



Futures (Coach Pitch) 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 may 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 5-7 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. Girls that are 7 can play either in this league or in the Pigtail (7-9) fast pitch league. Futures is a coach-pitch league while girls pitch in the Pigtails league.
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. 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. 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 (6 per season) 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.
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. Custody of rosters and authority to rule on player eligibility.

STANDARD GAME AND PREGAME PROCEDURES

1. Head coaches are responsible for maintaining proper conduct of their assistant coaches, parents, and players at all times. (See VBUSL Code of Conduct)
2. The home team will be noted on the schedule and occupy the third base bench.
3. **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.
 - C. Game time will be 1 hour.
 - D. A regulation game is 3 innings, or when the time limit expires (whichever comes first).

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

4. **Coaches:**
 - A. Maximum four (4) Adult Coaches (1st Base Coach, 3rd Base Coach, and 2 Dugout Coaches) 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.
 - 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.

- C. Two fielding coaches will be permitted in the field of play to coach the fielders. The coaches are allowed on the field for verbal assistance only and will not interfere in any way with any ball in play or opposing base runners. Another coach may be stationed behind the catcher to aid in recovery of passed balls in order to speed up play. All Futures coaches must comply with Coaches section B.

5. 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. 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 11-inch IncrediBalls (Softstitch, wrapped in a washable cover)
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. Futures batters and runners must wear helmets with earflaps and a NOCSAE warning label.
7. All fielders (infielders and outfielders) must wear a defenders facemask.
8. Teams must provide their own practice balls and uniforms.
9. Team members must all have the same color uniform and individually identifying jersey numbers. There shall not be duplicate jersey numbers.
10. **No jewelry** can be worn by players during the game (No earrings, necklaces, etc.).

PLAYING RULES

1. Base Distance: distance between bases – 55 feet.

2. Pitching Distance – 30 feet (or at the coaches’ discretion).

3. Team Makeup:

- A. A team may play with 6 players in the Futures. No automatic out in Futures.
- B. If additional players arrive late for a game, they can play and are added to the bottom of the batting order.
- C. 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.
- D. Ideally each player should play at least two innings in the field. Any 9 players in the lineup may play in the field in any given inning.

4. Game rules:

In the Futures league, each team will bat through their lineup each inning. The game will end after 3 innings or after 1 hour, whichever comes first. Home and visiting team must leave the field and dugout immediately following the game to allow for the next game/practice. Game scores will not be posted.

5. Pitching and Hitting (Futures):

- No called balls and strikes.



- For the first third of the season, each batter will receive 3 pitches from their team coach. If the batter does not hit the ball in fair territory during those 3 pitches, the batter will have 2 swings at a ball on a tee. If the batter does not hit the ball fair off the tee after 2 swings, the batter is out. In the middle 1/3 of the season, each batter will receive 4 pitches from their coach and 1 swing off the tee. In the last 1/3 of the season, the batter will receive 5 pitches and no swings off a tee.
- When the coach (pitcher) has control of the ball and is in the circle around the pitching rubber, time will be called and the next batter will bat.
- Outfielders must be at least (10) feet behind the bases until the batter hits the ball. Infielders must be farther from home plate than the pitcher until the batter hits the ball.

6. Infield Fly Rule:

- no rule in effect.

7. 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. In 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 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.

8. Leading and Stealing: None.



9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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, as long as time is called.

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 theseason.
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.

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)].
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 head coaches will determine if the field is playable and their 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 head coaches 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.

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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