



HVABA Baseball Rules

Updated January 2026

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HVABSA Baseball Rules

Governed by the **NFHS Baseball Rules** (NFHS Official Rules Website), with the following exceptions:

General Rules Revised: January 2026

Note: These rules apply during seasons when HVABSA teams are **not** interlocking with other associations. If an age group participates in an interlock league, the **interlock rules** will govern all games for that season—including those between two HVABSA teams.

1. Participation:

- 1.1. Failure to comply with player participation rules (per age division) will result in the player starting the team's next game and receiving a minimum of **four innings in the field**.
- 1.2. Players may play up one age group if they are **within one year** of that age level. Exceptions require **board approval**.
- 1.3. No player is allowed to be on a **HVABSA Rec Division roster** while simultaneously appearing on **any other baseball roster**, in any league, at any time. Violation will result in **immediate removal** from the Rec team roster and ineligibility for all HVABSA Rec games.
- 1.4. In **7U–10U divisions**, no player may sit out a **second defensive inning** until all other players have sat out **at least once**.

2. Guest Playing Rules:

2.1 Rec League Teams

- 2.1.1. If a HVABSA Rec team has fewer than 8 players, they may pick up substitutes from the preceding HVABSA age division (e.g., 14U picks up from 12U).
- 2.1.2. Substitute players must:
 - Play only outfield positions
 - Bat last in the lineup
- 2.1.3. No substitute may play while a league-age player is sitting on the bench.

2.2. Important Notes:

- There are no exceptions to roster rules.
- Minimum 8 roster players are required to avoid forfeit.
- Teams with 6 roster players may pick up enough subs to field a full outfield.
- Select players (e.g., Storm) are not eligible to sub for Rec-level teams at any point during the same season.
 - *Seasons are defined separately (Spring and Fall).*

2.3. Penalties for Use of Ineligible Players:

- **1st Offense:** One-game suspension (in-season)

- **2nd Offense:** Season-long ban
- **3rd Offense:** Permanent league ban

2.4. Select (Storm) Teams:

2.4.1. If a Storm team has nine (9) or fewer players for a League/TEBA game, they may pick up players from the Premier or Rec division. Each Rec player may guest play no more than twice per season and may not miss a Rec game to do so. *Note: We do not recommend using Premier or Rec players as substitutes in Select Tournaments, as this could affect their eligibility to participate in All Stars Tournaments later in the season.*

2.4.2 "Season" includes regular season and HVABSA Rec postseason.

2.5. Interlock League Games:

2.5.1 Teams may pick up substitutes from the same age division only if fewer than 8 players are available.

2.5.2 No player who has been on a Select roster during the season may participate in any interlock game.

3. Attire & Equipment:

3.1. Metal cleats are allowed only for players age 13+ at Unity Park.

3.2. No jewelry allowed during games, except for medical alert items.

3.3. In Tee Ball and Coach Pitch:

The player in the pitcher position must wear a protective helmet with a face mask.

3.4. Helmets must remain on while the ball is in play.

3.5. Sunglasses

3.5.1. Allowed for all players.

3.5.2. Pitchers (10U and up) may not wear sunglasses if deemed distracting by the umpire.

3.5.3. Prescription glasses/sports goggles are always allowed.

3.6 Catchers' Protective Equipment (NFHS Alignment)

3.6.1. Equipment - Any player assigned to the catcher position in live play, warm-ups, or bullpen activity shall wear the following equipment:

1. Head Protection – A one-piece catcher's helmet and mask meeting the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture.
2. Full Ear Protection – All helmets shall provide full ear coverage (dual ear flaps).
3. Throat Protector – A commercially manufactured throat protector, either integral to or securely attached to the mask, fully covering the throat area.
4. Chest Protector – A chest protector meeting the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture.
5. Leg Guards – Properly fitted catcher's shin guards.
6. Protective Cup – Required for all male catchers (7U and older)

3.6.2. Certification & Combination Use

- Catchers must use a one-piece helmet and mask (Hockey Style).
- Damaged, altered, or uncertified equipment shall not be used under any circumstances.

3.6.3. Enforcement & Penalty

- The umpire shall require immediate correction if the catcher's equipment is non-compliant.
- Failure to comply before the next pitch or play shall result in the player being removed from the catcher's position until proper equipment is worn.
- Persistent or willful non-compliance may result in ejection in accordance with NFHS Rule 1-5 Penalty provisions.

Rationale: This rule ensures all catchers are protected in compliance with NFHS safety standards, reducing the risk of injury and liability.

4. Bats:

4.1. All bats must meet nationally approved standards:

- USSSA 1.15 BPF
- USA Baseball standard (approved since Jan 2018)

4.2. Bats must display the appropriate certification logo. Approved logos must appear stamped on the handle.

- Post-manufacture stickers are not allowed.

4.3. NFHS uses the USA Baseball certification mark as their standard for legal bats. Any bat without the official USA Baseball logo is generally banned.

The bats listed below do **not** meet NFHS, BBCOR, NCAA, USA, Perfect Game, and/or USSSA standards and are prohibited in high school and many youth leagues including HVABSA:

Banned Bat List (*List is subject to change.*)

Year	Governing Body / League	Brand	Model / Specs	Status / Notes
2024	Perfect Game	Easton	Hype Fire (-5 only)	Banned
2022	BBCOR	Stinger	Missile II (33")	Banned
2020	BBCOR	Louisville Slugger	Meta (33")	Banned
2018	USA Baseball	Easton	Ghost X (30/20 only)	Banned
2018	USSSA	Dirty South	KAMO BB KA 8 (specific sizes)	Banned
2017	USSSA	DeMarini	CF Zen (Drop 8 & 10)	Banned
2015	USSSA	Easton	XL1 (Drop 5 only)	Banned
2011	BBCOR	Marucci	CAT 5 ² (33" & 34")	Banned
2011	BBCOR	Reebok	TLS (all sizes)	Banned
2011	BBCOR	Easton	Speed Brigade (all sizes)	Banned
2018	NFHS	Easton	Ghost X	Banned

Year	Governing Body / League	Brand	Model / Specs	Status / Notes
2020	NFHS, NCAA	Louisville Slugger	Meta	Banned
2017	NFHS	DeMarini	CF Zen (-8 & -10)	Banned
2012	NFHS, BBCOR, NCAA	Marucci	CAT 5 ²	Banned
2024	NFHS	Easton	XL1 (2015, -5)	Banned
2022	NFHS, NCAA	Stinger	Missile II (33")	Banned
2015	NFHS, BBCOR, NCAA	Reebok	Vector TLS (32" & 33")	Banned

5. Coaches' Responsibilities:

- 5.1. A coach may not act as the Commissioner for their own age group unless approved by the Board of Directors.
- 5.2. HVABSA board members who also coach may not display board identification (e.g., shirts, hats, badges) while on the field. Their only role during games is “Coach.”
- 5.3. A maximum of four (4) coaches may be inside the fences during games. “Inside the fences” includes both the field of play and the dugout.
 - 5.3.1. All on-field coaches must be registered with the league as a coach.
 - 5.3.1a. A Background Check thru USA Baseball is Required for all adults that will be on the field for practices or games (including assistant coaches & photographers)
 - 5.3.2. All defensive coaches must remain in the dugout during play, except as noted in Additional Rules by Age Group for BlastBall, T-Ball, and Coach Pitch (7U & 8U).
 - 5.3.3. Offensive coaches must be positioned in either the base coaching boxes or at the opening of the dugout—no exceptions.
 - 5.3.4. Adult photographers are allowed on the field but must remain no closer to home plate than the on-deck circle and enter at their own risk. Photographers may not act as additional coaches. Simply holding a camera does not grant field access; they must be actively taking pictures.
Penalty: Removal from the field of play (they may remain in the stands).
- 5.4. At least one adult (in addition to the head coach) must attend each practice.
- 5.5. Game Responsibilities:
 - 5.5.1. Home team is responsible for keeping the official scorebook.
 - 5.5.2. Visiting team is responsible for providing someone to run the scoreboard.

Note: If the home team fails to maintain the official scorebook, the visiting team's book becomes official. If neither team keeps a book, umpire rulings on outs, batting order, and score are final and non-protestable.
- 5.6. Chatter Rule: Players may cheer positively for their team but may not make distracting comments or actions toward the opposing pitcher or batters.
- 5.7. Anyone under 18 (e.g., batboy, base coach) must wear a helmet while on the field of play.
- 5.8. Head coaches are responsible for reporting game scores and pitch counts after each game.

6. Pre-game Field Use:

- 6.1. No team may use the infield for warm-up; all warm-ups must occur in the outfield grass.
- 6.2. Teams may not use the pitcher's mound for pre-game warm-up.
- 6.3. Games will not be delayed for warm-ups and can start up to 20 minutes early if the umpires are ready to begin. Teams must be ready at the scheduled game time or when umpires are ready to begin.

7. Game Management:

7.1. Game Lengths and Field Dimensions

Game Management: Game Lengths and Field Dimensions					
Age Group	Max Innings	Time Limit	Bases Distance	Mound Distance	Run Rules (runs/innings)
3/4 (BlastBall)	6	45 Minutes	30 Feet	-	-
5/6 (T-Ball)	6	55 Minutes	50 Feet	-	-
7u (Coach Pitch)	6	60 Minutes	60 Feet	40 Feet	-
8u (Coach Pitch)	6	60 Minutes	60 Feet	40 Feet	-
9 - 10	6	1 hr 30 Minutes	65 Feet	46 Feet	15/3, 10/4, 6/5
11 - 12	6	1 hr 40 Minutes	70 Feet	50 Feet	15/3, 10/4, 6/5
13 - 14	7	1 hr 45 Minutes	80 Feet	54 Feet	15/3, 10/4, 8/5
15 - 18	7	1 hr 45 Minutes	90 Feet	60 ft, 6 in	15/3, 10/4, 8/5

- 7.2. The pre-game meeting will take place at home plate five minutes before game time, or immediately after the previous game.
- 7.3. The clock starts at the conclusion of the pre-game meeting. The home plate umpire is the official timekeeper.
 - *Note: The scoreboard is not official. If discrepancies occur, the home plate umpire's call is final.*
- 7.4. When time expires, the umpire will announce 'Time has expired'. The current inning will be completed unless otherwise stated in Rules Exceptions by Age Group. Mathematical elimination applies in innings with run limitations.
- 7.5. The next inning officially begins when the third out is made in the bottom of the previous inning.
 - *Note: In the Fall season, no new inning shall begin within five (5) minutes of the remaining official game time.*
- 7.6. If the home team leads and meets the run rule after the visiting team's at-bat, the game ends immediately (e.g., 11+ run lead after 3.5 innings).
- 7.7. Pitchers entering the game may throw a maximum of six (6) warm-up pitches. Returning pitchers between innings are limited to four (4). Umpires may adjust at discretion.

8. Suspended, Postponed, or Called Games:

8.1. A game called due to weather or lighting conditions is declared as follows:

- If 3 full innings (or 2.5 if home team leads) are completed: Official game.
- If 2 full innings are completed: Game is suspended.
- If fewer than 2 innings are completed: Game is postponed.

8.2. Suspended Games

8.2.1. Suspended games will be rescheduled and will resume exactly where they were stopped.

8.2.2. The home team is responsible for accurately recording all relevant details, including:

- Game start time
- Time of delay
- Current score
- Runner positions
- Player at bat
- Balls, strikes, and outs

8.3. Postponed Games

- Postponed games will be rescheduled and played in their entirety, if schedule allows.

9. Coach / Parent Behavior & Ejections:

HVABSA is committed to providing a positive and safe environment. All participants must adhere to the Code of Conduct. Violations of the Code may result in removal from games or additional disciplinary action.

9.1. Coach Conduct:

- Be a positive role model.
- Never ridicule players, umpires, or league officials.
- Maintain responsibility for the behavior of players, parents, and fans.
- Set the tone for respectful behavior and sportsmanship.

9.2. Parent Conduct:

- Remember that games are for the enjoyment and development of children—not adults.
- Learn the rules and respect officials and coaches.
- Demonstrate respect, sportsmanship, and support for all players, coaches, and officials.
- Avoid any unsportsmanlike conduct (e.g., taunting, profane language, arguing).
- Support youth umpires as they learn in a challenging environment.

9.3. Ejections:

- Umpires are authorized to remove managers, coaches, or parents who display abusive behavior, including post-game harassment of youth umpires. (*See Section 11*)

HVABSA is a community league emphasizing recreation, development, and safety. All conduct that undermines this mission must cease immediately.

10. Umpire Authority:

- Decisions made by on-field umpires are final.
- Coaches shall not argue balls, strikes, or any other judgment calls.
- Judgment calls cannot be appealed or overruled by on-site league officials.

10.1. Communication with Umpires

- 10.1.1. Only the head coach may approach an umpire to discuss calls or rules interpretations.
- 10.1.2. Base and dugout coaches must remain in their positions and may not approach umpires.

10.2. Conduct Expectations - Coaches, parents, and players must adhere to the HVABSA Code of Conduct.

10.2.1. Fan Behavior

- Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their parents and fans.
- If a fan becomes unruly, the umpire will warn the head coach to control the fan.
- Continued disruptive behavior may result in ejection of both the fan and head coach.

10.2.2. Harassment of Umpires

- Any harassment of an HVA umpire before or after the game may lead to disciplinary action against the coach or parent.

10.2.3. Player Safety

- Coaches must never instruct players to make physical contact with opponents.
- Phrases like "run him over," if heard by an umpire, may result in the coach's ejection.
- See [Safety Base and Force Play Slide Rule Addendum](#) on page 24-25

10.3. Slide/Avoid/Retreat rule:

- No head-first slides into home plate.
- Runners must slide, avoid contact, or retreat when a tag play is imminent.
- **Note:** Hurdling/leaping is not considered avoiding contact.
- **Penalty:** Runner is out if contact occurs without an attempt to slide/avoid/retreat.

11. Disciplinary Actions & Ejections:

11.1 Applicability

- Coaches, parents, and players are subject to HVABSA disciplinary action regardless of whether an ejection occurs.
- Belligerent or inappropriate behavior observed by league officials may result in discipline.
- HVABSA members represent the league when participating in games at other associations; ejections or misconduct at non-HVABSA fields are still subject to HVABSA rules.

11.2. Ejection Procedures

- Managers, Coaches, and Parents: Must leave the field and grandstand area immediately, take no further part in the game, and exit the ballpark entirely.
- Players: Must leave the field immediately and be placed under the supervision of a parent or responsible adult.
 - If no parent/adult is present, the player must remain in the dugout under coach supervision.
 - Players may remain in the ballpark but must not comment on the ejection.

11.3. Penalties for Ejection

- Suspension for the remainder of the current game and the next scheduled game.

11.4. Disciplinary Progression:

- 1st Offense - Minimum 1 in-season game suspension
- 2nd Offense - Season-long ban
- 3rd Offense - Permanent league ban

Notes: First offenses may carry more severe penalties (e.g., multi-game ban) depending on the incident. The HVABSA Executive Board will determine the exact length of suspensions. Suspensions may carry over to the following season if incidents occur late in the season. Severe first offenses may be reviewed and voted on by the full Board for appropriate penalty determination.

11.5. Appeals Process

- Suspended coaches or parents may submit a written appeal to the HVABSA Board.
- The Board will:
 - Review and vote on the appeal.
 - Either amend the suspension or deny the appeal.

Additional Rules by Age Group

12. BlastBall (Ages 3-4, Tee Only):

12.1. Participation Rules & Basic Game Rules

- 12.1.1. Teams will bat their entire roster each inning.
- 12.1.2. A full batting order constitutes a half-inning.
- 12.1.3. The batting order will be reversed in alternating innings.
- 12.1.4. Gloves are not permitted. Players must not wear baseball or softball gloves.
- 12.1.5. The game is played with a soft foam “Incrediball”.
- 12.1.6. Batting helmets must be worn by all offensive players when on the field.
- 12.1.7. The objective for the batter is to:
 - Hit a fair ball.
 - Run to 1st base.
 - Sound the horn before the defensive team fields the ball, raises it, and yells “BlastBall”.
 - After running to 1st base, the batter returns to the dugout.
- 12.1.8. There is no swing limit for each batter. However, coaches should use discretion to keep the game moving.

12.1.9. A fair ball is defined as: Any ball hit between the foul lines; And travels past the 10-foot fair arca in front of home plate. If a batter struggles, the coach may declare a hit fair at their discretion.

12.1.10. Defensive play:

- All players will take a defensive position at least 35 feet from home plate.
- No player may play the catcher position.
- Defensive positions will be marked with squares prior to the game.

12.2. BlastBall - Coaches' Responsibilities

12.2.1. The home team is responsible for keeping the official game time.

12.2.2. Once the 45-minute time limit expires, the current batter completes their at-bat, and the game ends.

12.2.3. Each team must have a minimum of two (2) coaches on the field at all times.

12.2.4. The home team is responsible for setting up the playing field.

12.2.5. Coaches will also act as on-field umpires during play.

12.3. BlastBall - General Game Guidelines

12.3.1. The playing field includes: Home plate (with tee); 1st base with a horn; Defensive players positioned at least 30 feet from home plate.

12.3.2. No score or win/loss records will be kept.

13. **T-Ball (Age 5, Tee Only):**

13.1. Participation Rules & Basic Game Rules

13.1.1. Teams will bat their entire roster each inning.

13.1.2. When the last batter has batted, the inning is over.

13.1.3. The batting order will reverse in the next inning.

13.1.4. Base running is base-to-base only. No outs will be recorded.

13.1.5. Games may be played with a minimum of five (5) players per team.

- If needed, teams may share players to ensure safe and full fielding.

13.1.6. All players will take a fielding position:

- Infielders must assume traditional positions.
- Extra players will be placed in the outfield.
- Players positioned in the outfield may not make a direct play in the infield; they must throw the ball to an infielder.
- Players in the pitcher and catcher positions must wear a helmet with face mask at all times.

13.1.7. There is no swing limit, but coaches must use discretion to avoid game delays.

13.2. Coaches' Responsibilities

- 13.2.1. Defensive coaches are allowed to be on the field.
- 13.2.2. The home team keeps the official game time and must provide the batting tee for each game.
- 13.2.3. Once the 55-minute time limit is reached, the current batter completes their at-bat and the game ends.
- 13.2.4. No exceptions. Fields must be cleared for the next game.
- 13.2.5. No score or win/loss records will be kept.

14. T-Ball (Age 6, Coach Pitch/Tee):

14.1. Participation Rules & Basic Game Rules

- 14.1.1. This division is instructional and non-competitive.
 - While score may be kept during the game, no official standings or post-season awards will be based on results.
 - The primary focus is on developing baseball fundamentals, sportsmanship, and teamwork.
- 14.1.2. When the official game time expires, the current batter will finish their at-bat, and the game will end—regardless of inning status.
- 14.1.3. Each team will bat through its entire roster each inning, until:
 - Three (3) outs are recorded, or
 - Five (5) runs are scored.
- 14.1.4. All players will play defensively each inning.
 - Infielders must take standard infield positions.
 - Outfielders must begin each play positioned in the outfield grass.
 - Pitcher and catcher positions must always wear helmets with face masks.
- 14.1.5. A game may begin and be played with a minimum of six (6) players per team.
 - If needed, players from the preceding age group may be used to complete a roster.
 - Opposing players may also be shared between teams to field full defenses.

14.2. Base Running Rules

- 14.2.1. Runners must remain on their base until the ball is hit. No leadoffs are allowed.
- 14.2.2. A maximum of two (2) bases may be taken on any fair hit, at the runner's own risk.
- 14.2.3. A maximum of one (1) base may be taken on an overthrow at any base.
- 14.2.4. Runners must stop at the appropriate base and may not attempt to draw a throw by rounding further.
- 14.2.5. Runners must stop: When the ball is returned to the infield, or after advancing one base on an overthrow.
- 14.2.6. Coaches are responsible for enforcing these limitations with their runners.

14.3. Pitching Rules

- 14.3.1. A coach from the offensive team will pitch to their batters from the pitching rubber (35 feet from home plate).
- 14.3.2. Each batter will receive up to 3 pitches.
- 14.3.3. If the batter does not put the ball in play after 3 pitches, the Tee will be used.
- 14.3.4. The batter is allowed up to 2 swings from the tee.
 - If the ball is not put in play after the 2nd swing, the batter is out.
 - If the 2nd swing results in a foul ball, the batter is granted one additional swing.
- 14.3.5. After the ball is put into play, the pitching coach must immediately exit to foul territory and shall not interfere with the play.

14.4. Defensive Coaches Rules

- 14.4.1. Defensive coaches are not allowed on the infield during play.
- 14.4.2. A maximum of two (2) defensive coaches may be stationed in the outfield.

14.5. Outfielder Rules

- 14.5.1. Must start each play at least 10 feet behind the bases, in the grass.
- 14.5.2. May not run in and tag or force a runner unassisted.
- 14.5.3. Must throw the ball into the infield to make a play.
- 14.5.4. If retrieving an overthrow, an outfielder may tag or make a defensive play without assistance.

14.6. Pitcher Rules

- 14.6.1. The pitcher may not make an unassisted force out after fielding a batted ball.
Example: The pitcher may not run to tag home plate or first base for an out.
- 14.6.2. If retrieving an overthrow, the pitcher may tag or make a defensive play without assistance.

15. Coach Pitch (7U & 8U Leagues):

15.1. Participation and Game Play

- 15.1.1. Teams will bat through their full lineup each inning, until:
 - Three (3) outs are recorded, or
 - Five (5) runs are scored.
- 15.1.2. The player-pitcher must always wear a helmet with a facemask while the ball is in play.
- 15.1.3. The defense will field 10 players, including 4 outfielders.
 - Infielders will take standard positions.
 - Outfielders must begin each play behind the base paths and behind the infielders.
 - Outfielders may be positioned on the dirt if both criteria are met.
- 15.1.4. A game may be played with a minimum of 8 players per team.
- 15.1.5. If a team has fewer than 8 players, they may bring players from the preceding age group (see General Rule 2.1).

15.1.6. If no player can be added:

- An out will be recorded in the 9th batting spot only.
- No team will be penalized for not fielding a 10th batter.

15.1.7. When the official game time expires, the inning will be completed if the run differential is less than 5.

15.1.8. If a team is ahead by 6 or more runs, the game ends once the current batter completes their at-bat due to mathematical elimination.

15.2. Defensive Rotation Requirement

15.2.1. No player may sit out a second defensive inning until all players have sat out once.

15.2.2. Injury/Illness Exceptions:

- Injured or sick players may remain on the bench.
- Once they miss a turn at bat, they are ineligible to return for that game.
- No out is recorded unless the team has fewer than 9 active players.

15.3. Batting and Base Running

15.3.1. Each batter receives 5 pitches or 3 swinging strikes, whichever comes first.

- A foul on the 3rd strike is not an out unless caught.
- A foul on the 5th pitch extends the at-bat until the batter misses or puts the ball in play.

15.3.2. To be fair ball, a batted ball must:

- Reach the outfield grass (Red/Green Fields), or
- Pass the chalk line (~12 ft from home plate on Blue Field).
- Batted balls that reach and spin back from the cutout are fair.

15.3.3. Bunting is not allowed. If a batter bunts:

- Play is dead.
- No runners may advance.
- The pitch counts as a strike.
- On the 5th pitch, this results in an out.

15.3.4. Slashing is prohibited (showing bunt then swinging away).

- Penalty: Batter is out.
- Ball is dead.
- Runners return to their previous base.

15.3.5. Runners may not leave the base until the ball is hit.

15.3.6. Overthrow Rules:

- On overthrows at first base only, runners may advance one base at their own risk.
- Overthrows at other bases:
 - No restriction on advancement, but runners may not advance in an attempt to draw a throw.
 - Umpires will stop play and place runners accordingly if this occurs.

15.3.7. Play stops when the umpire calls "Time", which occurs when:

- The ball crosses a base path from an outfield throw-in, and

- The defense has control of the lead runner.

Example: A runner rounding 3rd and hesitating may not advance if the defense is in control.

15.3.8. If a runner hesitates at 3rd, they must return. If they continue without hesitation, they may attempt to score.

15.4. Sliding Rules & Penalties

15.4.1. Head-first slides at home are prohibited.

15.4.2. When a tag play is imminent, runners must slide, avoid contact, or retreat.

15.4.3. If the runner does not slide or avoid contact, they are out.

15.4.4. Hurdling/leaping over a fielder is not considered avoidance.

15.4.5. Malicious contact supersedes obstruction penalties. The runner may be ejected if the contact is deemed malicious by the umpire.

15.5. Defense and Pitching

15.5.1. The player-pitcher must have one foot inside the mound circle when the pitch is delivered.

15.5.2. A coach will pitch from the back of the pitching turf mat (40 ft) and must:

- Pitch overhand, and
- Stay on the pitching mat completely

15.5.3. Once the ball is hit, the pitching coach must exit to foul territory.

15.5.4. Failure to exit will result in both a warning from the umpire, and replacement of the pitching coach for repeated offences.

15.5.5. If a coach is hit by a batted ball:

- If unintentional, the play is dead and the pitch is nullified.
- If intentional interference is ruled, the batter is out and no runners may advance.

15.6. Coaches' Responsibilities

15.6.1. Maximum of 4 coaches allowed "inside the fences" (dugout + field of play).

15.6.2. Defensive coaches may be positioned in foul territory past first and third base only.

15.6.3. A coach may be positioned behind the catcher to shag balls, but:

- May not coach players from this position.
- May offer encouragement only.

15.6.4. Offensive coaches must remain in the first and third base coach's boxes. No exceptions.

15.6.5. Coaches may not assist base runners physically.

- Penalty: Runners may be called out if the umpire observes pushing or pulling by a coach.

15.7. General Game Rules

15.7.1. A 5-run limit per half inning is in effect.

15.7.2. Standings will be kept during the spring season.

15.7.3. The infield fly rule is NOT in effect.

15.7.4. Courtesy runners are allowed only:

- For the catcher of record, or
- In the event of an injury.
- The courtesy runner must be the last batted out.
- Projected substitutions are not permitted.

16. Division 9U-10U:

Governed by NFHS Rules with Local Modifications

Note: For seasons when HVABSA participates with other associations, Interlock Rules shall apply.

16.1. Participation

16.1.1. All teams will bat the entire roster.

16.1.2. Minimum players to start a game:

- Eight (8) players required to avoid forfeit.
- If playing with 8, the 9th batting position is an automatic out.
- If a 9th player arrives late, they enter the lineup in the 9th spot.
- Teams with fewer than six (6) roster players will forfeit.
- Players may be borrowed from the preceding age group if needed (see General Rule 2.1). If no subs are available, the lineup will take an out for missing players.

16.1.3. Player rotation:

- All non-starters must enter at the top of the second inning and rotate at least every other inning.
- No player may sit twice until all others have sat once.

16.1.4. Injuries/illness:

- Sick or injured players may stay in the dugout.
- If they miss their turn at bat, they are ineligible for the rest of the game.
- No out is recorded unless fewer than 9 active batters remain.

16.2. Batting / Base Running

16.2.1. Open bases: Runners may lead off.

16.2.2 Slide/Avoid/Retreat rule:

- No head-first slides into home plate.
- Runners must slide, avoid contact, or retreat when a tag play is imminent.
- **Note:** Hurdling/leaping is not considered avoiding contact.
- **Penalty:** Runner is out if contact occurs without an attempt to slide/avoid/retreat.

16.2.3. Malicious contact:

- Any contact judged malicious by the umpire may result in ejection.
- This overrides obstruction calls.

16.2.4. Slashing is prohibited:

- Players may bunt but cannot swing after showing bunt.
- **Penalty:** Batter is out; ball is dead; runners return to their previous base.

16.2.5. Dropped third strike: Batter may attempt to reach first base.

16.3. Pitching Rules – [USA Baseball Pitch Smart](#)

*To protect young arms and promote equitable player participation, our league follows the **USA Baseball Pitch Smart** guidelines for all age divisions. These rules are designed to encourage a healthy balance of player development and safety, while fostering a positive playing environment. We emphasize athleticism, physical fitness, and fun, and encourage every player to focus on learning the rules of baseball, developing sound techniques, and building teamwork on and off the field.*

Annual & Seasonal Limits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not exceed 80 combined innings pitched in any 12-month period. Take at least 4 months off from throwing each year (2–3 of those months should be continuous). Play other sports during the year to promote overall athletic development.
Game-Day & Practice Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warm up properly before pitching. Set and follow pitch-count limits and required rest periods. Avoid throwing pitches other than fastballs and change-ups. Avoid playing for multiple teams at the same time. Avoid playing catcher while also pitching. Do not pitch in multiple games on the same day. Monitor for signs of fatigue (reduced velocity, control issues, pain).
Game Rule Restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pitchers once removed from the mound may not return as pitchers. No pitcher shall appear in a game as a pitcher for three consecutive days, regardless of pitch count.
Pitch Count & Rest Requirements	See chart below.



AGE	DAILY MAX PITCHES	REQUIRED REST (PITCHES)				
		0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days
7-8	50	1-20	21-35	36-50	N/A	N/A
9-10	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
11-12	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
13-14	95	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
15-16	95	1-20	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+
17-18	105	1-20	31-45	46-60	61-75	

16.3.1. Additional Pitching Rules:

- Coaches must track pitch counts accurately and maintain daily logs.
- Pitchers reaching max pitch count or inning limit for the day must be removed immediately.
- Violation of pitching rules will result in disciplinary action per league policy
- Coaches must submit pitch counts to commissioners after the game

16.3.2. Balks (9U/10U):

- Two (2) balk warnings per pitcher per game.
- Umpire stops play, returns runners; ball is dead.
- Subsequent balks follow official MLB rules (runners advance).

16.3.3. A pitcher who is removed may not return to pitch but may play another position.

16.3.4. Infield fly rule is in effect.

16.4. Coaches' Responsibilities

16.4.1. A maximum of four (4) coaches may be inside the fences during play. "Inside the fences" includes the field of play and dugout.

16.4.2. On-Field Coaching Restrictions:

- Defensive coaches:
 - Must remain at the dugout entrance and may not be on the field of play.
 - No roaming or sitting on buckets/seats outside the dugout area.
- Offensive coaches:
 - Must remain in designated coaching boxes at first and third base.
 - May retrieve bats between at-bats but must be inside the dugout while the ball is in play.

16.4.3. Charged defensive conference: A second timeout in one inning requires a pitching change.

16.5. General Rules

16.5.1. Maximum of 5 runs allowed per half-inning.

16.5.2. One (1) offensive timeout per inning.

16.5.3. Courtesy runners allowed for pitcher and catcher of record (not projected subs):

- Runner must be last batted out.
- Optional and may occur anytime during the inning.
- If no outs yet in 1st inning, use last batter in lineup.

17. Division 11U-12U:

Governed by NFHS Rules with Local Modifications

Note: For seasons when HVABSA participates with other associations, Interlock Rules shall apply.

17.1. Participation

17.1.1. All teams will bat the entire roster.

17.1.2. Minimum players to start a game: Eight (8) players required to avoid forfeit.

- If playing with 8, the 9th batting position is an automatic out.
- If a 9th player arrives late, they enter the lineup in the 9th spot.
- Teams with fewer than six (6) roster players will forfeit.
- Players may be borrowed from the preceding HVABSA age group if needed (see General Rule 2.1). If no subs are available, the lineup will take an out for any missing players.

17.1.3. Player rotation: No player may sit out twice until all have sat once.

17.1.4. Injuries/illness:

- Sick or injured players may stay in the dugout.

- If they miss their turn at bat, they are ineligible for the rest of the game.
- No out is recorded unless fewer than 9 active batters remain.

17.2. Batting / Base Running

17.2.1. Slide/Avoid/Retreat rule:

- No head-first slides into home plate.
- Runners must slide, avoid contact, or retreat when a tag play is imminent.
- **Note:** Hurdling/leaping is not considered avoiding contact.
- **Penalty:** Runner is out if contact occurs without an attempt to slide/avoid/retreat.

17.2.2. Malicious contact:

- Any contact judged malicious by the umpire may result in ejection.
- This overrides obstruction calls.

17.2.3. Slashing is prohibited:

- Players may bunt but cannot swing after showing bunt.
- **Penalty:** Batter is out; ball is dead; runners return to previous bases.

17.3. Pitching Rules – [USA Baseball Pitch Smart](#)

*To protect young arms and promote equitable player participation, our league follows the **USA Baseball Pitch Smart** guidelines for all age divisions. These rules are designed to encourage a healthy balance of player development and safety, while fostering a positive playing environment. We emphasize athleticism, physical fitness, and fun, and encourage every player to focus on learning the rules of baseball, developing sound techniques, and building teamwork on and off the field.*

Annual & Seasonal Limits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not exceed 80 combined innings pitched in any 12-month period. • Take at least 4 months off from throwing each year (2–3 of those months should be continuous). • Play other sports during the year to promote overall athletic development.
Game-Day & Practice Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm up properly before pitching. • Set and follow pitch-count limits and required rest periods. • Avoid throwing pitches other than fastballs and change-ups. • Avoid playing for multiple teams at the same time. • Avoid playing catcher while also pitching. • Do not pitch in multiple games on the same day. • Monitor for signs of fatigue (reduced velocity, control issues, pain).
Game Rule Restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitchers once removed from the mound may not return as pitchers. • No pitcher shall appear in a game as a pitcher for three consecutive days, regardless of pitch count.
Pitch Count & Rest Requirements	See chart below.



AGE	DAILY MAX PITCHES	REQUIRED REST (PITCHES)				
		0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days
7-8	50	1-20	21-35	36-50	N/A	N/A
9-10	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
11-12	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
13-14	95	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
15-16	95	1-20	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+
17-18	105	1-20	31-45	46-60	61-75	

17.3.1 Additional Pitching Rules:

- Coaches must track pitch counts accurately and maintain daily logs.
- Pitchers reaching max pitch count or inning limit for the day must be removed immediately.
- Violation of pitching rules will result in disciplinary action per league policy.
- Coaches must submit the game score and pitch counts on the website after the game.

17.3.2. Balks (11U/12U):

- Fall Season: One balk warning per pitcher.
- Spring Season: No warnings; balks enforced per rulebook.

17.3.3. A pitcher who is removed may not return to pitch but may play another position.

17.3.4. Infield fly rule is in effect.

17.4. Coach's Responsibilities

17.4.1. A maximum of four (4) coaches may be inside the fences during play. “Inside the fences” includes the field of play and dugout.

17.4.2. On-Field Coaching Restrictions:

- Defensive coaches:
 - Must remain at the dugout entrance and may not be on the field of play.
 - No roaming or sitting on buckets/seats outside dugout area.
- Offensive coaches:
 - Must remain in designated coaching boxes at first and third base.
 - May retrieve bats between at-bats but must be in dugout while the ball is in play.

17.4.3. Charged defensive conference: A second timeout in one inning requires a pitching change.

17.5. General Rules

17.5.1. Maximum of 7 runs allowed per half-inning (spring and fall).

17.5.2. Slashing is prohibited (as above).

17.5.3. One (1) offensive timeout per inning.

17.5.4. Courtesy runners allowed for pitcher and catcher of record (not projected subs):

- Runner must be last batted out.
- Optional and may occur anytime during the inning.
- If no outs yet in 1st inning, use last batter in lineup.

18. Division 13U-14U:

Governed by NFHS Rules with Local Modifications

Note: For seasons when HVABSA participates with other associations, Interlock Rules shall apply.

18.1. Participation

18.1.1. Teams will bat through the full roster.

18.1.2. Teams must have a minimum of eight (8) players present to begin a game.

- If only eight players are present, the 9th batting position is recorded as an automatic out.
- If a 9th player arrives after the game has started, they will assume the 9th spot in the batting order.
- If fewer than seven (7) players are available, the game is forfeited.
- Teams may borrow players from the preceding age group to fill the roster (see General Rule 2.1).
- If no substitute can be found, an out will be recorded for each vacant batting slot.

18.1.3. No player may sit out twice before all players have sat out once.

18.1.4. Players who are sick or injured may remain on the bench but are ineligible to return once they miss their turn at bat. No out is recorded for illness/injury unless fewer than 9 active players remain in the lineup.

18.2. Base Running

18.2.1. Slide/Avoid/Retreat rule:

- No head-first slides into home plate.
- Runners must slide, avoid contact, or retreat when a tag play is imminent.
- **Note:** Hurdling/leaping is not considered avoiding contact.
- **Penalty:** Runner is out if contact occurs without an attempt to slide/avoid/retreat.

18.2.2. Any contact judged to be malicious (by either runner or fielder) may result in ejection.

Malicious contact overrides any obstruction penalties.

18.3. Pitching Rules – [USA Baseball Pitch Smart](#)

To protect young arms and promote equitable player participation, our league follows the **USA Baseball Pitch Smart** guidelines for all age divisions. These rules are designed to encourage a healthy balance of player development and safety, while fostering a positive playing environment. We emphasize athleticism, physical fitness, and fun, and encourage every player to focus on learning the rules of baseball, developing sound techniques, and building teamwork on and off the field.

Annual & Seasonal Limits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not exceed 80 combined innings pitched in any 12-month period. Take at least 4 months off from throwing each year (2–3 of those months should be continuous). Play other sports during the year to promote overall athletic development.
Game-Day & Practice Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warm up properly before pitching. Set and follow pitch-count limits and required rest periods. Avoid throwing pitches other than fastballs and change-ups. Avoid playing for multiple teams at the same time. Avoid playing catcher while also pitching. Do not pitch in multiple games on the same day. Monitor for signs of fatigue (reduced velocity, control issues, pain).
Game Rule Restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pitchers once removed from the mound may not return as pitchers. No pitcher shall appear in a game as a pitcher for three consecutive days, regardless of pitch count.
Pitch Count & Rest Requirements	See chart below.



AGE	DAILY MAX PITCHES	REQUIRED REST (PITCHES)				
		0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days
7-8	50	1-20	21-35	36-50	N/A	N/A
9-10	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
11-12	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
13-14	95	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
15-16	95	1-20	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+
17-18	105	1-20	31-45	46-60	61-75	

18.3.1 Additional Pitching Rules:

- Coaches **must track pitch counts accurately** and maintain daily logs.
- Pitchers reaching max pitch count or inning limit for the day must be removed immediately.
- Violation of pitching rules will result in disciplinary action per league policy
- Coaches must submit pitch counts to commissioners after the game

18.3.2. Balks (13/14U): No balk warnings will be issued; all balks will be enforced per NFHS rules.

18.3.3. A pitcher who is removed may not return to pitch but may play another position.

18.3.4. Infield fly rule is in effect.

18.4. Coaches' Responsibilities

18.4.1. No more than four (4) coaches may be inside the fenced area during a game. “Inside the fences” includes both the playing field and dugout areas.

18.4.2. On-Field Coaching Restrictions:

- Defensive coaches:
 - Must remain at the dugout entrance and may not be on the field of play.
 - No roaming or sitting on buckets/seats outside dugout area.

- Offensive coaches:
 - Must remain in designated coaching boxes at first and third base.
 - May retrieve bats between at-bats but must be in dugout while the ball is in play.

18.4.3. Charged Defensive Conferences:

- A coach may request one defensive timeout per inning.
- On a second timeout during the same inning, the current pitcher must be removed.

18.5. General Rules

18.5.1. A maximum of seven (7) runs may be scored per half-inning in both Spring and Fall seasons.

18.5.2. One (1) offensive timeout is allowed per team per inning.

18.5.3. Courtesy runners are allowed for the pitcher and catcher of record (not projected substitutions).

- The courtesy runner must be the most recent batted-out player.
- If no outs have occurred in the first inning, use the last batter in the lineup.

Appendix

MLB vs NFHS Baseball Rules Comparison

Rule Category	MLB (Professional)	NFHS (High School)
Governing Body	Major League Baseball	National Federation of State High School Associations
Game Length	9 innings	7 innings
Pitch Count Limits	No pitch count restrictions; workload is managed by teams	Strict pitch count limits and required rest days
Designated Hitter (DH)	DH allowed in both leagues (universal DH since 2022)	DH allowed; teams may use a DH for any player
Player Substitution	Substituted players may not return to the game	Re-entry allowed once for starters into the same batting spot
Courtesy Runner	Not used	Allowed for pitcher and catcher of record
Balk Rule	Strict enforcement; no warnings	One balk warning per pitcher per game (in lower levels)
Slide Rule	No specific force play slide rule	Must slide or avoid contact on force/tag plays
Head-First Slide	Legal at all bases	Legal, except some leagues restrict it at home or for younger ages
Ejection Consequences	Subject to league/team discipline	Immediate removal + often a one-game suspension
Obstruction/Interference	Based on umpire judgment	Similar interpretations, but NFHS emphasizes safety and intent
Game Protest	Formal protest process available	No protest allowed; umpire judgment is final
Coaches on Field	Strictly limited to base coaches	Defensive coaches restricted to dugout; more regulation
Use of Video Replay	Allowed at major league level	Not permitted
Equipment Rules	Pro-level equipment (e.g., wood bats only)	Bat and equipment must meet NFHS safety certifications (BBCOR)
Time Between Innings	Controlled for TV timing	1-minute limit between innings (NFHS recommends quick transitions)
Jewelry	Permitted	Prohibited unless medically required or religious
Umpire Authority	Game management via crew chief	Umpire authority begins when they arrive on field, includes pre-game

Key Notes for HVABSA (9U–HS Division) Alignment with NFHS

- **Pitch Count Enforcement:** Coaches submit pitch counts to
- **Substitution & Re-entry:** Consider allowing one-time re-entry to promote participation.
- **Slide Rules & Malicious Contact:** Follow NFHS safety-first approach.
- **Courtesy Runners:** Align with NFHS rules using the last batted out player.
- **Jewelry & Equipment Checks:** Reinforce compliance before games begin.

Safety Base & Force-Play Slide Rule Addendum

These rules are intended to:

- Reduce unnecessary contact
- Protect players at all positions
- Promote proper fundamentals and sportsmanship

All coaches are responsible for teaching these rules and ensuring their players comply.

1. Double First Base (Safety Base)

To improve player safety and reduce collisions at first base, this league will utilize a **double first base** (white and colored base) on all fields where available.

A. Initial Play at First Base

- The **batter-runner must touch the colored portion** of the double base on the initial play at first base.
- The **defensive player must touch the white portion** of the base.

If the batter-runner touches only the white portion when a colored base is available and a play is being made:

The batter-runner shall be **declared out**.

B. After Reaching First Base Safely

- The runner must use the **white base only** for:
 - Leading off
 - Returning to first base
 - Tag plays
 - Pickoff attempts
- The colored portion is **no longer in play** after the initial touch.

C. Exceptions

- If a defensive player is **drawn into foul territory** while attempting to make a play, the batter-runner may use the **white base**.
- If a double base is not available, standard first-base rules apply.

2. Force-Play Slide Rule (FPSR)

The Force-Play Slide Rule is in effect to prevent unsafe contact and interference during force plays, particularly when a double play is possible.

A. When the Rule Applies

- On any force play at a base where the defense is attempting to record multiple outs (most commonly at second base).

B. Runner Requirements

The runner must either:

1. **Slide legally**
 - On the ground
 - Before reaching the base
 - Within reach of the base
 - In a straight line to the base

OR

2. **Make a bona fide attempt to reach the base**
 - Run directly to the base
 - Without altering path to initiate contact with a fielder

C. Illegal Actions

- Changing path to contact a fielder
- Sliding late and beyond the base
- Rolling or pop-up slides into the fielder
- Raising arms or legs to interfere with a throw
- Intentionally colliding with a fielder

D. Penalty

If the Force-Play Slide Rule is violated:

- The **runner is out**
- The **batter-runner is also out**
- The ball becomes **dead immediately**
- No runners may advance

This results in an **automatic double play**.