

BRAVES BASEBALL

2026 SWING FOR THE RINGS TOURNAMENT RULES

1. All games played shall be governed by Ohio High School Baseball Rules. ONLY those exceptions specifically listed herein shall be applicable.

2. **Player eligibility:**
 - a. 7U Baseball - Players must not be 8 years old before May 1 of the current year.
 - b. 8U Baseball - Players must not be 9 years old before May 1 of the current year.
 - c. 9U Baseball - Players must not be 10 years old before May 1 of the current year.
 - d. 10U Baseball - Players must not be 11 years old before May 1 of the current year.
 - e. 11U Baseball - Players must not be 12 years old before May 1 of the current year.
 - f. 12U Baseball - Players must not be 13 years old before May 1 of the current year.
 - g. 13U Baseball - Players must not be 14 years old before May 1 of the current year.
 - h. USSSA Grade Rule is in effect, meaning if a player has a birthdate prior to the cutoff date but is in the appropriate grade level then they will be allowed to play (i.e. A player who turns 10 prior to the May 1st cutoff date but is in the 4th grade is eligible to play in the 10u division).
 - i. All players must have their birth certificates present at each game played in the tournament.
 - j. Team rosters must be submitted with the registration form. Roster size is limited to only 15 players.
 - k. If a player is found to be ineligible, the team will forfeit all games in which the ineligible player played.

3. **Field Dimensions:** Pitching and base path distances shall be:

| AGE | PITCHING RUBBER | BASE PATH |
|---------|-----------------|-----------|
| 7U-8U | 35' | 60' |
| 9U-10U | 45' | 60' |
| 11U-12U | 50' | 70' |
| 13U | 54' | 80' |

4. **Equipment:**
 - a. There are no glove or bat length, barrel diameter or length/weight differential limitations in 7U-13U except the BPF 1.15 requirements

- b. N.O.C.S.A.E. approved batting helmets shall be worn by all batters, base runners, and on deck batters. Catchers must wear, at minimum, standard protective gear including an N.O.C.S.A.E approved hockey-style mask-helmet combo, chest protector, shin guards and protective cup. Player/Bullpen catchers must at least wear a protective mask (Full equipment is preferred and strongly encouraged by the league.)
- c. Only rubber or plastic spikes are allowed from age 7-12. Metal spikes may be used at 13U.

5. Game play:

- a. A minimum of 8 players are required to begin a game.
- b. Games shall be six (6) innings in duration for age levels 7U-11U, while 12U-13U shall be seven (7) innings, however innings necessary to break a tie are permitted.
- c. Run Rules shall apply when the visiting team is behind 15 runs after 3 innings; 12 runs after 4 innings and 10 runs after the 5th inning. However, in 7u & 8u a half inning shall consist of three (3) outs or five (5) runs, whichever comes first. Except, in the final inning (6th) when it shall be 3 outs only. 7u & 8u level teams will adhere to a 12 run lead after 4 innings or 10 run lead after 5 innings rule. (Thus playing a minimum of 3 ½ or 4 innings prior to any run rule).
- d. In the 9u-13u age groups, all pool play and bracket games (except championship game) will have a 1 hour 45-minute time limit. This means that no new inning shall start after the 1 hour and 45-minute time limit. Drop Dead at 2 hours. In the 7u and 8u age groups there will be a 1 hour and 15 minute (no new inning) time limit with a drop dead at 1 hour and 30 minutes for all pool play and bracket games. (except championship game)
 - (Time limits are subject to change based on weather, etc).
 - i. There will be no time limit for championship games.
 - ii. A new inning begins once the 3rd out of the previous inning is made.
 - iii. For bracket play only (except championship game), In the event of a tie and prior to the end of regulation time, one extra inning shall be allowed. If further play is required to determine a winner, a runner shall be placed at second base with no outs. The runner must be the last batter of the previous inning.
 - iv. Championship games are continued until there's a winner (normal extra inning rules will apply until a winner is determined).
 - v. Tie Breakers The following rules will determine how teams will advance out of their pool or determine round robin champion if applicable:
 - 1. Win-Loss
 - 2. Head to Head
 - 3. Runs Allowed
 - 4. Run Differential

5. Run Scored

6. Coin Flip

- e. Pitchers in the 9U-11U divisions can pitch a MAXIMUM of 3 innings per game (1 pitch constitutes an inning). In the 12U-13U divisions a pitcher can pitch a MAXIMUM of 4 innings per game (1 pitch constitutes an inning).
- f. A continuous batting order will be used for 7U – 12U games and shall be optional in 13U games (see 13U Substitution Addendum). All players in uniform will be in the batting order. An injured player or a player being disciplined may be withheld from the batting order as long as the coach reports this to the opposing coach prior to the game's start. In the event a player is injured his spot is skipped without penalty. In the event of an ejection, that spot is an automatic out for the rest of the game. In a continuous batting order, the spot occupied by an ejected player is an automatic out for the rest of the game. Free substitution shall be used defensively, except for the pitcher. Once a pitcher is removed from the pitching position, he shall not return to the pitching position in that game.
- g. A courtesy runner may be used for the pitcher and catcher at any time after reaching base. The courtesy runner may be anyone not having started or appeared in the game (when using other than continuous batting) or in the event that all players have been placed in the line-up, after that point, the courtesy runner may be anyone not in the game. A courtesy runner shall be the player who made the last out in a continuous batting situation. Note that this is an option and not a mandatory "speed-up" rule. Being a courtesy runner does not affect that player's ability to enter the game at a later point.
- h. A trip to the mound will be charged once the coach crosses the foul line to talk to the pitcher or any other fielder. Two trips per inning (per pitcher) are allowed. However the pitcher must be removed from the pitcher's position during the second mound visit in one inning.
- i. Base runners must avoid violent or malicious contact during league play. (For interpretation, this means high spiking, or the use of body parts for the purpose of dislodging the ball or causing bodily harm.)
- j. Charging umpires on judgment calls has no place in youth baseball. Any player, coach, bench personnel, or fan who charges an umpire shall be warned to stop their action at once. If the warning is not heeded immediately, the offender shall be ejected from the tournament. There shall not be any other warnings to that team. Any malicious contact with an umpire is an automatic ejection from the game and tournament and subject to team dismissal from the tournament.
- k. The head coach shall be the only coach to approach an umpire to discuss any rule or judgement call. Assistants will be given a warning and then ejected if the action continues.
- l. Protests are prohibited. The ruling of the on-field umpires is final.

6. Failure to start on time:

- a. There shall be a 10-minute grace period for a late start.
- b. The team that was on time shall notify the tournament director of the infraction.
- c. This grace period shall only be afforded once during the tournament, after which the on time team may elect a forfeit.
- d. If a team shows after the 10-minute grace period or it is their second or more infraction, the on time team may elect a forfeit win. However, if they choose to play the game, it shall be official and the grace period violation is waived in that instance only.

7. A pre-game umpires/coaches meeting shall be conducted prior to the start of every game in order to inform the visitors of all ground rules and to properly educate the umpire of all league specific playing rules. At this time each coach will pay the umpire for the game. NO EXCEPTIONS! Game time begins after the conclusion of the plate meeting.

8. Umpires:

- a. All attempts will be made to have an OHSAA sanctioned umpire for all games.
- b. Payment of Umpires
 - i. Umpire fees are payable in a form acceptable to the umpire, at the pre-game meeting or as arranged with the umpire.
 - ii. Teams shall split umpire expenses for all games. (see flyer for cost)

9. Inclement weather or darkness:

- a. The tournament director will be designated as the responsible party for determining the start of a game due to inclement weather or darkness. Until the game is started, the umpire shall have no authority in this matter.
- b. In the event of a weather issue, every effort will be made to get all the games played. The tournament director has the right to shorten games and change all scheduling to accommodate. Refund policy is as follows: 75% refund if no games played (covers trophies and diamond dry).
- c. No game shall be started or commenced where lightning is present or there is a tornado warning (As distinguished from a watch). Once the game is started, the umpire in chief alone shall be responsible for such determinations.
- d. If a game is called due to inclement weather or darkness, it shall be a completed game if official (4 completed innings for 6 inning games and 5 complete for 7 innings). If it is not yet official, it shall be picked up at a point of suspension and completed in the remaining amount of time left in the game.

10. Roster Batting with Free Substitution:

A continuous batting order will be used. All players in uniform will be in the batting order. An injured player or a player being disciplined may be withheld from the batting order as long as the coach reports this to the opposing coach prior to the game's start. In a continuous batting order, the spot occupied by an ejected player is an automatic out for the rest of the game. Free substitution shall be used defensively, except for the pitcher. Once a pitcher is removed from the pitching position, he shall not return to the pitching position in that game.

11. Courtesy Runners:

A courtesy runner may be used for the pitcher and catcher at any time after reaching base. A courtesy runner shall be the player who made the last out in a continuous batting situation. Note that this is an option and not a mandatory "speed-up" rule. Being a courtesy runner does not affect that player's ability to enter the game at a later point.

13U Substitution Addendum

In all 13U games, each team has the option of:

1. Roster Batting with Free Substitution
2. Using a Designated Hitter (DH)
3. Using an Extra Hitter (EH)
4. Using both a Designated Hitter (DH) and an Extra Hitter (EH)
5. Bat 9 play 9.

Both teams are not required to select the same option; however each team must play the entire game with their respective choice.

Roster Batting with Free Substitution

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(when using other than continuous batting) or in the event that all players have been placed in the line-up, after that point, the courtesy runner may be anyone not in the game. A courtesy runner shall be the player who made the last out in a continuous batting situation. Note that this is an option and not a mandatory “speed-up” rule. Being a courtesy runner does not affect that player’s ability to enter the game at a later point.

Notes on both Designated Hitter (DH) and/or Extra Hitter (EH)

If a team has used all eligible and healthy players in a game and a player is injured or ejected, the opposing coach shall choose from among the healthy players having played but not currently in the game to finish the game. If no healthy players are available, the game shall be forfeited at that point. The high school re-entry rule shall be in effect (Starters may re-enter once in their same spot in the batting order. Non-starters may not re-enter. **Designated Hitter (DH) rules are the High School D.H Rules**

Extra Hitter (EH) rules

- a.) The extra hitter can play defense.
- b.) If the extra hitter is used, he must be used for the entire game.
- c.) The extra hitter must remain in the same position in the batting order for the entire game.
- d.) If an extra hitter is used, all ten (10) players must bat and any nine (9) players can play defense. Defensive positions can be changed, but the batting order must remain the same.
- e.) The extra hitter may be substituted for at any time, either by a pinch hitter or a pinch runner, who then becomes the extra player. The substitute may be a player who has not yet been in the game.

9U Addendum

The following modification to the league rules shall apply to the 9U Division:

1. Nine (9) defensive players shall play in the field.
2. Balk rules shall not apply.
3. A batter shall be automatically out on a dropped / missed third (3rd) strike by the catcher.
4. Runners shall not lead-off but may advance at their own risk (steal) once a pitched ball has passed home plate. When a runner tries to advance prior to the pitched ball passing home plate, the following shall apply:
 - a. Approved Ruling: If the runner advances safely, the Umpire shall call "Time" and the runner shall return to the base last legally occupied at the time of the pitch. If the runner is called out, the call shall stand, and the runner is out. If the ball is hit, the defensive team shall have the option of the result of the play or a no pitch.
 - b. No delayed stealing. After the ball is pitched and the ball crosses home plate, a runner must immediately make an attempt to steal the next base. A team will receive one warning per game for the violation of leaving base too early, and the runner must return back to the base. Thereafter, runners will be called out.
5. If a runner has been stopped at 3rd base, and the next pitch has occurred; then the runner shall not advance from third (3rd) base to home unless the runner is batted home or forced by a base on balls or hit batsman. Runners shall not advance from third (3rd) base to home on passed balls, wild pitches or dropped / missed third (3rd) strikes by the catcher, as well as first/third situations.
6. No Infield Fly Rule.
7. No Bunting
8. An inning will be 3 outs or 6 runs maximum, even if the last hit causes more than 6 runs to score (only 6 runs will count).
9. Unlimited Runs will be allowed as follows:
 - a. In the 6th inning.
 - b. In any inning the umpire declares as the last due to the time limit.
 - c. In extra innings, if necessary.
10. Play is stopped when the ball is in control of an infielder and the lead runner has been stopped.

7U & 8U Rules Addendum

The following modification to the league rules shall apply to the 7U & 8U Division:

1. Ten fielders will be used. Normal positions with four outfielders. Outfielders must be approximately an equal distance from home plate; this means no “short fielders”. Outfielders must have both feet in the grass.
2. One coach is allowed in the outfield when his/her team is on defense. The defensive coach should be positioned behind the outfielders.
3. The fielding pitchers must be within 5” of the pitching rubber until the ball is pitched. The fielding pitcher may stand to the right, left, or behind the mound, but not in front of the designated pitcher.
4. The designated pitcher will pitch overhand from the pitching rubber. The designated pitcher MUST make every effort to leave the playing field immediately after the ball is hit. The designated pitcher will use caution NOT TO INTERFERE with the ball, fielders, and runner, and will remain off the field until play is stopped. If the designated pitcher interferes with the play, all runners will return to the last base they were at. The designated pitcher shall refrain from coaching the runners; this is the responsibility of the base coaches.
5. There will be no more than seven pitches to the batter. If the ball is not put into play on one of those pitches, the batter will be called out, with the following EXCEPTIONS:
 - a. A foul ball (unless caught) on the third strike, if it is also the 7 pitch, will not be counted as part of the seven pitches.
 - b. If a batted ball hits the designated pitcher, it shall be ruled a DEAD BALL; no pitch, no strike.
6. No walks
7. No infield fly rule
8. Batter cannot run on dropped third strike
9. No bunting. If the umpire judges that the batter bunted or attempted to bunt, the pitch is counted as a strike.
10. A base runner will be called out if they leave the base before the ball crosses the plate. This will not affect any other play that is being made on the batted ball.
11. No stealing.
12. An inning will be 3 outs or 5 runs maximum, even if the last hit causes more than 5 runs to score (only 5 runs will count).
13. Unlimited Runs will be allowed as follows:
 - a. In the 6th inning.
 - b. In any inning the umpire declares as the last due to the time limit.
 - c. In extra innings, if necessary.

14. Play is stopped when the ball is in control of an infielder and time has been called. If the base runner is beyond the halfway point between bases and time is called by the umpire, the base runner will be awarded that next base. If not beyond the halfway point, the base runner must return to the last touched base. (This is the umpire's judgement). **Infielders can request time, but ONLY the umpire can call time.**
15. 7u & 8u level teams will adhere to the following run rule: 12 runs after 4 innings and 10 runs after 5 innings.