



**NORTHVILLE EARLY BIRD TOURNAMENT**  
**25<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL**  
**MAY 10<sup>TH</sup> – 12<sup>TH</sup> 2019**

**2019 TOURNAMENT BASEBALL RULES**

1. **SPORTSMANSHIP:** This rule is delineated first because the Tournament Committee believes it is the most important one. Coaches, spectators, players, and umpires, please remember that the tournament is held for our youth to learn life's lessons through vigorous, spirited athletic competition. **SPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOR ON THE PART OF EVERYONE IS EXPECTED AT ALL TIMES.** The penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct (e.g., throwing equipment in anger, obscene or abusive language or gestures, fighting, disputing ball/strike or judgement calls, etc.) by a coach, player, or spectator may be a warning or ejection from the game and playing area, depending on the severity of the incident. A second occurrence of an unsportsmanlike act by an individual should, under most circumstances, result in the ejection of the offender from the game (if applicable) and playing area. If the ejected individual fails to leave the playing area immediately, a forfeit shall be recorded for the ejected person's team. The intent is not for umpires (whose conduct must also be above reproach) to be looking to issue warnings or ejections, but that coaches, players, and spectators should act appropriately as the participants develop their human skills while learning to play baseball. Additionally, anyone ejected from a game and/or playing area **SHALL SERVE AN ADDITIONAL MANDATORY 1 GAME SUSPENSION**, which will be the team's next game.
2. **REGISTRATION:** There will be no official registration for the tournament. Each coach must have the following items available for review at any time:
  - A roster of up to 15 players and their uniform numbers. Players cannot appear on multiple rosters.
  - A copy of each player's birth certificate. No exceptions!
  - Proof of insurance.
  - A. Teams must have at least 9 players present to start each game.
  - B. **AGE:** Players may not attain the age above that of their playing division prior to May 1<sup>st</sup> (e.g., a player who turns 12 on May 1<sup>st</sup> is considered 11 for the tournament).
  - C. **UNIFORM NUMBERS:** For identification purposes, players' uniforms must contain numbers.



- D. INSURANCE:** The Tournament Committee does not carry health, medical, or liability insurance to cover players, coaches, or spectators in case of injury or accident. Each team **MUST** provide proof of its own insurance.

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- 3. RULES:** Except for the variations contained in these Tournament Rules, the 2018 Baseball Rules, released by the Office of the Commissioner of Baseball, shall apply during this tournament. If deemed to be in the best interest of the tournament, further modifications to the Tournament Rules (because of conditions such as weather, injury, illness, etc.) may be made at any time by the Tournament Director or his on-field representative.
- 4. FORMAT:** The Early Bird Tournament format will vary depending on the number of teams in a pool.
- Age Group has 8 Teams - Two Pools, Round Robin against each team in your pool. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> in each pool cross over and play each other in Semi-Finals. Winners play in Championship.
- Age Group has 7 Teams - 1 Pool, 2 Games of pool play, followed by a seeded 7 team single elimination bracket.
- Age Group has 6 Teams - 1 Pool, 2 Games of pool play, followed by a seeded 6 team single elimination bracket.
- Age Group has 5 Teams - 1 Pool, 2 Games of pool play, followed by a seeded 5 team single elimination bracket.
- Age Group has 4 Teams - 1 Pool of Round Robin Play, Top Two teams play in championship.
- For the age groups with 8 teams, the top team from Pool A will play the 2nd team from Pool B in one semi-final, and the top team from Pool B will play the 2nd team from Pool A in the other semi-finals. The winner of the two semi-finals will meet in the championship game. In the event of ties within a pool, see rule 16 for the tie breaker information.
- For those age groups with 5,6, or 7 teams, teams will be seeded into a single elimination bracket, which may include byes for some teams. In the event of ties within a pool, see rule 16 for the tie breaker information to determine proper seeds.
- For those age groups with 4 teams, the top two teams after Round Robin will play in a championship game. In the event of ties within a pool, see rule 16 for the tie breaker information to determine proper seeds.
- 5. UMPIRES, BASEBALLS, SCOREKEEPING:** The Tournament Committee will provide 2 umpires and 2 new regulation baseballs for each game. The home team will be the official scorekeeper. To avoid disputes, the score should be verified by each team's scorekeeper after each inning. At the conclusion of each contest, both managers must initial the official scoresheet verifying specifically the final score, and the number of innings pitched by players. The winning team **MUST** report the applicable information to the Tournament Representative following the completion of the game.
- 6. GAME RULES:** THERE WILL BE NO PRE-GAME INFIELD OR BATTING PRACTICE!
- A. PRELIMINARY ROUND:** Games will consist of 6 innings (8U-12U divisions) or 7 innings



(13U-14U) or 1 hour and 40-minutes, whichever occurs first. If a game is tied at the end of 6 or 7 innings or the 1 hour and 40-minute time limit, a “TIE” will be recorded for both teams. Game time is forfeit time!

- B. CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND:** Championship round games are defined as Semi-Final and Finals games. These games will be played until a winner is determined. They are not subject to time limits, but are subject to the inning standards per age group, OFFICIAL GAMES and MERCY RULES. Game time is forfeit time!
- C. OFFICAL START and END TIMES:** The official start time for a game is when the first pitch is thrown. After the first pitch, the plate umpire will announce the start time to the official scorekeeper, who will record the time. Also, when the last out of an inning is made, the next inning is deemed to have begun even though it may be a minute or more before a pitch is thrown in that inning. No inning may start after 1 hour and 40-minutes from the official start time of the game.
- D. OFFICIAL GAMES:** For games affected by weather and/or darkness, an official game consists of a minimum of 4 full innings of play unless the home team is ahead after 3 ½ innings.
- E. MERCY RULE:** If a team is leading by 15 or more runs after 3 complete innings, or 10 or more runs after 4 complete innings, or 8 or more runs after 5 complete innings, the game will terminate at that point.

## 7. HOME TEAM:

- A. PRELIMINARY ROUND:** The home team will be determined by a coin toss before each game.
- B. CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND:** The team with the better seed based on the Scoring System points, and tiebreaker if necessary will have its choice of being home or away. In the event the teams have the same seed, i.e. Two #1 seeds in an 8-team division meet in the championship, then home field will be determined by a coin toss.

## 8. DIMENSIONS:

- A.** The pitching rubber will be set at 40’ (8U) 46’ (9U&10U) 50’ (11U&12U) 54’ (13U) 60’6 (14U)
- B.** The bases will be set at 60’ (8U) 65’ (9U&10U) 70’ (11U&12U) 80’ (13U) 90’ (14U) For the 9U division only:

(1) There will be leadoffs; (2) Unlimited steals on the bases (2nd & 3rd only); (3) Once a runner reaches 3rd base, he can only score from a BB/HP/Balk or a batted ball (in other words, NO stealing home); (4) All runners can advance (1) base on an overthrow from an attempted steal. Once a runner reaches 3rd base, he cannot advance home on an overthrow attempt (in other words, catchers and fielders get a free throwing attempt to third base); (5) Unlimited balk warnings, instructional only. Coaching to cause an intentional balk to try to send a runner back will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct; (6) The dropped third strike rule does not apply (The batter cannot advance to first base on a dropped third strike. He is out).

## 9. EQUIPMENT:

- A. BATS:** Hitters may use aluminum, wood, or composite wood bats that do not exceed 42” in length or 2 ¾” in diameter at the thickest part.
- B. HELMENTS:** Batters, baserunners, on-deck hitters, and batboys MUST wear protective helmets whenever they are on the playing field. Any player purposely removing a helmet while running shall be called out.



- C. **SHOES:** 8U, 9U, 10U, 11U & 12U: Only molded-rubber or plastic cleats are allowed. 13U & 14U: Molded-rubber, plastic, or metal cleats are allowed.
- D. **CATCHERS:** All catchers must wear a full set of gear (i.e., mask, protective helmet, and throat guard, chest protector, shin guards, and athletic cup). Any player warming up a pitcher **MUST** wear a mask and protective helmet.

**10. BATTING ORDER:** All players present at the start of a game will bat in a rotational order (bat around). Players arriving after a game starts will be inserted into the batting order after the last hitter in the order. If a player misses a turn at bat because of illness or injury, an out will not be recorded.

For the 13U & 14U divisions, teams may choose to bat all players, 9 players, or 10 players with a Designated hitter. Once the game begins, the team must adhere to the number of batters indicated in the starting lineup. Players that are removed from the starting lineup in order to place a substitute into the lineup, may only return to their original spot in the lineup. Substitutes placed into the lineup may not return once removed.

**DEFENSIVE SUBSTITUTION:** For 8U – 12U, except for pitchers (see Rule 12C), players may be substituted for at any time and at any position. There are unlimited defensive substitutions.

For 13U & 14U, teams choosing to bat the entire lineup may have unlimited defensive substitutions, except for pitchers. Teams choosing to bat 9 or 10 batters, may substitute a player into the lineup for a player in the starting lineup. A starting player may return to the game at any defensive position, as long as they return to the same spot in the batting order. A substitute player may not return to the field or batting order once removed from the lineup.

There are to be NO defensive coaches on the field for any age division. **8U and 9U divisions** will have the option of using 4 outfielders. If you choose to use a 4th outfielder, that fielder must be in the outfield. In other words, you can't use your 10th fielder as a rover in the infield, or some other positioning. The outfield is defined as either where the outfield grass begins, or in the case of large infields, a chalk line on the infield.

**11. PITCHING RULES:**

A. Pitchers are limited to the following “inning” restrictions:

| <u>Per Game</u>       | <u>Per Day</u>         | <u>Entire Tournament</u> |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3 (9-12U) / 4(13-14U) | 6 (9-12U) / 7 (13-14U) | 12 (9-12U) / 14 (13-14U) |

**PENALTY:** Upon discovery (by protest) of a violation (a single pitch) of the above inning restrictions, the violating team shall immediately forfeit that game. Any forfeited games will end in a 6-0 score for 9U, 10U, 11U and 12U; and a 7-0 score for 13-14U.

- B. The delivery of a single pitch in an inning constitutes an "inning pitched."
- C. Once a player has been replaced on the mound, he may not return as a pitcher in the same game.
- D. A coach may visit a pitcher on the mound once each inning. A 2<sup>nd</sup> trip to the same pitcher in the same inning will result in the pitcher’s removal from the mound. A visit to tend to an injury does not count as a trip to the mound.
- E. **BALKS:** There will be 1 warning per pitcher per game for balks. If a second should occur, it will be called, and the appropriate penalty applied. After a balk call, the coach may have a “not charged” visit to the mound where the umpire(s) will explain the violation to the pitcher.



## 12. SPEED UP RULES:

In order to complete games within the 1 hour and 40-minute time limit, avoid unnecessary delays, and keep games moving along, the following SPEED UP rules will apply:

- A. THE TIME BETWEEN INNINGS WILL BE NO MORE THAN 1 MINUTE.** If a batter is delayed in being ready to hit, the umpire may call a “STRIKE” on the batter; and if the fielders are not ready to play, the umpire may call a “BALL” on the batter.

**NOTE:** Before assessing a penalty, an umpire will use good judgement in determining whether a delay is caused by extenuating circumstances (injury, broken equipment, etc.). The intent is not for umpires to be looking to assess penalties, but to keep games moving along given the time constraints.

- B.** Once a player enters the batter’s box to hit, he may not step out of the box until the completion of his turn at bat unless for injury, the need to avoid a pitched ball, or other safety measure (such as dirt in one’s eyes) dictates leaving the batter’s box.
- C.** Intentional walks will be indicated to the umpire who then will direct the batter to take 1<sup>st</sup> base. No pitches need be thrown.
- D.** When the catcher for the next inning reaches base, a replacement runner may take his place on the bases. The replacement runner will be the player who made the last out.
- E.** You can use a courtesy runner for the pitcher, as it is allowed for in the High School Rules. Also, allow for courtesy runner for both the catcher of record, and the catcher who is going to catch next inning. Coaches are expected to maintain the integrity of the game when it comes to running for their players (e.g. don't run for a player, and then have him catch 1 pitch, and then put a new catcher in).

- 13. BASERUNNING SAFETY:** If a play is made on a runner at any base, except 1<sup>st</sup> base, when the defending player is in possession of the ball and within “arm's reach” of the base, the baserunner must avoid malicious contact with the fielder. Umpires are instructed to use the Federation Rule guideline for this. **AVOID MALICIOUS CONTACT!**

## 14. SCORING SYSTEM:

- A. PRELIMINARY ROUND:** Points will be awarded on the outcome of games where a:

- WIN = 2 points
- TIE = 1 point
- LOSS = 0 points

- B.** Following the Preliminary Round games, total points for each team, along with the Tie Breaker Rules, if necessary, will be used to determine the CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND teams plus who the home teams are in these games.

- 16. TIE BREAKER RULES:** If necessary to determine CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND teams and who the home teams are in these games, the following TIE BREAKERS, in the order listed, will be used:

- A.** Head to head competition
- B.** Fewest runs allowed (total)
- C.** Highest run differential (runs scored minus runs allowed). This will be limited to a maximum of plus or minus 10 runs (i.e. if Team A beats Team B 19-1, Team A only gets credit for +10 runs, and Team B is credited -10 runs).
- D.** Coin toss



- E. If two #1 seeds meet in the finals it is a coinflip for Home Field, otherwise better seed gets home field advantage.

### **17. DISPUTES AND PROTESTS**

- A. **DISPUTES:** For other than judgement calls (for which no dispute resolution mechanism is necessary), disputes will be handled immediately on the field by the home plate umpire. The home plate umpire may consult with the Tournament Director or his on-field representative before issuing a ruling.
- B. **PROTESTS:** All game protests will be settled by the Tournament Director or his on-field representative at the time of occurrence. These decisions are final and are not subject to appeal. No protests will be considered if the protest is made after one or more pitches have taken place after the protested play.

### **18. AWARDS:**

- A. **Team Trophies:** Awarded to 1<sup>st</sup> place teams in each Age Group.
- B. **Medals:** Awarded to 2<sup>nd</sup> place teams in each Age Group.
- C. A maximum of 15 per team will be awarded to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place teams in each age.

- 19. **CLEANUP:** Please clean your dugout after each game. The maxim should be: LEAVE IT CLEANER THAN BEFORE YOU ARRIVED. THANKS!!!