams. See the examples below which describe the breakdown for either 12 or 16 total teams. Numbers will be adjusted if there are totals other than 12 or 16 teams.
6. One coach from the highest ranked team from each recreation association will serve as an All Star coach, to be determined by the recreation association. The head coach from the highest ranked team in the league/division will be head coach.
7. Girls will wear the jersey from the team they represent.
8. VBUSL will provide recognition to each player in the form of a medallion or other item.
9. The game will be 6 innings or 2 hours, whichever occurs first.
10. Head coaches will be provided with contact information supplied for the All Star game. This information is to be used only to coordinate practice schedules and not for any other purpose.
11. Players must go in the field in the first available inning.

### **Example of An All Star Breakdown if Two Divisions of Six teams with 14 players per team.**

#### **American Team**

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American Team One 4 players

American Team Two 3 players

American Team Three 3 players

American Team Four 2 players

American Team Five 1 player

American Team Six 1 player

#### **National Team**

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National Team One 4 players

National Team Two 3 players

National Team Three 3 players

National Team Four 2 players

National Team Five 1 player

National Team Six 1 player

### **Example of An All Star Breakdown if Two Divisions of Eight teams with 15 players per team.**

#### **American Team**

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American Team One 3 players

American Team Two 2 players

American Team Three 2 players

American Team Four 2 players

American Team Five 2 players

#### **National Team**

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National Team One 3 players

National Team Two 2 players

National Team Three 2 players

National Team Four 2 players

National Team Five 2 players



# VIRGINIA BEACH UNIFIED SOFTBALL LEAGUE BYLAWS – WWW.VBUSL.COM

American Team Six 2 players

National Team Six 2 players

American Team Seven 1 player

National Team Seven 1 player

American Team Eight 1 player

National Team Eight 1 player

## **NOTES**

1. Coaches will advise parents and players of the bylaws. Ignorance of any bylaw will not be tolerated.
2. Please park in authorized parking areas only.
3. Smoking, use of tobacco products, and use of all types of e-cigarettes (including nicotine vapor and non-nicotine vapor products) are prohibited by State Law on School Property. Thank you for your cooperation.
4. Per Virginia Beach School Board Policy, pets other than service animals are prohibited on school property.
5. At Virginia Beach City Parks, pets are permitted but must be leashed and under control with leash in hand at all times. Please be sure to scoop the poop.
6. NO PETS are allowed on the athletic fields at any time.

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