



General Rules and Regulations

Tri-Cities Baseball Softball Association

Amended as of January 24, 2026

GENERAL INFORMATION

Tri-Cities Baseball Softball Association (“TCBSA”) overall follows the rules of National Federation of State High School Associations (“NFHS”) with inclusion of National Championship Sports (“NCS”) as applicable, unless otherwise specified in TCBSA General Rules and Regulations. For the individual sports the order of precedence for rules is as follows:

- A.** Baseball divisions – TCBSA, NCS, and NFHS.
- B.** Softball divisions – Interlock Specific, TCBSA, NCS, and NFHS.

All rules have been presented by the Rules Committee, reviewed by the Board of Directors (“BOD”) and approved by the members. None of these rules shall be altered or revised by any league without consent of the BOD and approval of the members. These rules cannot be changed after seventy-two (72) hours prior to the first regular season game. During regularly scheduled games, the following line of authority shall be followed in cases where TCBSA General Rules and Regulations interpretations are necessary:

- A.** Umpire-in-Chief
- B.** League Age Group Commissioner
- C.** Director of Rules and Protest – Baseball or Softball
- D.** Vice President – Baseball or Softball
- E.** President

1.0 SCOREKEEPER

- 1.1** Home team shall provide the official scorekeeper for each game and the Visitor team shall provide a scoreboard scorekeeper. If the home team cannot provide the official scorekeeper, and both teams agree, the visiting team can be the official scorekeeper.
- 1.2** The official scorekeeper shall record at-bats, hits, runs, strikeouts, base on balls, innings pitched by each pitcher and the scheduled starting time of games, or actual starting time of games. TCBSA encourages the usage of the GameChanger app for game recordkeeping by the official scorekeeper.

2.0 UMPIRE

- 2.1** There is not an umpire for 4U League games.
- 2.2** There shall be at least one (1) official Umpire for 5U/6U and 7U/8U League games.
- 2.3** There shall be at least two (2) official Umpires for 9U thru 16U Leagues present at each ball game
- 2.4** In the event an official umpire crew is not available at the scheduled starting time, the BOD representative (generally age group commissioner) will appoint a temporary umpire.
- 2.5** An umpire who ejects a person (coach, player, or spectator) must submit a report detailing the circumstances of the ejection, including reason, to the League Commissioner; Director of Rules and Protest; and the Umpire-in-Chief. Said person(s) are then subject to Article 10 – Conduct, in the TCBSA Bylaws.



3.0 PROTESTS

- 3.1 A protest based upon a play which involves an umpire's judgment is not permitted. Protests are only permitted over an application of a rule.
- 3.2 The head umpire of the game in question must be notified at the time of the protest, prior to the next pitch, and said protest shall be recorded by report to the Umpire-in-Chief. To validate this protest a \$100.00 cash filing fee and written notification stating the grounds of the protest must be submitted to the League Commissioner or designee within 24 hours and shall be brought before the Protest Commission within the next 24 hours. If the protest is denied, the \$100.00 filing fee will be designated to the general fund. When a protest based on the interpretation of a rule is upheld by the Protest Commission, the game concerned shall be replayed from the point of protest and the filing fee returned.
- 3.3 Umpires shall make a public announcement to the crowd when a game is being played under protest and game play completed through innings, time limit, or mercy run rule as applicable.
- 3.4 Protests will not be permitted in fall leagues.

4.0 EQUIPMENT

- 4.1 Batting Helmets: National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment ("NOCSAE") approved batting helmets must be worn when a player steps onto the field of play in an offensive position (on-deck, batter, and/or batter-runner) and until he/she returns to the dugout. This includes practice games, batting practice or regular games.
 - A. Batters in 9U and 10U baseball leagues are recommended to wear an approved batting helmet with faceguard.
 - B. Batters in softball leagues are required to wear an approved batting helmet with faceguard and chin strap.
- 4.2 Metal Cleats: Metal Cleats and Metal Composition Cleats will be allowed at the 13U league and up, but not at any league 12U and under.
- 4.3 Catcher's Gear: Catchers shall wear approved helmets, approved catcher's *mitt*, chest protector, and cup type supporters. Hockey style masks are required for all age divisions. Two-piece (i.e., mask and skull cap) masks are not allowed.

EXCEPTION: Catchers in 4U – 8U and softball divisions **only** may wear a fielder's glove in place of a catcher's mitt.

NOTE 1: Approved catcher's helmets for 4U – 6U shall be a batter's helmet with face mask.

NOTE 2: Catchers warming up the pitcher in the warm-up area **must** wear an approved helmet and cup type supporter. (It is strongly recommended they wear full catcher's gear.)

- 4.4 Pitchers in 6U and younger shall wear a batter's helmet with face mask and chest protectors. (This is also strongly recommended for pitchers in 7U and 8U as well)
- 4.5 TCBSA bat rules are in accordance with the NCS rules for all baseball and softball divisions.



5.0 PLAYING INDIVIDUALS AND MANDATORY SUBSTITUTION

5.1 All TCBSA games, including post season (including any tournament play), at every age level will be played in such a manner that all present players on the roster will be included in the lineup (i.e. bat the roster). If a player arrives late to the game that player will be immediately added to the bottom of the lineup and take their at bat the first time available.

NOTE: Additional players not assigned starting fielding position in the lineup can be distinguished as extra hitter (EH). The lineup will not include designated hitter (DH) as defined by NCS and NFHS.

5.2 No player shall sit out defensively twice before all players sit out defensively once. (i.e., fair play player game timing)

5.3 Each player must play 1 inning in the infield and outfield within the first 3 innings. Catcher is considered an infield position. (i.e., fair play infield/outfield)

5.4 Defensive lineup deviations due to injury or illness may be agreed upon by both coaches.

5.5 Coaches shall exchange lineup cards batting order and defensive lineup covering the first 3 innings with infield positions highlighted. Efforts should be made to exchange lineups approximately ten (10) minutes prior to the scheduled starting time, listing all eligible players.

5.6 The penalty for violation of any of the above rules could potentially be forfeiture of the game in which the violation occurred. The time limit for reporting a violation of this rule shall be 48 hours and said report or complaint must be in writing to the League Commission. The League Commissioner will refer the complaint to the Managers Disciplinary Review Commission. A second violation of this rule shall make the Manager subject to further disciplinary action.

***Exception:** Absence, injury, sickness or disciplinary actions

6.0 GAME PLAY

6.1 The scheduling of dates and starting times for league games shall be determined by the Director of Scheduling or league delegate and approved by the Board of Directors or League President. TCBSA attempts to honor scheduling request, if possible, but makes no guarantee to reschedule if conflicts occur. Under no condition can league officers set up a schedule of games which would require a team to play more than two (2) games in one day (*exception may occur during hosted tournaments*). Games will be played as scheduled. Listed below are the planned numbers of games per season by age group:

	3/4U	5/6U	7/8U	9/10U	11/12U	13/14/15U
Spring Season	8	10	10	10	10	10
Fall Season	8	10	10	10	10	10

6.2 All regular season games shall be played to the time limits specified by the league, subject to the following limitations:

A. No new inning shall begin once official time has expired as recorded by the game umpire crew, if the score is tied at the end of the last inning, and the score will be recorded as a tie, for league play or as specified in tournament play (pool play). For bracket play, where a winner needs to be determined, additional play is required until a winner has been defined.

6.3 All TCBSA games will be played in accordance with the following table:

League	Inning s	Time Limit	Run Limit per Half Inning	Mercy Rule	Pitching Distance	Base Path Distance
3/4U BB	4	0:45	N/A	N/A	N/A	55'
5/6U BB	6	1:15	5	N/A	N/A	60'
6U SB	4	1:00	5	N/A	N/A	60'
7/8U SB	6	1:15	5	N/A	35'	60'
7/8U BB	6	1:15	5	N/A	40'	60'
9/10U SB	6	1:15	5	15 after 4; 10 after 5	35'	60'
9/10U BB	6	1:30	5	15 after 4; 10 after 5	46'	65'
11/12U SB	7	1:15	5	15 after 4; 10 after 5	40'	60'
11/12U BB	6	1:40	5	15 after 4; 10 after 5	50'	70'
13/14/15U SB	7	1:15	5	15 after 4; 10 after 5	43'	60'
13/14/15U* BB	7	1:45	5	15 after 4; 10 after 5	54'	80'

**14U and above BB may play on 60' x 90' fields, depending on field scheduling.*

**NOTE: 15U and above for BB is allowed only within Bandits Select Program.*

6.4 Games are not to be held on Sunday except at the discretion of the League Commissioner and consent of the Team Managers involved.

NOTE: No team shall be penalized or required to forfeit if unable to field a team on a Sunday.

6.5 Rained Out Games:

- Rained out games shall be rescheduled in the order in which they were rained out by the League Commissioner at the earliest available date. The Commissioner shall notify both involved managers, the Director of Scheduling, and the Chief Umpire as soon as the date and time of the rescheduled game has been determined (36-48-hour notice should be given). Under no conditions will there be switching of scheduled games by League Commissioners. Games will be played as scheduled.
- Games deemed completed will not be rescheduled and the score will be reported as defined below. A game will be deemed complete after completing 3 innings, or 2.5 innings if the home team is ahead.
- A game that is deemed complete, if stopped mid-inning will revert to the score at the last completed inning.
- Any game not deemed complete, as defined at 6.5.B will not be suspended. Games rained out prior to being deemed complete will be rescheduled and replayed in its entirety.

6.6 In 7U – 15U Leagues, during the first week of play, any player making a fake tag will be ejected from the game after one warning. No warning will be given after the first week of play.

NOTE: A fake tag is a form of obstruction by the defensive player as identified in the NFHS ruleset. Obstruction is an umpire judgment determination.



6.7 In an attempt to avoid injuries, the following rule is in effect: If the runner, in the umpire's opinion, forcefully collides with the defensive player in an obvious attempt to either jar the ball loose or interfere with the defensive player's ability to catch the ball, he/she shall be called OUT and the ball declared dead. At the umpire's judgment, the runner may also be ejected from the ball game.

NOTE 1: This rule describes a form of interference on the offensive player, with the potential ruling of malicious contact as defined by NFHS ruleset. Both interference and malicious contact are an umpire judgment determination.

NOTE 2: This rule does not give the defensive player the right to block the base path except when in the act of fielding a hit or thrown ball. In addition to reducing injuries, the intent of this rule is to learn proper sliding techniques, not to penalize players.

6.8 Managers, coaches and players must remain in the dugout, dugout entrance vicinity, or in appropriately designated areas throughout the game. After one (1) warning, the offending person will be ejected from the ball game.

EXAMPLE: Defensive coaches should not be up and down the foul area while the ball is in play.

6.9 Dugout occupants will consist of eligible players, along with managers, coaches, and assistants that have passed the appropriate background screenings as stated in Article 8 – Managers and Registered Coach Approval, in the TCBSA Bylaws.

6.10 A team failing to field at least eight (8) players within fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled starting time of the game shall forfeit the game. If there are only eight (8) players, the ninth (9th) slot will be an automatic out, when the ninth (9th) spot comes up in the batting order.

6.11 Guest Player –Up to 3 guest players can be used to fill the roster up to the ninth (9th) position and avoid forfeit. Any guest player(s) should be declared at the plate talk. The player(s) shall be a registered TCBSA player and:

- Wearing their own TCBSA team uniform,
- Play in the same division or no more than 1 division below the division guest playing within,
- Bat at the bottom of the lineup, and
- Play in the outfield (i.e., *fair play infield/outfield rotation not applicable to guest players*)

Note: If additional players arrive that are on the team's regular roster (that are not additional guest players), will be added to the bottom of the roster, as stated in Article 5.1 in these Bylaws. It is recommended to follow the rules for playing time for all players, including the guest players.

6.12 A game that has been forfeited shall have a score of 7-0.

6.13 In all leagues except 5U and 6U, if the catcher (7U and 8U only) or pitcher (of record from the previous inning) is on base, the Manager has the **option** to utilize a courtesy runner. The courtesy runner must be the last batted out unless that player is the pitcher in which case it would be the previous batted out prior to the pitcher. If no outs have been made, then the last batter not on base would be the courtesy runner.

6.14 Under no circumstances can pitching rules be changed or waived by anyone.



6.15 For all leagues, players who arrive late for the start of the game shall be added to the team batting order at the end of the lineup and bat when this position comes up. Players who must leave before the end of the game may do so. Their position in the batting order will be ignored for the rest of the game and no out will be charged unless the batting order falls below nine (9) players.

6.16 Any time the batting order is reduced by an ejection when a team is batting the roster, an automatic out shall be declared in that batting order position.

6.17 **No Slashing** for 13U and under. On the first offense, if a batter squares to bunt and then swings at the pitch (slashing), with or without runners on base, the batter is out, the runners go back to their bases, and the third-base coach is given a warning. On the second offense, the batter is out, the runners go back to their bases, and the third-base coach is ejected.
NOTE: 14U and above may only slash bunt on 60' x 90' field.

6.18 Practices are limited to twice a week during pre-season and regular season. Each practice shall not exceed the game time defined at 6.3. There shall be no more than 3 activities per week, i.e. – 2 practices and 1 game, or 2 games and 1 practice. A practice constitutes five (5) or more players, in an organized fashion, where drills are performed, and instruction is given. Anything less (4 or less kids hitting a ball around, pitching lessons, hitting lessons.... etc.), is not considered an organized group event such as a practice.

6.19 If there are not three (3) outs when five (5) runs are scored, the teams shall change sides. The play on which the 5th run is made should be completed but no more than five (5) runs shall be recorded into official scorebook.

6.20 For age divisions without mercy rules games will be played if time allows, even if it is mathematically impossible for the losing team to catch up. Once time expires, the game can be called, and mathematical elimination should be a consideration.

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7.0 BASEBALL RULES – Rules herein are specific to age divisions designated as BB in rule 6.3.

7.1 – 3U/4U – ROOKIE T-BALL RULES

- 7.1.0 No umpires are assigned at this age division.
- 7.1.1 On defense – all active players will field defensively. Infield positioning can be up to the coach. Safety is a concern, so positioning players should take this into consideration. Extra players should play the outfield.
- 7.1.2 On offense – the team will bat the entire lineup each half inning, with the last batter clearing the bases. Players prior to last batter will advance base to base.

7.2 – 5U/6U – MODIFIED T-BALL RULES

- 7.2.0 The batter shall receive three (3) coach pitched pitches. The batter will not be called out for 3 swinging strikes from pitched balls. If unable to hit a fair ball from the pitches the batter will be granted 3 swings from the approved tee. Batter shall be declared "out" after failing to hit a fair ball after three (3) swings at the ball from the tee.
- 7.2.1 The batter may not hit the ball until the pitcher has made a pitching motion from the pitching rubber. **PENALTY:** Strike is called.
- 7.2.2 Batters are to take a full swing and the ball shall go beyond a 10 foot circle in fair territory on skinned infields or beyond the grass cut of the plate area on a grass infield. Umpire judgment. **PENALTY:** Batter shall be called back to the plate and a foul ball/strike called.
- 7.2.3 Thrown bat (e.g. causing injury to another player or causing interference) will result in a warning on the first offense. Subsequent offense may result in the batter being called out based on umpire judgment.
- 7.2.4 Players shall not be permitted to steal or lead off the bases.
- 7.2.5 Base runners may not advance more than one base on any overthrow by an infielder. Only one overthrow is allowed per play after the ball is thrown by an outfielder. Ball is live until umpire has called time.
- 7.2.6 A player may not play the position of pitcher more than one (1) inning or first base more than three (3) innings per game. **NO EXCEPTIONS**
- 7.2.7 **Player Pitcher:** The pitcher must remain in contact with the pitchers' plate until the ball is hit.
- 7.2.8 One defensive coach is allowed in the field of play but must be positioned outside the infield.
- 7.2.9 **Offensive Coach Positions:** In addition to the Coach Pitcher, may include one to coach first based, one at third base, and one additional coach may be positioned behind home plate away from the players to help position batter prior to at bat starting.
NOTE: 7U/8U rules 7.3.4- 7.3.6 will be followed and in effect for the Coach Pitcher.



7.2.10 Infield Fly and Dropped 3rd Strike rules will not be observed.

7.2.11 If a ball hits a runner after it passes an infielder other than the pitcher, it is considered to be a dead ball. The batter-runner is then awarded first base. If the ball strikes an umpire, it is live and in play.

7.2.12 The number of players allowed to play defense will be ten (10). The 10th player must play outfield which will result in four (4) outfielders. A game may start with eight (8) players when ten (10) players are not available.

7.2.13 Put Out Attempts (Force Out vs Tag Play):

- A.** An attempt must be made to throw the ball (*not rolled underhand*) when a play is being made on any base (i.e., 1st, 2nd, or 3rd) for a force out.
- B.** **On a force play at home plate, the pitcher must attempt to throw or toss the ball to the catcher and may not run the ball to home plate.**

PENALTY: Runner is safe.

C. Outfielders must throw the ball into the infield when making a play on a runner at any base and are not permitted to run the ball into the infield in attempt to make a play unassisted.

D. If the natural motion and progression of the baseball play promotes a tag play in the base line, the out will be recorded.

7.2.14 Runner Advancement: The umpire shall call time when the ball is in the possession of an infielder, and in the umpire's judgment the lead runner is not attempting to advance.

7.2.15 Protective Gear: Catchers are required to wear gear; Pitchers are required to wear a helmet with faceguard and chest protection (may be full chest pad or "heart guard" style).

7.2.16 Intentional Walk:- Will **NOT** be allowed.

7.3 – 7U/8U – BASEBALL COACH PITCH RULES

7.3.0 The number of players allowed to play defense shall be ten (10). The 10th player must play outfield which will result in four (4) outfielders. A game may start with eight (8) players, with the 9th position as an automatic out. The tenth (10) position will not be counted as an out.

7.3.1 The umpire shall call time when it is in possession of an infielder, and in the umpire's judgment, the lead runner is no longer attempting to advance.

7.3.2 If a ball strikes a coach-pitcher the following shall apply:
If in the umpires' judgment

- a)** There was no legitimate attempt to avoid contact; the batter is out, no runners advance.
- b)** There was a legitimate attempt to avoid contact, the ball is dead and no-pitch is declared.

7.3.3 The Coach-Pitcher pitches to his/her team and should straddle or stand on pitching rubber.

7.3.4 The Coach-Pitcher shall be permitted to coach batting position through hand signals or minimal verbal communication, prior to the pitch being thrown. No further coaching may be



permitted while the ball is in play and Coach Pitcher is encouraged to exit field of play away from play action.

- 7.3.5** There shall be only one (1) time out per inning for the positioning of the batter.
- 7.3.6** There shall be only two (2) time outs per inning for the positioning of the fielders.
- 7.3.7** Only the catcher may cover home plate while fielding a thrown ball; the pitcher (or another fielder) may “backup” the play and may field an overthrown or passed ball without penalty.

EXCEPTIONS: Rundowns and regular baseball backup play. E.g. pitcher backing up the catcher can tag out a runner at home, but the pitcher may not field the ball at the mound and make force or tag play at home.

- 7.3.8** Infield Fly and Dropped 3rd Strike rules will not be observed.
- 7.3.9** Catchers are required to wear full gear; Pitchers are recommended to wear a helmet with faceguard and chest protection (may be full chest pad or “heart guard” style).
- 7.3.10** Intentional Walks will **NOT** be allowed.
- 7.3.11** Each batter will be allowed six (6) pitches or three (3) swinging strikes, whichever occurs first. If a batter hits a foul ball on the sixth pitch, he/she will be allowed to continue batting until he/she does not contact the ball or put the ball in play (i.e., continuation of at-bat).
- 7.3.12** A defensive coach (NOT the head coach) shall be allowed to be positioned behind the catcher in the interest of speeding up play and **IS NOT** allowed to provide any instruction to the defensive team before or during a ball in play.
- 7.3.13** Runners shall not lead off or steal bases. A runner is out for leaving the base before the ball is hit or reaches home plate.

7.4 – 9U/10U – KID PITCH BASEBALL RULES

- 7.4.0** Infield Fly and Dropped 3rd Strike rules are in effect for this age group.
- 7.4.1** One balk warning, per team, per game will be issued. Subsequent violations will be subject to penalty according to official baseball rules. Balks are an umpire judgment.

7.5 – 11U/12U – KID PITCH BASEBALL RULES

- 7.5.0** Infield Fly and Dropped 3rd Strike rules are in effect for this age group.
- 7.6.0** One balk warning, per team, per game will be issued. Subsequent violations will be subject to penalty according to official baseball rules.

7.6 – 13U/14U – KID PITCH BASEBALL RULES

- 7.6.0** Infield Fly and Dropped 3rd Strike rules are in effect for this age group.
- 7.6.1** No warnings for balks will be issued in this age group.



7.7 – PITCHING LIMITATIONS AND REST

7.7.0 In accordance with the pitching limitations for MLB's Pitch Smart pitch count limits and required rest recommendations, the following shall be applicable for each age group:

Pitch Count Limits and Required Rest Recommendations

It is important for each league to set workload limits for their pitchers to limit the likelihood of pitching with fatigue. Research has shown that pitch counts are the most accurate and effective means of doing so. See required rest recommendations below.

Age	Daily Max (Pitches in Game)	0 Days Rest	1 Days Rest	2 Days Rest	3 Days Rest	4 Days Rest	5 Days Rest
7-8	50	1-20	21-35	36-50	N/A	N/A	N/A
9-10	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
11-12	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
13-14	95	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
15-16	95	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+	N/A
17-18	105	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-80	81+	N/A
19-22	120	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-80	81-105	106+

See here for more information: <https://www.mlb.com/pitch-smart/pitching-guidelines>

7.7.1 We will utilize Game Changer to score games. The app game records will be the official record for recording player pitch counts.

7.7.2 At the completion of each game, it is the responsibility of the head coach to ensure that the pitch counts are communicated to the commissioner. The process for doing so, is to take a screenshot of the pitch counts on Game Changer and send to the commissioner via text or email. This should be done within 24 hours after the completion of the game. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action, such as, but not limited to a player being ineligible to pitch the next game, and/or a game suspension for a coach. The purpose of this process is to protect the players.

8.0 – SOFTBALL RULES

Rules herein are specific to age divisions designated as SB in rule 6.3. Due to these rules being developed in agreement with the local interlock that TCBSA works plays within, see softball specific Interlock League Rules. For items not addressed therein, TCBSA defaults to NCS and NFHS rulesets.