

VIRGINIA BEACH
PARKS & RECREATION

VBGOV.COM/PARKS

**2022 COMMUNITY
YOUTH FASTPITCH
SOFTBALL LEAGUE
BYLAWS**



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REVISED
August 2022

VIRGINIA BEACH COMMUNITY LEAGUE YOUTH SOFTBALL BYLAWS
(FAST PITCH)

The object of this league shall be...

- To provide a wholesome and enjoyable recreational activity for the participants.
- To develop character, skill, sportsmanship, leadership, and promote good will among the teams and individuals participating.

EFFECTIVE DATE: These bylaws are in effect for the Fall 2022 Community Youth Fastpitch Softball League season. Coaches are responsible for advising their players and spectators of the articles within these bylaws.

OFFICIAL RULES: Virginia Beach Department of Parks and Recreation Sports Management (SM) rules and regulations and the National Federation of High School (NFHS) Fastpitch softball rules shall govern all leagues unless otherwise listed below. Coaches, parents, players, and spectators must abide by all rules, regulations, and bylaws. For more information about the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Fastpitch Softball rules please visit their website at <http://www.nfhs.org>.

TEAM REGISTRATION FEE: SM will require a registration fee (Spring - \$325.00 and Fall - \$280.00) from all teams (check, money order, or credit card only). Checks/Money Orders are to be made payable to: **Treasurer, City of Virginia Beach**. Payment should accompany the Team Entry Form and must be received by **August 19, 2022** in order for a team to participate in the league.

Forms received after this date will be placed on a waitlist. If space is available and the team entry form is accepted, the team will be assessed a **\$25.00 fee**. **TEAM ENTRY FEES CAN BE PAID ONLINE.....PLEASE ASK FOR DETAILS.**

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

SM assumes the following responsibilities:

1. Game facilities and schedules.
2. Payment of umpire's association.
3. Custody of youth player contracts, team player lists, and team rosters.
4. Authority to rule on player eligibility, rules, and regulations.
5. Awards to division (Fall and Spring) and league champions (Spring Only).
6. Provision of game balls (to teams prior to the start of the season). Game balls are not to be used for practice or warm ups.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

Information on player eligibility policy can be found in the General Bylaws For All Community League Sports.

A player's age on **September 30th of the current school year** determines eligibility. **EXCEPTION:** A player who turns ten (10) years old during the league season (Fall season: July – November) (Spring season: March – June) will have a "league age" of ten (10) years old.

- A. **12U:** Age twelve (12) and under (must be ten (10) years old on or before September 30 or turn ten (10) years old during the league season (Fall: July – November) (Spring: March – June). Cannot be thirteen (13) years old on or before September 30th of the current school year.
- B. **15U:** Age fifteen (15) and under. Cannot be sixteen (16) years old on or before September 30th of the current school year.
- C. **18U:** Age eighteen (18) and under, cannot be nineteen (19) years old on or before September 30th of the current school year or be a rostered player for any sport at the college level.

YOUTH PLAYER CONTRACT, TEAM PLAYER LIST, AND TEAM ROSTERS

Information on youth player contract and roster policy can be found in the General Bylaws For All Community League Sports.

1. SM will generate team rosters for game site staff. Rosters can also be viewed online at VBgov.com/Sports. The deadline for adding new players to a team's roster for a weekday game is the previous business day by 5:00pm. For example, in order for a player to be eligible to participate in a Thursday game, the player must have a completed youth player contract in the SM Office by 5:00pm on Wednesday.
 2. A completed Youth Player Contract should accompany the team player list for each player listed and must be submitted to the SM Office to be eligible to participate.
 3. Maximum of twenty (20) rostered players.
 4. The final cut-off date for any team roster changes will be 4:00pm on Friday, October 14, 2022. New or additional players will not be added after this date/time.
- Note: Information found to be false on a youth player contract may result in player ineligibility for one (1) year.**

GENERAL REGULATIONS

1. Practice may begin Monday, August 1, 2022.
2. **Each team is permitted one (1) Head Coach, three (3) Assistants (Base & Dugout Coaches/Scorekeeper), and one (1) Junior Assistant (Base & Dugout Coach/Scorekeeper).** If equipment managers and/or team parents are used, they are included in (and not in addition to) the maximum number of assistant coaches. The name, telephone number, and e-mail address of each team's Head Coach and Assistants must be on file in the SM Office **before** the start of the season. SM shall be notified of any coaching changes during the season.
3. **Information on Youth Sports League Volunteer Identification System are located in the General Bylaws for All Community League Sports and at VBgov.com/Sports.**
4. Only coaches that have a valid Youth Sports Volunteer ID Badge on their selves will be permitted on the field and participate in practices/games.
5. **Mandatory coaches meeting will take place in April (Spring) and September (Fall) covering rules and regulations for the upcoming season. Each team must be represented.** The date, time, and location of the clinic will be included in the coach's packet.
6. **Coaches are encouraged to become certified by the National Youth Sports Coaches Association.** Becoming a certified youth coach is highly recommended. The cost of the certification program is \$20.00 per year. The date, time, and location of the clinic will be included in the coach's packet.

SCHEDULING OF GAMES

1. Games will be played in accordance with the schedule created by SM with game site/times distributed as equitably as possible.
2. Any coach finding it impossible to play a scheduled game must notify the SM Office (no later than 3:00pm), so that necessary arrangements can be made. This constitutes a forfeit, and the opposing team will receive credit for a win. **In an effort to encourage more timely communication, when a coach notifies the SM Office of forfeiture (no later than 3:00pm), the coach can either request the game either be recorded as an official forfeit or have the game rescheduled in the event games are cancelled due to inclement weather by 5:00pm, the day of the game.**
3. If a game is postponed due to weather, light failure, or conditions beyond our control, SM will post make-up information on the online league schedule (VBgov.com/Sports) by the next business day of the cancellation. Postponed games can be rescheduled at the end of the regular season or on alternate nights of play (due to excessive cancellations). Games that have no bearing on league standings may not be rescheduled (see General Bylaws For All Community League Sports).
4. SM reserves the right to arrange postponed games, reschedule games, change game times, move games, and/or cancel games, if necessary, due to conditions beyond control. Please contact the SM Office with any questions.
5. There will be no postponement or rescheduling of league games to play in middle school games and to prepare for or play in tournaments of any kind.
6. If a team forfeits two (2) games in succession or three (3) games overall in a season for not having the required number of players to start the game, the team may be subject to removal from the league.
7. Requests of postponement or rescheduling of league games will not be accepted.

STANDARD GAME PROCEDURE

1. Umpires will be paid by SM and will be assigned by the contracted Umpires Association. One (1) umpire will work each game during the regular season and two (2) umpires will work each post season game (Spring only). No team has the right to refuse any umpire assigned. If the umpire has not arrived by game time, please see the on-site Sports Management staff. A game will not be delayed for more than thirty (30) minutes to wait for an umpire, unless the teams are informed otherwise. Should there be an umpire “no show”, the game(s) will be postponed and rescheduled for a later date.
2. SM staff are assigned by the SM Office. Coaches, parents, players, and spectators are expected to cooperate with them.
3. Head Coaches are the **ONLY** coaches permitted to address an umpire. Assistant Coaches and Spectators **ARE NOT** permitted to address an umpire regarding a call. Coaches are required to remain within the coaching box.
4. **Head coaches are responsible for maintaining proper conduct among their assistants, parents, players, and spectators at all times (before, during, and after all practices and games at all facilities). Players, coaches, parents, and spectators may be suspended from future games based on inappropriate behavior. Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated.**
5. Head coaches are responsible for keeping parents, children, spectators, and non-rostered individuals out of their team’s dugout area. For safety and liability purposes, any non-playing person (other than coaches with a displayed valid Volunteer ID Badge) will not be allowed to sit/stand in the dugout area.
6. Home team is listed to the left on the schedule and will occupy the third base dugout area and the visiting team will occupy the first base dugout area.
7. The home team shall provide an official scorekeeper, furnish the score book, and will be designated as the official scorer. The visiting team’s scorekeeper should frequently check with the home team’s scorekeeper to avoid scoring errors or mistakes. The score books of home and visiting teams must be filled out with all player’s first and last names, and uniform numbers. If this information is not provided, protests will be denied. In the event of any disputes that cannot be settled, the umpire will review both scorebooks immediately and make all necessary notations. **THE GAME WILL CONTINUE.** After the conclusion of the game, the official scorekeeper will present SM with the score book and all pertinent information.
8. **Starting of Games:**
 - A. There is **NO** grace period. Game time is forfeit time. Official time is administered by the umpire’s watch/mobile phone.
 - B. Teams should be at their game site thirty (30) minutes ahead of their scheduled game time. **A game can start earlier than the scheduled time only if both coaches agree.**
 - C. **Game Time:** One (1) hour and twenty (20) minute time limit will be in effect for all regular and playoff league games. A new inning must begin if any time remains. Any inning started must be completed (see Regulation Games, page 9). A new inning starts the moment the third out is made completing the previous inning. No new inning will be started after the time limit has expired. If a game remains tied after seven (7) completed innings, extra innings will be played to determine a winner if time remains. Home and visiting team must leave the field and dugout immediately following the game to allow for the next game.
 - D. **Time Considerations for Injuries:** In the event of an injury to a player, the umpire will only allow the time they deem necessary for the safe removal of the player. This amount of time will be added to the time limit of the game and the umpire will immediately inform each head coach of the new time limit.
 - E. **Teams must have a minimum of eight (8) players present at game time to begin.** If a team cannot field the minimum eight (8) players at game time, the game will be declared a forfeit by the umpire.
 - F. If neither team is able to field the minimum number of players necessary to play, both teams will be credited with the applicable number of losses.
 - G. Practices and/or scrimmages of any kind are prohibited at the Princess Anne Athletic Complex (PAAC), City View Park (CVMP), or any City/School game site. Pre-game warm ups are permitted following the standards listed below (see Pre-Game Warm Ups).
 - H. **Should there be an umpire “no show” at any of our Sports Management (City) league games for which only one umpire is assigned, the game(s) will be postponed and rescheduled for a later date. This also applies to game forfeitures (i.e., either or both teams do not have enough players and/or no coach available with a valid volunteer ID), as umpire(s) will no longer be permitted to officiate a scrimmage/practice game for which the outcome has already been determined (i.e., forfeit or double forfeit).**

- I. SM will determine postponement or cancellation of games up to 5:00pm of each game day (due to inclement weather). After 5:00pm, all cancellations will be determined by the umpire at the field.

STANDARD PRE-GAME PROCEDURE

1. Teams must warm up in the designated areas on the field where they will be playing. Home teams should be behind the left field fence (if available) to prevent interference with the game that is taking place and/or down the left field fence line.
2. Visitors should warm up behind the right field fence (if available) to prevent interference with the game that is taking place and/or down the right field fence line.
3. **NO** live batting practice with softballs and/or baseballs.
4. Teams may hit wiffle balls, soft foam balls, and other restricted-flight balls in the designated warm-up areas (Home team – Left Field, Away team – Right Field) facing away from the infield.
5. Hit sticks are allowed.
6. **ANY BATTING WARM UPS REQUIRE THE PLAYERS TO WEAR HELMETS AT ALL TIMES.** At no time shall players be swinging bats near other players who are not wearing batting helmets.
7. If you are not sure what warm up balls are approved for use, check with the SM Office.
8. Balls should not be hit or thrown towards pedestrian areas and/or walkways.
9. Neither team is permitted to warm up on the infield before a game. This includes taking infield, pitching, or batting practice.
10. For the first game of the day, teams may warm up in the outfield or foul territory of the infield of the team's scheduled SM league game no more than thirty (30) minutes prior to game time.
11. Umpires and SM staff may intervene if they see an unsafe situation.
12. Players on teams scheduled for the next game shall keep behind the bleachers and may warm up in the side areas along the first and third base. However, they may not detract in any way from the game in progress. Once the previous game has concluded, teams may move to the outfield areas (See Above). For the safety of spectators and fairness to the teams playing, coaches must enforce this rule.

PLAYER EQUIPMENT

Information on player equipment, jewelry, and uniform policy can be found in the General Bylaws for All Community League Sports.

1. It is the head coach's responsibility to make certain all players are legally and properly equipped, which includes checking bats, helmets, and catcher's gear prior to every contest. Umpire(s) may inspect equipment but are not required to do so.
2. SM will provide each team a set (twelve (12) – Spring, ten (10) - Fall) game balls. **These balls are not to be used for practice.**
3. **Bats:** Only official softball bats will be allowed (NFHS bat rules apply). Bats made of aluminum, graphite, or ceramic materials must have an official softball insignia on it or have had it before such an insignia wore off. Titanium bats are not allowed. A softball bat is permitted to have an adjustable knob, provided the knob is permanently fastened by the manufacturer. Any damaged bats (bats with dents, cracks, sharp edges, rattles, etc. that might deface the ball) will be removed from the game without penalty. If a batter uses a damaged bat that was previously removed from the game by the umpire, the batter shall be called out.
4. **Balls:** This league will use a 12-inch optic yellow cover, red stitch, .47 CORE official fast pitch softball (USA or NFHS stamped). For each game, the home team will furnish one (1) new ball and one (1) acceptable (practically new) ball, and additional balls if necessary. The home team shall have at least two (2) other balls on hand and coaches are requested to make arrangements to have the balls retrieved promptly.
5. **Batting Helmets:** All batters, on-deck batters, base runners, and players participating in pre-game hitting warm up are required to wear protective batting helmets with a face mask at all times. It is mandatory for all batting helmets to be equipped with double ear flaps and a face mask. Helmets shall have a non-glare (not mirror-like) surface. Youth players, who occupy first or third as coaches, must also comply with this requirement. The face mask must meet NOCSAE standards for the mask and helmet combination and must be permanently attached by the manufacturer or attached by a procedure approved by the manufacturer with a NOCSAE warning label. Safety Note: Top inside padding of helmet must be touching the top of player's head. Intentionally

removing the helmet while actively running the bases or deliberately wearing a helmet improperly shall result in the player being declared out, but shall not remove a force play, and the ball remains live.

6. **If an umpire observes a player wearing an illegal or damaged helmet while at bat, coming to bat, or while on base, the umpire shall direct the player to change, without penalty, to a legal helmet. Failure to wear a legal helmet, when directed by the umpire, shall result in the player being called out.**
7. Shoes with metal spikes are not allowed. Only shoes with rubber soles or plastic molded soles will be allowed.
8. **Defense (Pitchers and Infielders):** It is **MANDATORY** that a protective face mask be worn by all infielders and pitchers for their safety. Any pitcher or infielder refusing to wear such protective gear will not be allowed to occupy the pitchers or infield positions. Face mask must be worn as intended by the manufacturer for safety purposes and no improper accessories that may be glittery, distracting, or the color of the ball may be worn. Distracting face mask may not be worn (umpires' judgement). Face mask worn by defenders shall have a non-glare (non mirror-like) outer surface. An eye shield may be worn attached to a defensive player's face/head protection, but it must be constructed of a molded, rigid material that is clear and permits 100 percent (no tint) allowable light transmission.
9. **Catchers:** It is mandatory for all catchers to wear a full helmet (no skull cap), with facemask and must meet NOCSAE standards), throat protector (not necessary if the face mask has an integrated throat protector), chest protector, and shin guards. Any player that is warming up a pitcher must wear a catcher's full helmet. Plastic visors attached to the catcher's helmet are prohibited. If an eye shield is worn attached to the catcher's helmet, it must be constructed of a molded, rigid material that is clear and permits 100 percent (no tint) allowable light transmission. The catcher's helmet shall have a non-glare (non mirror-like) surface.
10. Any wristband with a playbook/play card attached shall be permitted as long as it is a single, solid color (not optic yellow), and does not have to match the color of the uniform. It shall only be worn on the non-pitching arm.
11. A pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist, arm, or thighs which the umpire judges to be a distracting to the batter.
12. Players may wear head coverings for religious reasons. The headwear must be made of non-abrasive, soft materials and must fit securely so that it is unlikely to come off during play. Head coverings worn for medical reasons must still receive approval.

PLAYING RULES

1. **Base and Pitching Distance:** The distance between all bases shall be 60 feet. The distance from the point at the back of home plate and the front of the pitching rubber shall be 40 feet for the 12U division and 43 feet for the 15U and 18U divisions. A pitching circle with a diameter of 16 feet or a radius of 8 feet will be lined on the field.
2. **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 batter-runner use 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 provided the defense appeals prior to the batter-runner returning to the white or orange base.
 - 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, who is 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.

- 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 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.
3. **Team Makeup:**
- A. A team may start a game with as few as eight (8) players. The line-up will be one (1) through eight (8). The ninth (9th) position will be recorded as an out.
 - B. **BATTING LINE-UP:** The batting line-up will consist of every player in uniform in attendance at the game. The batting order will remain the same for the entire game.
 - C. If additional players arrive after the game has begun, the team must insert their ninth (9th) player in their next vacant position (ninth (9th) position). If additional players arrive (and the ninth (9th) position in the batting line-up has been filled), these additional players must be added to the end of the batting line-up. Players will bat in the order designated in the line-up regardless of whether they are employed in the field or not. If the player who is listed in the batting line-up is not present, the batter will be declared out. If the player arrives after their at bat, they will bat the next time their turn comes up.
 - D. If a team loses a player due to injury or the player has to leave the game, their batting position will be skipped and no out will be recorded. If a team does not have a substitute and falls below nine (9) players, the vacated spot will count as an out. However, if a player cannot bat, they will not be allowed to re-enter the game.
 - E. If a team loses a player due to an ejection, the spot vacated by the ejected player will be recorded as an out each time their batting position comes up.
 - F. In order to continue play, a team must always have eight (8) players.
4. **Mandatory Play Rule:** Each player in uniform at the game site must play at least two (2) innings in the field and bat at least once. Any in the line-up may play in the field in any given inning. Both scorekeepers will check players off in the score book when they play their required innings in the field. It is the coaches' responsibility to adhere to this rule. Violations will be brought to the attention of the SM Office and may result in suspension of the head coach. The Mandatory Play Rule is in effect for all games.
5. **Defensive Player Substitution:** Players can be substituted from the bench to a different defensive 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 limitation identified in pitching (item 18).
6. **6-Run Per Inning Rule:** For **ALL** 12U Divisions, if the team at bat scores six (6) runs in one (1) half-inning before committing three (3) outs, that half-inning will be considered complete. Play will cease immediately after the sixth (6th) run is scored. Runners remaining on base will be considered to have had their turn at bat. Should a batter be in the box, the same batter (position) will lead-off in the next inning (with a fresh count). It is the responsibility of the scorekeepers (specifically the home team's scorekeeper) to inform the umpire when six (6) runs are attained. **Note: If the home team is behind by seven (7) or more runs in the last inning, they are still entitled to their final turn at bat.**
7. **15-Run Rule:** A fifteen (15) run rule shall be in effect for all regular and post season games (**Exception:** Championship games). The game is over and shall be declared by the umpire after two and a half (2½) complete innings if the home team is fifteen (15) or more runs ahead or after three (3) or more complete innings either team is fifteen (15) or more runs ahead.
8. **Regulation Games:**
- A. It will be a regulation game when seven (7) innings have been played and the game is not tied, or the **time limit** has elapsed, and each team has had an equal number of "at bats". If seven (7) innings have not yet been played and time remains, the next inning must be started even though it may be impossible to finish the inning within the time limit. **If the time limit expires during an inning, the home team will only bat in the bottom half that inning if the game is tied or the home team is losing. The inning continues until the home team scores the winning run or the side is retired (3 outs).**
 - B. It will be a regulation game when the umpire calls it on account of darkness, rain, lightning, or other factors, which based on the umpire's judgment, interferes with further play provided five (5) or more innings have been played. Four and one half innings (4½) will constitute a regulation game if the home team has scored more runs in its four (4) innings than the visiting team has in its five (5) innings. If the game is ended prior to regulation, it will be rescheduled for a later date. Rescheduled

games are **started over**, instead of resuming at the point of interruption. **Exception:** Championship Play (playoff) games are continued from the point of interruption.

- C. If a game ends in a tie after seven (7) innings have been played and the time limit has not yet expired, the game will go into extra innings (see International Tie-Breaker Rule below) until a winner is decided or the time limit expires. If a game is tied at the end of an inning after time has expired, it will count as a tie in the league standings and will not be replayed. Ties count as half a win and half a loss in the standings.
9. **International Tie-Breaker Rule:** Starting with the top of the eighth (8th) inning, and each half inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who made the last out of the previous inning being placed on second base. If an absent player is the one who should begin the half inning at second base, an out is not declared. Instead, place on second base the player whose name precedes the absent player's name in the line-up.
10. **4-3 Rule:** Four (4) balls will be a walk; three (3) strikes will be an out. No foul ball rule. **Exception:** A bunted ball that lands foul, and is the third (3rd) strike, is an out.
11. **Intentional Walk (Base on Balls):** A request must be made to the umpire by the defensive coach, pitcher, or catcher, for the purpose of awarding the batter first base. The request may be made prior to or during the at bat. The intentional walk is considered a time at bat and an appeal of the previous play cannot be made following the intentional walk.
12. **Hit Batter:** 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 (umpires judgment), 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.
13. **Squeeze Play:** The squeeze play is allowed in all leagues. **Squeeze play defined:** A play in which a runner advances from third base toward home, following the release of a pitched ball, and during which the batter bunts.
14. **Courtesy Runner:**
 - A. Teams at bat may at any time use a courtesy runner for the pitcher and/or catcher as soon as they reach base. Neither the pitcher nor the catcher will be required to leave the game under such circumstances. Courtesy runners can only run for either pitcher or catcher per half inning. They cannot run for both.
 - B. Courtesy runner **MUST** be used for the catcher when there are two (2) outs or five (5) runs have already scored in the inning. Runs scored will only be administered in the 12U division.
 - C. The player who made the previous out of that half inning will become the courtesy runner.
 - D. Courtesy runner must remain on base until they score, are put out, or the half-inning ends.
 - E. Should the player who is acting as a courtesy runner come to bat while still on base, that batting position becomes an out and the next scheduled batter will come to bat.
 - F. This rule will be in effect for all regular season and playoff games. **Exception:** Should an injury occur to the courtesy runner, the player that made the previous out before the courtesy runner of that half inning may become the new courtesy runner until they score or are put out.
 - G. If an ineligible or incorrect courtesy runner is utilized and is discovered while still on base, the courtesy runner shall be called out and a team warning issued. On the second offense, the head coach may be ejected.
 - H. If a player is injured and unable to run the bases to the fullest extent, the coach may request a courtesy runner through the umpire. The player who made the previous out of that half inning will become the courtesy runner. If courtesy runner has already been used for the catcher and/or pitcher prior to the injury, the previous out to the courtesy runner will be used.
15. **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.
16. **Illegal Pitch:** 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, the opposing team can try to get them out.
17. **Base Running:**

- A. Play is not automatically over when the pitcher receives the ball. The runner may continue to their destination. They may also stop past the base but the direction in which they then decide to run they must continue **UNLESS** the pitcher takes the ball out of the circle as to make a play. This can be done in the form of running at the runner or throwing to another defensive player.
- B. The batter may not run back towards home plate when going to first base. They can **STOP** to slow down but cannot go backwards.
- C. A runner may go into a base or home plate standing up; however, a runner cannot go into a base or home plate standing up and make contact with the fielder or alter the play of the fielder, this is an umpire's judgment. If a runner collides with a defensive player when they are going to make a play on the ball, the runner is automatically out (umpire's judgement). If a defensive player is not making a play and comes in contact with the runner, the runner automatically is awarded the next base even if this collision causes the runner to get "out" (umpire's judgement).
- D. **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.
- E. A base runner, advancing to any base, must attempt to avoid a collision if the defensive player has possession of the ball or is about to catch a thrown ball. If the base runner does not attempt to avoid a collision and makes aggressive contact with the defensive player, she is automatically declared out and may be ejected from the game if deemed flagrant. Note: This is a judgment call by the umpire and cannot be protested.
- F. **Sliding:** Players may not slide head first, unless they are returning to a base. If a runner slides head first not returning to a base, the runner is automatically called out by the umpire.

18. Pitching:

- A. A coach will be allowed one (1) visit to the mound per inning. The second (2nd) appearance (in the same inning) necessitates the removal of the pitcher from the pitching position. If a player is removed from the pitching position due to the second (2nd) mound appearance in the same inning, they may return to the pitching position a maximum of one (1) additional time and allowed five (5) warm-up pitches. No warm-up pitches are permitted if a pitcher is removed from the mound and then returns to the mound in the same half inning. Pitchers that are removed in between innings do not fall under this rule and can re-enter as many times as needed (see Mandatory Play Rule).
- B. Pitchers are allowed a maximum of five (5) warm-up pitches between innings.

19. Legal Pitch:

- A. Both feet must be on the ground within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.
- B. The shoulders should be in line with first and third bases.
- C. When taking the pitching position, the pitcher must have their hands separated and must have the ball in either the glove or pitching hand.
- D. The pitcher shall not be considered in the pitching position unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch. The catcher is considered to be in position to receive a pitch when their mask is on and is facing the pitcher. It is not necessary to be in a squatting position.
- E. While on the pitcher's plate, the pitcher shall take a signal or appear to take a signal with the hands separated. The ball must remain in either the glove or pitching hand. If the pitcher does not pause after stepping onto the pitcher's plate to take a signal prior to bringing her hands together, an illegal pitch should be called (umpire's judgement).
- F. Prior to pitching, the pitcher shall take a position with their pivot foot (same foot as pitching hand) in contact with the pitcher's plate. This contact must be on or partially on the top surface of the pitcher's plate. The non-pivot foot must be in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate.
- G. The pitcher shall bring the hands together for not less than one (1) second and not more than ten (10) seconds before starting the delivery. A backward step may be taken before, simultaneous with or after the hands are brought together. The pivot foot

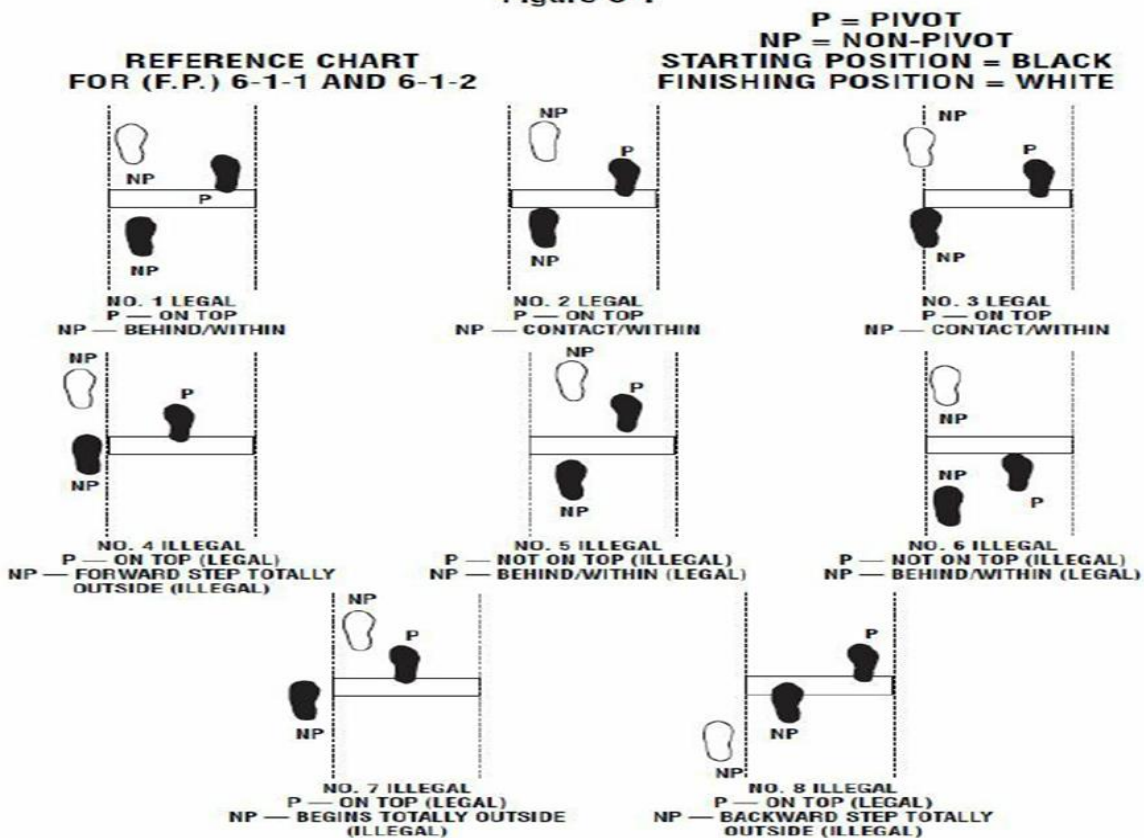
must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate at all times prior to the forward step.

- H. For the pitcher to remove themselves from the pitching position after the hands have been brought together but prior to the start of the pitch, the pitcher must legally step back from the pitcher's plate with the pivot foot first.

20. Legal Delivery:

- A. The delivery shall be an underhand motion (sling shot and/or windmill).
- B. The pitcher may not take the pitching position on the pitcher's plate without having the ball in their possession.
- C. The pitch starts when one hand is taken off the ball after the hands have been placed together.
- D. The pitcher shall not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
- E. The pitcher shall not use a pitching motion in which, after bringing their hands together, the pitcher removes one hand from the ball, and returns the ball to both hands in front of the body.
- F. The pitcher shall not make a stop or reversal of the forward motion after separating the hands.
- G. The pitcher shall not make two revolutions of the arm on the windmill delivery. A pitcher may drop the arm to the side and to the rear before starting the windmill motion. If the windmill motion is not used the ball must be delivered toward home plate on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip.
- H. The pitch shall be delivered on the throwing arm side of the body and not behind the back or through the legs.
- I. The release of the ball and follow through of the hand must be forward and past the straight line of the body.
- J. The pitcher shall not deliberately drop, roll, or bounce the ball in order to prevent the batter from hitting it.
- K. 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. If a hole has been created, the pivot foot may drag no higher than the level plane of 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 diagram from NFHS rule book below).

Figure 6-1



CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY (Playoffs) (Spring Only)

1. At the end of the regular season, if two (2) or more teams are tied, the standings tiebreaker will be head-to-head play amongst all tied teams. When head-to-head play is used, runs scored/run differentials will not be considered; only win-loss. Additional tie-breaker information can be found in the General Bylaws For All Community League Sports.
2. A one (1) hour and twenty (20) minute time limit will be in effect for all playoff games except the championship game. Championship game will have a two (2) hour time limit. **Note: The 12U Championship games will be a six (6) inning game or time limit. If the game is tied after six (6) complete innings, the International Tie-Breaker rule will be used to determine a winner** (see International Tie-Breaker rule). **The 15U and 18U Championship games will be a seven (7) inning game or time limit. If the game is tied after seven (7) complete innings, the International Tie-Breaker rule will be used to determine a winner** (see International Tie-Break Rule).
3. The 15-run rule is in effect for all playoff games except the championship game.
4. If a playoff game is stopped before the time limit is reached or a full set of innings are played due to circumstances beyond our control, the game will be rescheduled, and play will continue from the point of interruption. All teams should be prepared to play on short notice if games are cancelled.
5. Higher seed shall be the home team. If teams have the same seeding, a coin flip will determine home team.
6. Game balls will be provided by SM.

SCORES

It is very important that you check reported scores online so that accurate standings can be maintained.

WEBSITE

Updated schedules, standings, and scores can be found at the following website: VBgov.com/Sports.

SUSPENSION POLICY

Information on the suspension policy can be found in the General Bylaws For All Community League Sports.

PROTESTS

Any and all protests must be clearly stated to the umpire on the field at the time of the infraction. Only player eligibility and/or rule misinterpretations are protestable. All protests must be submitted in writing by the Area Chair to the SM Office. Judgment calls by the umpire are not protestable.

To protest a rule interpretation or infraction:

- A. Protesting coach must immediately notify the umpire at the time of the alleged infraction before the next pitch is thrown. It will be announced that the game is being played under protest. Scorekeeper will note in their score book the following: the exact time, the inning, players on base (if any), batter, balls and strikes, and any other pertinent game information. **THE GAME MUST CONTINUE.** Specific violations of League Bylaws or Virginia High School Federation rules must be cited. No protest involving an umpire's judgment (balls and strikes, fair or foul, safe or out, etc.) will be considered. If the protest involves the last play of the game, the umpire and both teams must be notified before leaving the playing field.
- B. All protests must be clearly stated to the umpire on the field at the time of the infraction as stated above. Protest must also be submitted in writing by the Area Chair to the SM Office within two (2) business days of the incident. The written protest should contain the following information:
 - I. The date, time, and field location of the game.
 - II. The names of the teams.
 - III. The rule and section of the official rule or local rule under which the protest is made.
 - IV. The information, details, and conditions pertinent to the decision to protest.
 - V. All essential facts involved in the matter protested.
- C. The decision rendered on a protested game will result in one of the following:
 - I. The protest is found invalid, and the game score stands as played.

- II. The protest is found valid, and the game is replayed from the point at which the incorrect ruling was made by the umpire (now corrected).

To protest player eligibility during a game:

- A. All protests must be clearly stated to the umpire on the field, identifying the player being protested, and submitted in writing by the Area Chair to the SM Office within two (2) business days of the incident. The protest (both on the field and in writing) must detail the reason for the protest (i.e., the player in question is not on the team's online roster, the player is participating under an assumed name; the player is on a high school jv and/or varsity roster, etc.).
- B. Upon notification, the umpire shall stop the game, call both coaches out to the field, and inform both coaches that an official protest has been lodged. SM staff will also be informed of the protest on the field. SM staff will request the player in question's additional personal details.
 - I. If the player in question provides additional personal details, SM staff will document the protested player's full name and additional personal details. If SM staff determine the player's name is on the online roster, the game will then continue. If SM staff determine the player's name is not on the online roster, the player will be removed from play and the game will then continue being played under protest.
 - II. If the player in question refuses/incorrectly provides additional personal details, the game will be forfeited immediately, and the coach will be placed on probation for up to one (1) year. A second offense will result in the coach being suspended for up to one (1) year.
- C. Upon receipt, SM Office will review the written protest. If the player is deemed to be eligible, the protest will be denied, and the result of the game will become official. If the player is deemed to be ineligible, any/all of the following actions will be taken:
 - I. Forfeiture of the most recent game played with ineligible player(s)
 - II. Coach and player(s) probation and/or suspension for up to one (1) year
 - III. Loss of Championship Play (playoff) eligibility
- D. All matters of an arbitrary nature in connection with a youth player's contract or eligibility may be protested at any time during the season by the Area Chair.
- E. All decisions rendered by SM are final.

AUDIO/VISUAL/AMPLIFIDE SOUND/NOISE MAKERS

Information on the audio/visual policy can be found in the General Bylaws For All Community League Sports.

LIGHT DIFFICULTY

Information on the light difficulty policy can be found in the General Bylaws For All Community League Sports.

INCLEMENT WEATHER - CONDITION OF THE PLAYING FIELD

Information on inclement weather policy can be found in the General Bylaws For All Community League Sports.

Once a game has started, the umpire(s) have authority to suspend/terminate games prior to their scheduled start and during the game in the event of weather conditions (field playability) and/or other difficulties (light failure, safety concerns, etc.) that make the field unplayable. The umpire's decision will be final. In the event a game is halted, teams are encouraged to seek shelter, but should not leave the immediate area for a period of thirty (30) minutes. During/after the thirty (30) minute period, the umpire will make a final decision as to whether the game will continue, declare the game final (regulation game has been completed) or be cancelled and notify coaches accordingly. However, if the weather becomes threatening (lightning, etc.), teams should follow the lightning procedures (see General Bylaws For All Community League Sports, Article XIV. Lightning Procedures, Page 9-10). Note: At all SM game facilities, the umpire(s) are empowered to immediately cancel play when conditions which threaten player safety exist or are imminent.

LIGHTNING PROCEDURE

Information on lightning procedures can be found in the General Bylaws For All Community League Sports.

INSURANCE

Information on insurance requirements can be found in the General Bylaws For All Community League Sports

INJURED PLAYERS

Information on injured players can be found in the General Bylaws for All Community League Sports.

FACILITY USE

Information on facility use can be found in the General Bylaws for All Community League Sports.

NOTES

- ✓ The Sports Management Coordinator has the authority to make final decisions on all bylaws, interpretations and any matters concerning all youth sports, and will impose penalties and suspensions upon teams, coaches, and players as necessary to insure the orderly conduct of the league.
- ✓ Coaches will advise parents, players, and assistant coaches of the bylaws. Unfamiliarity of any rule in the bylaws on the part of the coach, parent, player, or assistant coaches shall not be tolerated.
- ✓ These Bylaws are in addition to the **GENERAL BYLAWS FOR ALL COMMUNITY LEAGUE SPORTS.**

PANDEMIC PROTOCOLS

Practices and games will adhere to the current Executive Order and follow current CDC, state, and local guidance relative to physical distancing, use of face masks, and sharing of equipment.