

*DEPARTMENT OF SD
VETERANS OF
FOREIGN WARS
(VFW) BASEBALL*



*8U/10U/12U/7-9TH
GRADE/JV/VARISTY*

2026 RULE BOOK

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Varsity (V)/Junior Varsity (JV)/7-9th Grade (7-9)/12U/10U/8U	2
1. South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars Baseball Organization (SD VFW Baseball)	2
2. ELIGIBILITY	3
3. General Rules	8
4. First or Second Half of Tournament Seasons.....	10
4.39. GUIDELINES ON HANDLING LIGHTNING OR THUNDER DISTURBANCES:	16
5. Equipment	17
6. Regulations	18
6.7. Pace of play guidelines	19
6.7.4. COURTESY RUNNERS.....	19
6.15. Bench and Field Conduct.....	23
7. Coaches Code of Ethics	25
8. Seven Legal Duties of a Coach.....	25
South Dakota VFW Baseball Code of Sportsmanship	26
9. 12U Rules.....	27
10. 10U Rules.....	32
11. 8U Rules.....	38
11.6. 8U Machine Pitch Rules:.....	38
Attachment 1: Seed determination using specific league statistics to determine a weighted, composite score	42
Attachment 2: Seed determination using SD High School Baseball Association Power Points Seeding Process modified to meet SD VFW Baseball Terminology	45
Attachment 3: 8U Catcher’s Box Dimensions and Image	46

2026 Changes in blue font

South Dakota VFW Baseball Rules

Varsity (V)/Junior Varsity (JV)/7-9th Grade (7-9)/12U/10U/8U

January 1, 2026

1. South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars Baseball Organization (SD VFW Baseball)

- 1.1. The State VFW Commander shall appoint the SD VFW Baseball Chairman. The Baseball Chairman will establish a Baseball Advisory Committee that consists of the State Commander (or designated representative) and Quartermaster, SD VFW Baseball Adjutant (if appointed by SD Baseball Chairman), SD VFW Baseball Chairman, SD VFW Director of Baseball Operations, SD VFW Assistants Director of Baseball Operations, Committee Chairs, Immediate Past Chairman (if applicable), Chief Umpire, at-large member of the Council of Administration (or SD VFW Baseball Chairman's selectee) to participate in grant funding determination and 1 to 3 at-large representatives.
- 1.2. The Advisory Committee will have a minimum of seven (7) members. A minimum of five (5) Advisory Committee members is required for a Committee Quorum. The Advisory Committee will meet as required or as requested by the SD VFW Baseball Chairman. The Advisory Committee may meet prior to the SD VFW Baseball Annual Meeting. Members of the Advisory Committee are expected to be trained as SD VFW Baseball Event Representatives and cover at least one SD VFW Baseball Event/Tournament weekend. Training will be completed by the SD VFW Baseball Chairman, Director or Assistant Director of Operations and will be annotated in an email memo.
- 1.3. The following committees are established with Chairs or Co-Chairs, members and volunteer members: High School Tournament Divisions, Youth Tournament Divisions and Scholarship, Grant and Donation Committee. Chairs and members will be assigned by a SD VFW Baseball Chairman Personnel Memo each year by the first of November each year for the following season. Volunteer members can be added by the Committee Chairs as required and coordinated with the Executive Committee. Committee Volunteers can be members of the age division they are NOT coaching. Committee Chairs own their committees and accountable to the Executive Committee/Chairman. Committee Chairs will submit recommended members to Executive Committee for final review prior to the SD VFW Baseball Chairman's consideration. The Division Committees also execute their respective age group tournaments are report meeting summaries and actions via email to the chain-of-command.
- 1.4. The Executive Committee will consist of: SD VFW Baseball Chairman, Committee Chairs, Chief Umpire and volunteers selected by the SD VFW Baseball Chairman to participate. Division Committees will work with Executive Committee to ensure decisions are consistent with SD VFW Baseball rules and code of conduct. The State Quartermaster will be ex officio. A minimum of three (3) Executive Committee members is required for a Committee Quorum.
- 1.5. SD VFW Baseball Scholarship, Grant and Donation Committee consist of Chairs/Co-Chairs and volunteer members. The State Quartermaster will be ex officio. VFW Baseball Scholarship,

Grant and Donation Committee will evaluate and determine SD VFW Baseball Grant, Scholarship and Donation submissions recommended approval and amount. A minimum of three (3) Grant Committee members is required for a Committee Quorum. Recommendations will be forward to the Executive Committee for review and approval.

- 1.6. Each Community that registered a team will receive a delegate vote at the Annual Meeting for each team they registered the previous season not to exceed four (4) votes. All Baseball Rules and guidance changes determined to be administrative or VFW centric may be modified immediately by the Baseball Executive Committee and distributed via media (website, the official notification process) to all coaches as well as discussed at the Annual Meeting. Significant or coach proposed rules will be reviewed by the Baseball Executive Committee and presented at the Annual Meeting for discussion. Only Baseball Association Officers or Team Coaches from the previous season and present are authorized to vote. The updated rules will be posted on the VFW Baseball website.
- 1.7. There will normally be a tournament for each age group. The number of divisions for each age group will be determined by the number of teams registered to participate, the host facility capability/capacity, fair team/school district size comparability and sanctioned league performance (when data is available and fair to use).
- 1.8. National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) rules of baseball as modified by SDHBA/SDHSAA will apply to all SD VFW Baseball games except in all cases where VFW League Rules and Regulations conflict with NFHS and SDHSBA/SDHSAA rules, then VFW Baseball rules will supersede. SD VFW Baseball age groups will follow SDHSAA/SDHSBA rules except as modified by SD VFW Baseball for each age group. The foundational rules for 8U, 10U and 12U age groups is NFHS as modified by SD VFW Baseball Varsity/JV Grade age groups.
- 1.9. SD VFW Baseball will be the sole source for all **SD VFW Baseball patches** (jpg and vector file available upon request for sublimation in new uniform purchases) and **NOT** the National Headquarters VFW Store
- 1.10. If you're habitually looking for opportunities to find loopholes or manipulate the rules to gain an unfair advantage, you will be discovered or reported. You'll be investigated, adjudicated and receive appropriate consequences. This is our 67th year and you should know and understand our intent with our rules and code of conduct is to grow our players to be people of integrity, service before self and willing to put effort into the process to be an excellent human in addition to becoming the best player they can be. If this is not the way you run your organization, then you need to find a different program to participate in. If you believe in our code of conduct, start acting like it and start meeting our intent.

2. ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1. Fair competition is available to boys and girls. All Varsity/JV/7-9th Grade players shall meet eligibility requirements as set forth by the SD High School Activities Association by-laws Chapter I, page 8, Part IV and Chapter II, page 10, Part I. Students qualifying under the

“Alternative Instruction” section of SDHSAA are also eligible to play. Any team found to have allowed an ineligible player to participate in their program at any level shall be banned from post-season eligibility for that year. To be eligible for the VFW Varsity/JV/7-9th Grade Baseball program, his/her name must be on the state tournament roster, registered with local baseball/softball association or recreation department, and/or on a sanctioned league team roster. Sanctioned leagues will provide administrative access to game changer statistics or whatever method is used to track standings and performance at all age levels under their jurisdiction.

2.2.If a player is found not to be of age or on multiple non-VFW team rosters, except exempt organizations, during their VFW Season, will be declared ineligible, he/she shall be disqualified immediately. In the case a player is found guilty of losing his or her amateur status only, the player should be disqualified. In all other cases where the player is found ineligible the entire team shall be disqualified and all games forfeited that have been played up to that point in time.

2.3.No questions of age, member of multiple non-VFW team rosters or eligibility, except exempt organizations, during their SD VFW season eligibility may be raised after the **first pitch of the second round** of first half of the Tournament Season play or the first pitch of the second round of the second half of the Tournament Season since all rosters and age verification certificates have been checked prior to the first game and the same player’s name as appears on the score book appeared on the checked roster for the complete tournament.

2.4.A SD VFW Baseball team and players must register online at www.sdvfwbasketball.com

2.4.1. Early registration fee is **\$175** per team until **April 15**.

2.4.2. Registration fee is **\$200** per team from April 16 until **June 8**. Registration form and rosters are due by **June 9th**.

2.4.3. It is imperative that all age group registration/rosters be completed by **12:01 AM on June 9th** to allow tournament assignment and bracket construction to be completed as soon as possible. Rosters will be locked down at **12:01 AM June 9th**.

2.4.4. **Late registration must be approved by the Executive Committee:** All age division team initial registration as coordinated with the Executive Committee from **June 9th to June 15th** and the fee will be **\$400**. After brackets are posted, Varsity/JV team acceptance into tournament requires **2/3 approval** of the teams in their prospective region and the fee will be **\$400**.

2.4.5. Team registration will include team’s name, association name or city recreation department, league active in, SDHSBA Coop Teams or Coop petition approved by the Executive Committee, Coaches Name, information, phone, cell phone, address and email.

2.4.6. In addition, each league and team will designate a Game Changer Point of Contact (POC) with email for administration and official score keeper purposes.

2.4.7. During league or VFW Tournament season games Gamechanger POCs will both keep Gamechanger active scoring. They will resolve scoring conflicts including pitch count real time creating one official contest. SD VFW Baseball sanctioned or sponsored leagues must release performance data to help determine seeding or division assignment for SD VFW Baseball events and First/Second Half of Tournament Season games.

- 2.4.8. Gamechanger is required for all age division tournament seasons, **except 8U**, games. A simple method to track scoring will be used for 8U games.
- 2.4.9. All team rosters must have the following **player** information by **12:01 AM June 9th: uniform number, first and last name, address/city of primary residence, school attended the last school year, team played on last season, extenuating circumstances. (for 8U/10U/12U the high school within the school district their elementary/middle school feeds into) and date of birth.**
- 2.4.10. Initial team rosters with complete player information, including school last attended information and team played with last season as well as any extenuating circumstances, must be posted by **12:01 AM, June 9th**. If your team roster **doesn't** have the information necessary to determine your team ADM, **VFW Baseball reserves the right to move you to a different division or disqualify the team without refund.**
- 2.4.11. You may list unlimited players on the team roster however, VFW Baseball provides **14 medals** per team for 8U/10U per separate division and **18 medals** per team for 12U, 7-9th Grade, JV and Varsity State Tournaments. VFW Baseball will provide a trophy and 18 medals to the "Tournament of Champions" Winner only (when required). VFW Baseball will provide vendor information for purchasing additional medals or trophies as required (at the team's expense).
- 2.4.12. **June 9th at 12:01 AM** is the cutoff date for all roster changes to be posted on the website, late roster changes for all age divisions will be on a case-by-case basis and coordinated with the appropriate Age Group Division Committee Chairman, **VFW Baseball Chairman or the designated POC (DO NOT** update/post rosters to the website after **12:01 AM on June 9th).**
- 2.5. All protests of player's eligibility or rules interpretation must be specific with definite proof and submitted to the appropriate SD VFW Baseball Age Group Division Committee via email.
- 2.5.1. Host Tournament Director will decide issues at the local level. If a Host Tournament Director is a coach of a team involved in the appeal/protest, consultation with the appropriate SD VFW Baseball Age Group Division Committee should take place and if conflict of interest is apparent, the ruling shall be made by the VFW Baseball Executive Committee.
- 2.5.2. The SD VFW Baseball Executive Committee shall render decision as they pertain to the protests directed to them on the state level.
- 2.5.3. All **protests/appeals**, on all levels, must be in writing and received via email to the next higher authority within 48 hours after the decision has been rendered at each level. Text messages are not considered formal correspondence with VFW Baseball for **protests/appeals**.
- 2.5.4. No protests will be allowed on judgments by umpires in league and/or during tournament competition.
- 2.5.5. Any umpire's decision which involves judgment, such as whether a hit is fair or foul, whether a pitch is a strike or a ball, or whether a runner is safe or out, is final. But if there is reasonable doubt about some decision conflicting with the rules, the **head coach or designated head coach** may ask that the correct ruling be made. The umpire making the decision **may** ask another umpire for information before making a final decision. No umpire shall criticize or interfere with another umpire's decision unless asked by the one making it. All protests of this nature will be settled on the field at the time of the dispute.

- 2.5.5.1. The umpire-in-chief sometimes asks for aid from the base umpire when there is a question as to whether a batter's "half swing" is such as to be called a strike. As an aid in deciding, the umpire may note whether the swing carried the barrel of the bat past the body of the batter, but final decision is based on whether the batter struck at the ball.
 - 2.5.5.2. The use of videotape or equipment by game officials for the purpose of making calls or rendering decisions is prohibited.
 - 2.5.5.3. No umpire may be replaced during a game unless he becomes ill or is injured. His right to disqualify players or to remove nonplayers for objecting to decisions or for unsportsmanlike conduct is absolute.
 - 2.5.6. During SD VFW Baseball tournament seasons or sanctioned league games, decisions governing **interpretation** of rules may be appealed to the tournament host officials; however, in most cases the umpire's decision will be upheld.
- 2.6.A **notice of verification of team eligibility** must be included from the local governing body with registration. The entry form and fee must be presented by the local governing body. For clarification purposes, the mailing address of the governing body and registering team shall be used as the point of origin. There will be only one recognized baseball/softball association/governing body per independent school district. The established/long standing baseball association will take precedent over other organizations in the priority order stated in 2.7. The youth baseball association nearest to a team's "point of origin" will be designated as the local governing body and must verify eligibility. The local governing body and team should assess and understand their team's potential ADM during the verification of eligibility process.
- 2.7.A team seeking entrance into a South Dakota VFW State Baseball Tournament (**First/Second Half of Tournament Seasons**) must be verified eligible by their local governing body as defined in 2.6. A team seeking to participate in a South Dakota VFW Baseball **First/Second Half of Tournament Seasons**, sanctioned/sponsored League play and/or State Tournament must be verified eligible by the local governing organization in the following priority order:
- 2.7.1. Recognized local youth baseball/softball association within their independent school district
 - 2.7.2. League Commissioner/Chairman/President
 - 2.7.3. City Recreation Department
 - 2.7.4. Highest Ranking City Official
- 2.8.If a player attempts to play for another team outside of his or her local governing baseball association, **where he or she attended school the previous year**, he or she is required to petition SD VFW Baseball Executive Committee to be released. Only extenuating circumstances will be considered. Otherwise, the player is expected to play for their local/home association/league team, within their independent school district, from their previous baseball association.
- 2.9.A team wishing to register must have a minimum of at least **70%** of their players from its local governing baseball association **and** school of record, as defined in 2.11.3, from where they are attempting to be verified eligible.

- 2.10. A local baseball association or community wishing to register a team with SD VFW Baseball will be assigned to a division within their Age Group by the appropriate Tournament Division Committee. Division assignments will be reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee. The 8U division/state tournament assignment will be determined by initial tournament pool or league play results
- 2.11. Determining team division assignment using SDHSAA ADM numbers and other factors:
- 2.11.1. Tournament Division assignment is determined by Average Daily Membership, MALE Only (ADM) as defined by the South Dakota High School Activities Association and other factors, such as team performance information. The school district or sports co-op paired with local governing organization location will be used to determine starting ADM.
- 2.11.2. The South Dakota High School Activities Association [Alphabetical Listing](#) web page for MALE Only ADMs will be used to determine team total ADM. Your VFW Baseball team Co-op must be listed on the SDHSBA website or the [SDHSAA Cooperative](#) page under the Baseball listing to be a valid team for sanctioning by the local governing body. A team that doesn't participate in the SDHSBA program may petition SD VFW Baseball explaining their situation/proposed co-op and extenuating circumstances to help determine team validity and ADM determination.
- 2.11.2.1. The following criteria will be used to evaluate coop applications on an individual basis:
- 2.11.2.1.1. Does the CO-OP being applied for fit the SDHSAA guidelines for CO-OP formation
- 2.11.2.1.2. Does the CO-OP being applied for involve schools that have an existing SDHSAA Coop for another sport
- 2.11.2.1.3. Does the CO-OP being applied for involve schools and/or towns that currently coop for baseball during the summer season
- 2.11.2.1.4. Does the CO-OP being applied for adversely affect an existing co-op or would it if an already existing co-op would be split apart
- 2.11.2.1.5. In the event a school is requested by more than one team, the SD Executive Committee would defer to the local school district's preference before making a decision.
- 2.11.2.1.6. All of the above criteria will be taken into consideration when reviewing a co-op application. The SD VFW Baseball Executive Committee will approve applications as required based on the previous criteria.
- 2.11.3. **“No School” Exception:** If a sanctioning organization does not have a school located in the same town as their team, they can use the players with zip codes where their baseball field is located to determine their ADM. The ADM will be determined by the school of record, where the majority of the team is enrolled. They must meet the 70% rule with players from the school of record or the co-op. If the player doesn't have an address with the field's zip code, they will be treated as a pick-up player and will need to petition in accordance with Rule 2.8, unless they were enrolled at the school/co-op determining the team's ADM.

Male ADM and other factors will be used to determine division assignment within each age group.

2.11.4. Definition of a Pickup Player: A team will be allowed two release/pickup players without adding all ADM numbers.

2.11.4.1. Any team is allowed two pick-up players from other towns/schools if those towns/schools do not have a SD VFW Baseball team at that age division (petition for release not required). If the pickup player does not have an appropriate aged team within their independent school district, playing within any recognized organization, i.e., VFW, Legion (both senior and junior), Sanford, etc. will not have their ADM added to the team's total ADM. However, the pick-up player will count against the team 70% requirement. A petition will be required to prove the above circumstances.

2.11.4.2. No out of state pick-up player (unless a member of the sanctioning organization's SDHSAA sports co-op) unless there are extenuating circumstances and approved by SD VFW Baseball Executive Committee.

2.11.4.3. A team with more than two release or pickup players from another town/school on a roster will result in all schools' ADM numbers being added to the registering team's ADM based on the verifying organization. The addition of ADMs to a team may or may not reclassify the team into a **higher division** or result in **forfeit without refund**. The local governing body/team should assess and understand their team's potential ADM during the verification of eligibility process.

2.11.5. Private and Homeschooled players are exceptions to being added to the registering team's ADM. A release is not required.

2.11.6. **In addition, teams may be moved to reasonably balance regions/divisions up until July 1.** The Director of Baseball Operations is authorized to move a team to a different **division** after reviewing and consulting the situation with the SD VFW Baseball Executive Committee. Such a ruling should be made by **July 2nd**.

2.11.7. Extenuating circumstances (divorce, non-custodial parents/grandparents, etc.) will be taken under advisement and when necessary, will be ruled on by the administration to determine the impact to the team's base ADM. The player may also be required to petition SD VFW Baseball to be approved for release from the team he or she is leaving.

3. General Rules

3.1.No alcohol consumption at any VFW Baseball or Sports event. Spectators will be asked to dispose of the product and/or be asked to leave the venue.

3.2.**For good order and discipline:** Actions physical or verbal not in accordance with the SD VFW Baseball Code of Conduct or Coach's Code of Ethics and deemed to be contradictory to Department of SD VFW Baseball's mission will not be tolerated. Such actions may result in suspension from participating in any VFW program, tournament or event of the offending

individual(s), team, association or city for a duration determined by the VFW Baseball Advisory Committee or Executive Committee. VFW Baseball Executive Committee is not required to warn the individual(s), team, association or city prior to final determination of consequences for the offending actions because the SD VFW Baseball Code and Coach's Code of Conducts are contained in our rule book.

3.3.The first game in either the First or Second Half of Tournament Seasons will be considered as the start of that half of their VFW Baseball tournament season. A team's post season (or second half) begins the first day of the state tournament and ends after their final game of the state tournament.

3.4.The start of their team's season/state tournament play is the beginning of the 8U/10U/12U state tournament and ends after their final game of the state tournament.

3.5.A boy or girl may not participate in VFW baseball and any other baseball program in the same SD VFW Baseball season (First or Second Half of Tournament Seasons).

3.5.1. Exception to this rule will be allowed for teams who are signed up in Varsity, JV or 7-9th Grade Age Groups/VFW Programs. These teams will be allowed unlimited players on their team to play also with a South Dakota **Senior American Legion** A or B Programs, SDHBA/SDHSAA Baseball Programs and Community Amateur Team.

3.5.2. Players registered on a VFW team can play on a Senior American Legion team and unlimited players from a registered **Senior American Legion Team** can play on a VFW team. Names of the players, roster of Senior American Legion team and birth certificates must be attached to the VFW Roster and Team Entry Form.

3.5.3. Members of teams must be part of the same organized local governing body for baseball in the community. **South Dakota VFW pitching rules** will always apply. These other affiliations must be noted on your VFW team registration or **disqualification** may result. A player on an Amateur Team Roster is prohibited from pitching for that Amateur Team during their VFW Age Division Season.

3.5.4. Pitch counts follow the player between VFW Baseball and Senior American Legion Baseball.

3.6.A player can be listed on multiple teams in separate age groups but a boy or girl can only be listed on one 8U, one 10U, one 12U, one 7-9th Grade, one JV, and one Varsity roster.

3.7.It is the duty of the Director of Baseball Operations to ensure the **Age Group Tournament Committees** select regional, state tournament dates for VFW Baseball Executive Committee approval.

3.8.It is the duty of the VFW Baseball Executive Committee to approve the team assignments for the First or Second Half of Tournament Seasons' Tournaments.

3.9.All proposed rule changes must be submitted in writing to the VFW Baseball Chairman no later than **August 10th** of each year or they will not be considered at the annual meeting unless two-

thirds of those present and eligible to vote so determine. Executive committee will meet as directed by the Baseball Chairman to discuss proposed rule changes.

3.10. **The VFW Advisory Baseball Committee or Executive committee may make rule adjustments for the good of VFW Baseball.**

3.11. Proposed meeting agenda should be posted to the website approximately 5-days prior to annual meeting to be held on the **4th Sunday in August** or as determined by the VFW Baseball Chairman.

4. **First or Second Half of Tournament Seasons**

4.1.If a regional tournament format is used, it may consist of teams from one area or region participating against each other. Host Coordinators will be assigned. Host Coordinators will communicate and work with the teams in their region to ensure effective and efficient execution of their region's bracket. **Host Coordinators may or may not be the region host site.**

4.2.The Varsity and JV State Tournament brackets should be considered as **tentative and subject to change**. The seeded bracket posted is final but the actual game times on Friday may change. The final state bracket will have all the teams participating listed with the Host Team playing the last game on Friday evening thereby necessitating the swapping of brackets.

4.2.1. Seeding process options for region brackets and state tournaments explained

4.2.1.1. SD VFW Baseball Tie Breaker and Seeding process (See Rule 4.33)

4.2.1.2. SD VFW Baseball Weighted Seeding process (See attachment 1)

4.2.1.3. SDHSBA/SDHSAA Power Points Seeding Process (See attachment 2)

4.3.SD VFW Baseball should make every effort to have a single elimination **“Tournament of Champions”** bracket when age groups JV and Varsity have 4 or more divisions to determine the ultimate champion for that age group. The teams will be seeded using one of the options in rule 4.2.1. The #1 seed will be the “Tournament of Champions” host if their facility meets the requirements in rule 4.4.

4.4.All Varsity, JV, and 7-9th Grade First or Second Half of Tournament Season Games shall be played on a diamond (facility) with regulation distances between bases and between pitching mound to home plate. In addition, the distance from home plate to the right and left field corners shall be at least 275 feet. The distance from home plate to straightaway center field shall be at least 300 feet. For **Second Half (Post Season) tournaments**, the infield will consist of turf, either real or artificial. For First Half of Tournament Season Games, a well-maintained dirt or “skin” infield is allowed.

4.5.Entrants in the Regional Tournaments must be decided by the High School Tournament Division Committee as soon as possible. Regional Tournament sites will be determined by the High School Tournament Division Committee and approved by the SD VFW Director of

Baseball Operations. SD VFW Executive Committee will approve drawings for SD VFW Baseball Tournaments.

- 4.6. Normally, First Half of the Tournament Season Games are held the week prior to the Varsity, JV and 7-9th Grade Second Half (Post Season/State) Tournaments. Earlier dates may be proposed to the High School Tournament Divisions Committee and will be taken into consideration for approval by the SD VFW Baseball Executive Committee. The First Half of the Tournament Season Games should be completed by the Friday prior to the start of the Second Half (Post Season/State) Tournaments. This will allow the State Tournament Host Committees the weekend to communicate and collect data from the attending teams.
- 4.7. All SD VFW Baseball High School Tournament Division games shall be 7 innings duration unless a team is leading by 10 runs at the end of 5 innings, 4 ½ innings if the home team is leading by 10 runs, or if a team is leading by that number of runs any complete inning thereafter. A team leading by 15 runs or more after 3 complete innings, or any complete inning thereafter until the ten-run rule becomes effective will be declared the winner. The SD VFW Baseball Executive Committee may adjust any age group game inning duration as well as the mercy run rules as required based on the estimated number of games each team may play during the tournament season.
- 4.8. At all age divisions, extra innings will **be in accordance with NFHS** extra inning rules.
- 4.9. GameChanger App is **required** to be used for all age group division (except 8U) pool and bracket games including First Half of Tournament Season Games. Department of SD VFW Baseball IT Director will help set up First or Second Half of Tournament Seasons tournament games. State tournament hosts and region coordinators are responsible for coordinating or providing GameChanger score keepers for pool and bracket games.
- 4.10. If a team elects not to play a First Half of the Tournament Season game, the team forfeits and are disqualified from further participation in the tournament. There will **not** be a refund of registration fees.
- 4.11. If a team elects to not play the First Half of the Tournament Season championship game, the team forfeits their position in the state tournament and the next placed team will participate in the state tournament. A written (email) request for a waiver will be evaluated by SD VFW Baseball Executive Committee and/or Advisory Committee in coordination with the Host Tournament Director/Host Coordinator to determine validity.
- 4.12. All umpires for SD VFW Baseball Games/Events must be registered, except as noted below. Umpires should be registered or certified in SD. Umpires should be in appropriate SD uniform with SD VFW Baseball patches (**SD VFW Baseball patches are available for free to SD/IOWA Baseball Umpire Association members from the SD VFW Baseball Chairman**) for all SD VFW Baseball games.
 - 4.12.1. A certified umpire shall function as the umpire-in-chief at **all age divisions except 8U**. All games must have at least two umpires in state tournaments. It is highly

encouraged that an umpire crew of three be used on Championship Sunday for Varsity and JV State Tournaments.

- 4.12.2. (8U) Umpires must be qualified and understand the rules. (8U) A registered umpire shall be available to function as the umpire-in-chief. (8U) A certified umpire is recommended to function as the umpire-in-chief. Games in the 8U Division require 2 umpires, positioned primarily on first and third base lines.
- 4.13. All High School Tournament Division First Half of the Tournament Season shall be double elimination or pool play with the decision to be made by SD VFW Baseball Executive Committee. Home team, if not seeded, will be established and posted on the region bracket prior to region start by the SD VFW Baseball Chairman using a double random number app/process. SD VFW Baseball may elect to have a “Sweet 14 One or Done/Second Chance Bracket” games at the end of the First Half of the Tournament Season and before the start of the Second Half (Post) Tournament Season Games.
- 4.14. All High School Tournament Division Post Season Tournaments shall be single elimination.
 - 4.14.1. **The “higher” seed will be home team throughout the bracket except during the “if” game. Then winner of the previous game is the home team.**
 - 4.14.2. When a four region (champions and runner up advancing to the state tournament) format is used, the four regional champions will be awarded home team status in the first round.
 - 4.14.3. When the High School Tournament Division tournaments consists of two teams from each region, the champion and runner-up. The region hosting the state tournament will have a host team, that team will replace the runner-up if it does not place 1st or 2nd in their regional tournament.
 - 4.14.4. When seven regions are used, each region champion will proceed with the tournament host to the state tournament. When seven regions are used and the tournament host wins their region, the runner up team will also proceed to the state tournament. **The “Home Team” will be determined by coin flip if the bracket is not seeded using regional play performance.**
 - 4.14.5. When two super-regions are used, each region will send 4 seeds to the post season tournament. If the tournament host fails to make one of the seeds, the host team will replace the #4 seed in that region.
 - 4.14.6. **2 out of 3 Game Series Guidance:**
 - 4.14.6.1. Head-to-head game selection may be **random and/or statistically based on league/season activity** (SD VFW Baseball may make adjustments as required, i.e., deference given to local leagues teams, such as I-29/I-90, playing SD VFW Baseball rules will not play each other unless mathematically impossible);
 - 4.14.6.2. First host will be **randomly** selected; games will be played IAW SD VFW Baseball Rules;
 - 4.14.6.3. **Preferred Schedule:** Home 1 and 2 (double header) game location (Sunday or Monday preferred); Home if-game (Tuesday preferred); Home if-game back-up (Wednesday preferred). The schedule must be approved by SD VFW Baseball High School Tournament Division Committee as well as weather impact scheduling; times as agreed upon by teams;

- 4.14.6.4. Home/Host responsible for the items as assigned in accordance with the [First Half of Tournament Season Host Checklist](#).
 - 4.14.6.5. State seeding will be determined by using one of the seeding processes in Rule 4.2.1. SD VFW Baseball State tournament host may not play in the 2 out of 3 series process. [If the Host doesn't play](#), they will be seeded appropriately depending on the results of the series seeding results, normally seeded as the #8 Seed.
 - 4.14.6.6. A seeded Second Chance single elimination bracket (using region performance with one of the seeding options in 4.2.1) after the 2 or 3 games have completed may be used to determine a team's placement in the state tournament, normally the #7 Seed.
 - 4.14.7. (17U/14U) State Tournament Host team will have the last game on Friday's first round of play, unless different time is coordinated with SD VFW Baseball Executive Committee. Therefore, brackets are tentative until the last region has completed play. Host team will have their home dugout throughout tournament play.
 - 4.14.8. Coin flip will be used to determine home/away team when the teams have the same seeding. All registered teams, except host, must play in a qualifying [First Half of the Tournament Season](#) tournament. If pool play format is used in an "open" state tournament, there would be no need for a [First Half of the Tournament Season](#) tournament.
- 4.15. Insurance is mandatory for each team in tournament play. A copy must be submitted online at the SD VFW Baseball Website during initial registration.
- Minimum Insurance Requirements per team:
- 4.15.1. General Liability: \$2,000,000 Aggregate / \$1,000,000 Occurrence
 - 4.15.2. \$100,000 Accident Medical | \$10,000 AD&D | \$3,000 Accidental Dental Benefit
 - 4.15.3. At least a \$250 deductible
 - 4.15.4. Excess Liability Coverage Increase General Liability Aggregate & Per Occurrence by \$4,000,000 each (\$2M/\$1M →\$6M/\$5M)
- 4.16. All teams in [Varsity, JV and 7-9th Grade Age Groups](#), including coaches, shall be in [complete](#) baseball uniforms (with SD VFW Patches) for tournament games and opening ceremony. SD VFW Baseball will be the **sole source** for all SD VFW Baseball patches and not the National Headquarters VFW Store. All teams in [12U/10U/8U age groups](#), including coaches, shall be in team consistent apparel, i.e., team t-shirt, vest, jacket, polo; shorts may be worn, however, no gym shorts. If a coach or team player(s) are not in uniform, they will not be allowed on the field for games or opening ceremony. **Players will not wear uniform shorts/short pants unless the socks cover the bare skin to the bottom of the short pants.** Reference Rule 4.29 for penalties.
- 4.17. **All coaches** in the dugout or coaching on the field must participate in saying the VFW Code of Conduct with their team or they will be asked to leave the dugout area until game is complete.
- 4.18. All [Varsity, JV and 7-9th Grade team](#) uniforms **must** have a VFW patch or other VFW identifiable method on the jersey with a team determined, consistent location. Patches are

available through the Department of SD VFW Baseball Chairman at \$2 per patch. Make checks payable to SD VFW Baseball and send to SD VFW Baseball **1600 W Russell St, Ste 135, Sioux Falls SD 57104.**

- 4.19. The Baseball Executive Committee should announce the sites of the State Tournament by January 31.
- 4.20. State tournament hosting fees will be based on the following formula: \$25 per team participating in the State Tournament; minimum fee \$200 and maximum fee of \$600 apply.
- 4.21. Fee shall be paid to the Department of SD VFW Headquarters within 30 days after the completion of the tournament. SD VFW Baseball **1600 W Russell St, Ste 135, Sioux Falls SD 57104.**
- 4.22. The game to determine 7th and 8th place in the **Varsity, JV and 7-9th Grade Post Season/State Tournaments** will not be played in any of the tournaments.
- 4.23. Any team that does not report to play or notify the tournament officials at any regional or state tournament of a justifiable reason for being late by 30 minutes past the time established to play, shall forfeit the game.
- 4.24. State tournaments will not be played on any diamond where another baseball tournament is being played on the same diamond on the same dates.
- 4.25. Trophies shall be furnished for state tournaments by the Department of South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars Baseball.
 - 4.25.1. Trophies for all state tournaments with eight team format shall be awarded to the winner, runner-up, third and fifth place winners. Individual medals will also be presented to the members of all the teams that qualify for the tournament.
 - 4.25.2. Trophies for all state tournaments with a pool play format shall be awarded to the winner, runner-up and third place winner and in some tournaments, there may be a 4th place trophy. Individual medals will be presented to members of the top four teams.
 - 4.25.3. Sportsmanship Team Plaque will be presented in the memory of Louie Thury by the South Dakota Baseball Umpire Association for the **Varsity** Division Tournaments.
 - 4.25.4. Sportsmanship Team Plaque will be presented in memory of William Radigan by the Department of South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars for the **JV and 7-9th Grade** Division Tournaments.
 - 4.25.5. Sportsmanship Team Plaque will be presented in the memory of Benton Howe by the Department of South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars for the **12U** Division Tournaments
 - 4.25.6. Sportsmanship Team Plaque will be presented by the Department of South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars for the **10U** Division Tournaments
 - 4.25.7. Sportsmanship Team Plaque will be presented in Honor of Vern Lind by the Department of South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars for the **8U** Division Tournaments

- 4.25.8. These awards are the only awards presented at SD VFW Baseball State Tournaments.
- 4.26. Digital or Photocopies of Birth, Baptismal or Hospital Certificates, passport, Certified Copy from the Bureau of Vital Statistics or a valid Driver's License **will need to be presented** at the regional and state tournaments for cross reference with the official VFW Baseball roster for age verification.
- 4.27. **Post Season/State tournament coaches' meetings are mandatory.**
- 4.28. Prior to each SD VFW Baseball Sanctioned League or Tournament Season game, the Tournament Host Directors or umpires will verify both teams' bats to be in compliance with the appropriate age group bat equipment rules and may affix that year's VFW Sticker. Any illegal bats will be held by the tournament host committee and will be available to the teams at the end of the tournament or a team's elimination.
- 4.29. **All teams, all age groups, are required to participate in opening ceremonial functions in team uniforms as specified in rule 4.16.** Teams not participating in the opening ceremony may be penalized by directed forfeiture of their next, immediate game at the discretion of the Department of SD VFW Baseball Executive Committee.
- 4.30. The official Team rosters to be only used for age verification to participate in **First or Second Half of Tournament Seasons** play will be provided by VFW Baseball to the **Host coordinator/state tournament director** as early as possible before the tournament starts.
- 4.30.1. Coaches **are required** to bring age verification documents to **8U/10U/12U Post Season first games/coaches' meetings**. It is necessary to check birth age verification documents and rosters at regional and state tournaments. **All High School Tournament Division teams will ensure their teams are grade verified through the registration link.**
- 4.30.2. Teams participating in a VFW State Tournament should send rosters with uniform numbers and a team picture to their Host Tournament Director to meet the tournament publishing deadline.
- 4.31. Host Tournament officials have complete autonomy on taking whatever action is necessary in behavior problems of participants. Severe cases involving coaches, players and spectators/fans may result in suspension or disqualification without registration fee refund. Return to play will be determined by the SD VFW Baseball Executive Committee.
- 4.32. In interest of time all rained out or postponed championship round ball games in tournament play will begin from point of stoppage unless the Ten Run Rule has taken effect. It is recommended during regular league play, regional or state tournament that if a game is rained out it should be called a game if five or more innings have been played. Otherwise, the game will be suspended in accordance with NFHS rules.
- 4.33. **First or Second Half of Tournament Seasons** gate fees shall **not exceed \$10 per day/per adult**. Teams are allowed 3 coaches maximum to be recognized as non-paying guests for the

state tournament weekend or region game week. If the host decides to charge youth 12 and under, the fee will not exceed half the admission of an adult. Individual veterans/active duty/national guard are free.

4.34. SD VFW Baseball Tie Breaker and Seeding process option for SD VFW Baseball First or Second (Post) Half of Tournament Seasons.

4.34.1. Win-loss record in pool play

4.34.2. Head-to-head competition, if all pools at the state or region tournament have equal number of teams and all teams have played each other in their pool (otherwise this is skipped).

4.34.3. Fewest runs allowed (overall).

4.34.4. Best run differential in all pool play games (maximum per game run differential of +10 or -10).

4.34.5. If, in the event of a 3-way tie or more, the 3-way tie is broken either before step 4.34.4 or upon completion of step 4.34.4 and a 2-way tie remains, the two remaining tied teams will revert to step 4.34.2 and repeat the tie-breaker criteria from that point to break the tie.

4.34.6. If still tied, the best 2 of 3-coin flips alternating the call will be used.

4.35. During any pool play, pool winners will be seeded via the tie breaker format first then the rest of the seeding will be completed.

4.36. If Random Game Matching and Deconfliction is used, seeding will be from top to bottom.

4.37. No matter the method of game scheduling, **the highest seed** (not pool winner) will be the home team through the bracket.

4.38. In the event of **voluntary** forfeit in Divisional/Pool Play, the non-forfeiting teams will be credited with a 10-run differential victory. Teams that forfeit a game cannot advance in tournament bracket play.

4.39. **GUIDELINES ON HANDLING LIGHTNING OR THUNDER DISTURBANCES:**

These guidelines provide a default policy to those responsible or sharing duties for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of contests based on the presence of lightning or thunder.

4.39.1. PROACTIVE PLANNING

4.39.1.1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during activities.

4.39.1.2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safer areas and determine the amount of time needed to get everyone to a designated safer area: A designated safer place is a substantial building with plumbing and wiring where people live or work, such as a school, gymnasium or library. An alternate safer place from the threat of lightning is a fully enclosed (not convertible or soft top) metal car or school bus.

- 4.39.2. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
- 4.39.2.1. When thunder is heard or lightning is seen*, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough (5-10 miles away) to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location immediately.
 - 4.39.2.2. 30-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed* prior to resuming play.
 - 4.39.2.3. Any subsequent thunder or lightning* after the beginning of the 30- minute count will reset the clock, and another 30-minute count should begin.
 - 4.39.2.4. When lightning-detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology could be used to assist in deciding to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within 10 miles of the event location. However, you should never depend on the reliability of these devices and, thus, hearing thunder or seeing lightning* should always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning detection device.
- 4.39.3. * – At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.

4.40. The SD VFW Code of Sportsmanship shall be said before every game of [First or Second \(Post\) Half of Tournament Seasons games](#); **at all age groups**.

5. Equipment

- 5.1. Bat requirements for [Varsity and JV Age Groups](#): All bats must be wood or in accordance with BBCOR Bat Standards with the official BBCOR Stamp. **Wood bats, drop IAW NFHS Rules, may be used in any age division.** Any illegal bats will be removed from the game and the batter is out.
- 5.2. Bat requirements for [7-9th Grade Age Group](#): All bats must be in accordance with BBCOR Bat Standard, USABAT Standard or wood. The bat shall include the official stamp of USA Baseball or BBCOR. See this [link for USABAT](#). Any illegal bats will be removed from the game and the batter is out.
- 5.3. The **Wilson A1010 or Diamond HS baseballs** are the official SD VFW Baseball Program baseballs and will be used for **all age groups for [First or Second \(Post\) Half of Tournament Seasons games](#)**. Official SD VFW baseballs can be purchased via email to the VFW Baseball Chairman. VFW Official Baseball's will be sold at cost plus shipping and credit card fee. **High School Tournament Divisions** events should put new VFW Baseball official baseballs in play at the start of each game, as determined by the Tournament Director, during [Second \(Post\) Half of Tournament Season games](#).

- 5.4. A batter without protective headgear including ear protectors will be declared out when the pitcher comes to the set position or begins his motion. Protective helmets including ear protectors is required for all base runners, and if the base runner refuses to put on a helmet after being advised by the umpire, he shall be automatically out or the team will be assessed an out.
- 5.5. The catcher shall wear, in addition to a head protector, a mask (IAW NFHS rule 1-5-4) with a throat protector (hockey style mask), body/chest protector that meets the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture (Effective January 1, 2020), protective cup (male only), and baseball protective shin guards. Warm-up catchers (players or youth) must wear protective headgear and throat protectors (hockey style mask).
- 5.6. **(Exception to NFHS rule)** A wristband with defensive shifts, pitching choices or game directions as non-electronic equipment and must be a single, solid color and worn on the forearm or belt. Pitchers' cards must not be white, gray or a distracting color and worn on their non-pitching arm or belt.
- 5.7. **(Varsity Only)** NFHS Rule: The use of a one-way communication device between a coach in the dugout and a team's catcher for the purpose of calling pitches. Coaches are prohibited from communicating with any other player besides the catcher on defense and with any player while batting. The coach must also be in the dugout when using the communication device.
- 5.8. Courtesy runners may be used for pitchers and catchers attaining first base at any time. The same courtesy runner cannot be used for the pitcher and catcher in the same inning. Courtesy runners are not allowed for pinch hitters for catchers. A player who has already participated in the game is not eligible to be a courtesy runner (except under injury substitution).
- 5.9. Any player's equipment judged by the umpire to be unreasonably dangerous or distracting is illegal.
- 5.10. Any questions regarding legality of a player's equipment shall be resolved by the umpire-in-chief.
- 5.11. Non-traditional playing equipment must be reviewed by the VFW Baseball Executive Committee before it will be permitted to be used.

6. Regulations

- 6.1. If a pitcher is removed from the mound during the game, he **may not** return to the mound in the same game though he is retained in the lineup.
- 6.2. Designated hitters may be used in VFW Baseball for any player. Teams participating in Varsity, JV, 7-9th Grade, 12U and 10U age division VFW Baseball sanctioned tournaments may utilize one extra hitter as well as the designated hitter.

6.3.SD VFW Baseball utilizes the NFHS rule for re-entry. Any of the starting players may be withdrawn and re-entered once, including a player who was the designated hitter, provided such player occupies the same batting position whenever he is in the lineup. **A substitute who is withdrawn may not re-enter.**

6.4.All protests will be decided by the official on the level where they occur but may be appealed to the next higher authority via email/written appeal. Text messages are not considered official correspondence or a written appeal. The final authority resides with the VFW Baseball Executive Committee.

6.5.Adult managers who are at least 18 years of age only will be allowed in the coaching boxes, with permission granted to use one player in one box through First or Second (Post) Half of Tournament Seasons games. Players in the coaching box must wear a helmet with ear protection at all age groups. All High School Tournament Age Group (Varsity/JV/7-9th Grade) coaches must wear helmets in a coaching box.

6.6.In the event of a severe injury and there are no other players on the bench who have not played, the last player taken out may be placed back in the game in place of the injured player or players. In the alternative, in a severe injury situation, a team may continue to play with eight players, and the team shall receive an automatic out at such player(s) turn at bat. The applicability of the rule shall be determined by the head umpire.

6.7.Pace of play guidelines (**at discretion** of SD VFW Baseball Representative/Chief Umpire, Chief Umpire or Tournament Director):

6.7.1. Batter must keep one foot in the batter's box between pitches

6.7.2. Time between innings will be 3 minutes or less to allow the pitcher 4 (or less) warm-up pitches and catcher 1 throw-down.

6.7.3. A courtesy runner may be substituted for the catcher or pitcher in all age divisions at any point in the game.

6.7.4. COURTESY RUNNERS

6.7.4.1. At any time, the team at bat may use courtesy runners for the pitcher and/or the catcher. If the offensive team bats around, the pitcher and/or catcher who had a courtesy runner inserted on their behalf may bat in their normal position in the batting order.

6.7.4.2. The same individual runner may not be used for both positions (pitcher and catcher) during the same inning.

6.7.4.3. Neither the pitcher nor the catcher will be required to leave the game under such circumstances.

6.7.4.4. Players who have participated in the game in any other capacity are ineligible to serve as courtesy runners unless all bench players have played in current game.

6.7.4.5. A player may not run as a courtesy runner for the pitcher or the catcher and then be used as a substitute for another player in that half inning.

6.7.4.6. If an injury, illness or ejection occurs and no other runners are available, the courtesy runner may be used as a substitute.

- 6.7.4.7. The umpire-in-chief shall record courtesy runner participation and announce it to the scorer.
- 6.7.4.8. A player who violates the courtesy-runner rule is an illegal substitute. Should an injury, illness or ejection occur to the courtesy runner, another courtesy runner for the pitcher or catcher may run.

6.7.5. AFTER PUTOUTS

- 6.7.5.1. After a putout in the outfield and with no runners on base, the ball shall be thrown to a cutoff man and, if desired, to one additional infielder before being returned to the pitcher for delivery to the next batter.
- 6.7.5.2. After a putout in the infield and with no runners on base, the ball shall be returned directly to the pitcher.
- 6.7.5.3. Following the final out in any inning, the ball shall be given to the nearest umpire. The plate umpire shall give the ball to the catcher. The base umpire shall place the ball on the pitcher's plate.

6.8. Pitch Count:

South Dakota VFW Baseball will apply, execute and enforce pitch count rules in addition to providing several age-appropriate recommendations listed below. Pitch Smart ([USA Baseball's Pitch Smart Guidelines](#)) are a series of practical, age-appropriate guidelines to help parents, players and coaches avoid overuse injuries and foster long, healthy careers for youth pitchers. VFW Baseball elected to establish these rules to ensure the safety, wellbeing and yet have fun while playing in VFW sponsored events.

- 6.8.1. Ultimately, it's the responsibility of the **coaches, parents** and the **athlete** to ensure that the player follows the guidelines for his age division over the course of the year especially since they will often play in multiple leagues with different affiliations covering various times of the year.
- 6.8.2. **Required:** Pitch count limits and required rest recommendations follow players between SD VFW Baseball age divisions as well as any pitching events outside of SD VFW Baseball sanctioned events.
- 6.8.3. SD VFW Baseball rest days in accordance with the age division completed in when a player transitions to the next SD VFW Baseball age division. For example: if a player pitches 70 pitches in a SD VFW Baseball 7-9th Grade age division event, the player has 4 days rest before he/she pitches a SD VFW Baseball Varsity age group event.
- 6.8.4. A player pitching outside the SD VFW Baseball program (Senior/Junior Legion, Amateur, etc.) will determine their SD VFW Baseball days rest by using their last total daily pitch count (regardless when they started their last batter) applied to the SD VFW Baseball age group they will be playing. For example: if a player pitches 40 daily pitches in a Senior/Junior Legion game and is going to pitch during the SD VFW Baseball Varsity First or Second (Post) Half of Tournament Seasons games, the player would require 1 day rest from the previous outside pitching event.

Age Group*	Daily Max Pitch Count	Required Rest (Pitches)					
		0 Days	1 Days	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days	5 Days
7-8	50	1-20	21-35	36-50	N/A	N/A	N/A
9-10	75	1-25	26-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
11-12	85	1-25	26-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
7-9 th Grade	95	1-30	31-40	41-50	51-65	66+	N/A
Varsity/JV	105	1-35	36-45	46-60	61-80	81+	N/A

***The age group of the tournament being played will be used to determine the daily pitch count, not the age of the player pitching.**

Exception: If a pitcher reaches the Daily MAX or desired Required Rest Pitch Count limit for his/her age division while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until any one of the following conditions occurs: **1.** The batter reaches base; **2.** That batter is put out; **3.** The third out is made to complete the half-inning.

When confirming pitch count after the game, the coaches and official book will agree on both team's pitch count as well as which days rest is in effect. However, the total pitch count will carry over to the Max Daily Pitch Count if the pitcher pitches another game the same day. For example, if the pitcher reaches 35 pitches but requires 40 pitches to finish the batter, the pitcher will qualify for "zero" rest days but have a daily pitch count of 40 thus impacting the number of pitches during his second outing on the same day.

NOTE 1: (IAW 2023 NFHS Rule Change to 6-1-1, 2, 3) The pitcher shall take or simulate taking the sign from the catcher with the pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate.

NOTE 2: Intentional walk: only pitches thrown by the pitcher will be counted (**doesn't throw, doesn't count**).

NOTE 3: A player **may** appear in a game as a pitcher for three consecutive days but will not exceed their zero days rest pitch count per day the first two days and the 1-days rest pitch count for the 3rd day. For example; V/JV: 35, 35, **45 (1 pitch = 35 or 45 pitches in that day)** and 7-9th Grade: 30, 30, **40 (1 pitch = 30 or 40 pitches in that day)**

NOTE 4: Pitchers once **removed** from the mound or pinch hit for, he/she will not return to the mound in the same game.

6.8.5. V/JV/7-9th Grade additional recommendations

- 6.8.5.1. Players can begin using breaking pitches after developing consistent fastball and changeup
- 6.8.5.2. Do not exceed 100 combined innings pitched in any 12-month period

- 6.8.5.3. Take at least 4 months off from throwing every year, with at least 2-3 of those months being continuous
- 6.8.5.4. Make sure to properly warm up before pitching
- 6.8.5.5. Set and follow pitch-count limits and required rest periods
- 6.8.5.6. Avoid playing for multiple teams at the same time
- 6.8.5.7. Avoid playing catcher while not pitching
- 6.8.5.8. Players should not pitch in multiple games on the same day
- 6.8.5.9. Play other sports during the year
- 6.8.5.10. Monitor for other signs of fatigue

6.8.6. **For VFW sanctioned events, the tournament host committee and/or the regional coordinator (or designee) is responsible for keeping the official pitch count.** During VFW sanctioned games, both coaches, umpire crew chief (or designated official) and official book are responsible for keeping the pitch count. Between innings or as required, the coaches, umpire crew and official book (GameChanger app if used) will compare pitch count.

6.8.6.1. The official book (GameChanger) pitch count will be used as final.

6.8.6.2. Disagreements on pitch count will be presented to the Tournament Director. Appeals may be brought to the VFW Director of Operations or VFW Assistant Director of Operations for arbitration.

6.8.6.3. When a pitcher has been discovered to have exceeded the above age-division appropriate **daily max pitch count**, they will be removed from the mound, IAW with the notes above, and allowed to play any position. In addition, the player will be placed in appropriate pitching days rest status determined by the number of pitches performed.

6.8.6.4. If an **ineligible** player, in required rest days, pitches and is found “in-game,” he/she will be disqualified from the game and removed from the field of play. The player will also be placed in the appropriate/previous performed pitching days rest status. In addition, the Head Coach will be ejected from the game, removed from the field of play/dugout area and suspended for the next game. If the game has been completed when the ineligible player is discovered, the entire team shall be disqualified and all games forfeited that have been played up to that point in time.

6.9. **Definition of calendar day:** SD VFW Baseball defines calendar day as the 24-hour period from 7:00 AM to 6:59 AM

6.10. **Game continuation:** all games started on a definite date will be considered part of that day’s play even though the game is not completed until past midnight. In the event of interruption due to weather conditions and participating teams leave the ballpark because the complex is closed for that session, all pitching records will be counted for the calendar day the pitches are thrown in. If the game completes after midnight, the pitches will be counted on the calendar day the game started on. The start of the continuation game may result in the pitcher from the delayed game entering the appropriate pitch count rest period the next calendar day.

- 6.11. No more than two complete games will be played by any one team in any one day, except when a pool play format is used or extenuating circumstances and approved by VFW Baseball Executive Committee.
- 6.12. A legal slide can be either feet first or headfirst. If a runner slides feet first, at least one leg and buttock shall be on the ground. If a runner slides, he must slide within reach of the base with either a hand or a foot. A runner may slide or run in a direction away from the field to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder.
- 6.13. A slide is illegal if:
- 6.13.1. The runner uses a rolling, cross-body or pop-up slide into the fielder, or
 - 6.13.2. The runner's raised leg is higher than the fielder's knee when the fielder is in a standing position, or
 - 6.13.3. The runner goes beyond the base and then contacts or alters the play of the fielder, or
 - 6.13.4. The runner slashes or kicks the fielder with either leg, or
 - 6.13.5. The runner tries to injure the fielder, or
 - 6.13.6. The runner, on a force play, does not slide on the ground and in a direct line between the two bases.
 - 6.13.7. Any player may be ejected from a game for flagrant conduct, which in the umpire's judgment either injures or is intended to injure another player.
- 6.14. Force Play Slide Rule (**avoid contact rule**) simply stated (**V/JV/7-9th Grade**), the runner **never** has to slide. However, on a force play when they do slide, it must be legal and in a direct line between the two bases. A runner may slide or run in a direction away from the fielder to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder within reasonable distance of the base, plate or base path. The force play slide rule is in effect at second, third and home plate.
- 6.15. Bench and Field Conduct
- 6.15.1. A coach, player, substitute, attendant or other bench personnel shall not:
 - 6.15.2. Leave the dugout during a live ball for an unauthorized purpose;
 - 6.15.3. Fake a tag without the ball;
 - 6.15.4. Carelessly throw a bat;
 - 6.15.5. Not wear bandannas. Players, however, may wear most jewelry unless the jewelry worn is judged to potentially harm or injure the player or their opponent; umpire discretion to remove potentially distracting/dangerous items from pitchers; for example: arm compression sleeves, sunglasses, etc.
 - 6.15.6. Hit the ball to players on defense after the game has started;

PENALTY: At the end of playing action, the umpire shall issue a warning to the coach of the team involved and the next offender on that team shall be ejected.

6.16. The following behavior from coaches or players will result in immediate ejection by the umpire from the current game or SD VFW Baseball approved activity, as well as a mandatory suspension of the next full game and such other action as the SD VFW Baseball Executive Committee deems appropriate. In addition, the following behavior by spectators or guests will result in immediate removal from the venue at the Host Coordinator, Tournament Director or VFW Baseball Representative's discretion. The SD VFW Baseball Executive/Advisory Committees may take further action as they deem appropriate:

- 6.16.1. Arguing with umpires or other game officials;
- 6.16.2. Engaging in offensive behavior;
- 6.16.3. Unsportsmanlike conduct;
- 6.16.4. Abusive, harmful or unwarranted disruptions to the game;
- 6.16.5. Throwing bats, helmets, gloves, or other equipment in anger;
- 6.16.6. Using profane, obscene or vulgar language;
- 6.16.7. Verbal or nonverbal disrespect directed towards VFW Baseball, umpire, game official, league official, player, manager, coach or spectator.

6.17. Further player, coach or spectator illegal actions:

- 6.17.1. Intentionally moving to a position to be hit in the head by a pitch
- 6.17.2. Initiate malicious contact on offense or defense;
- 6.17.3. Call "Time" or use any command or commit any act for the purpose of causing a balk;
- 6.17.4. Use tobacco or tobacco-like products within the confines of the field;
- 6.17.5. Leave their positions or bench area during a fight or physical confrontation; or
- 6.17.6. Have physical contact, spit, kick dirt or engage in any other physical action directed toward an umpire.

PENALTY: The umpire shall eject the offender from the game. Tournament Director/Region Coordinator or SD VFW Baseball Representative will have the spectator removed from the venue. Failure to comply shall result in game being forfeited. In (2), the ball is immediately dead, if on offense, the player is ejected and declared out, unless he has already scored. If the defense commits the malicious contact, the player is ejected; the umpire shall rule either safe or out on the play and award the runner(s) the appropriate base(s) he felt they would have obtained if the malicious contact had not occurred. In (5), a coach who attempts to prevent a fight or restore order is not in violation of the rule. In (6), a player or coach consciously makes forceful physical contact with an umpiring official, that player or coach will be ejected for the remainder of that contest, as well as the **following 3 games**. The suspension may be reviewed and altered by the SD VFW Baseball Executive Committee.

6.18. A coach who is ejected shall leave the vicinity of the playing area immediately and is prohibited from further contact, direct or indirect, with the team during the remainder of the game. He may return when requested to attend to an ill or injured player.

- 6.19. Players loosening up to bat shall remain in the area of their team's on-deck circle while the pitcher is warming up.
- 6.20. The ejecting umpire will complete the SD VFW Baseball Player/Coach Ejection Report Form within 12 hours and submit via email to the SD VFW Baseball Umpire-in-Chief. The [Report Form](#) is located on a drop down menu on the SD VFW Baseball.

PENALTY Sections 6.17 and 6.18: The umpire shall issue a team warning to the coach of the team involved. The next offender on that team shall be ejected.

7. Coaches Code of Ethics

- 7.1. The function of a coach is to educate players through participation in sports competitions. Each player should be treated with the utmost respect and his or her welfare should be considered in decisions by the coach at all times. Accordingly, the following guidelines for coaches have been adopted SD VFW Baseball.
- 7.2. The coach shall be aware that he or she has a tremendous influence, for either good or ill, on the education of the student and, thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.
- 7.3. The coach shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession. In all personal contact with officials, region coordinators, tournament directors, SD VFW Baseball administrators, the media and the public, the coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.
- 7.4. The coach shall take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse. The coach shall avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco products when in contact with players.
- 7.5. The coach shall master the contest rules and shall teach them to his or her team members.
- 7.6. The coach shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.
- 7.7. The coach shall exert his or her influence to enhance sportsmanship by spectators, both directly and by working closely with parents and administrators.
- 7.8. The coach shall respect and support game officials.
- 7.9. The coach shall not indulge in conduct which would incite players or spectators against the officials.
- 7.10. Public criticism of officials or players is unethical.
- 7.11. The coach should meet and exchange cordial greetings with the opposing coach to set the correct tone for the event before and after the contest.

8. Seven Legal Duties of a Coach

- 8.1. Adequate supervision.
- 8.2. Sound planning that emphasizes appropriate and safe skill development for participants.
- 8.3. Communicate inherent risks to participants.
- 8.4. Provide safe field conditions and equipment to participants.
- 8.5. Evaluate and accommodate participants that display injury, physical and mental disabilities.
- 8.6. Match and equate participants by size, age, and physical ability.
- 8.7. Establish procedures for an emergency.

South Dakota VFW Baseball Code of Sportsmanship

(It is recommended that this Code is recited by both teams before a game during the season. At regional and state tournaments, it is a **requirement**.)

- **Keep the rules.**
- **Keep faith with my teammates.**
- **Keep my temper.**
- **Keep myself fit.**
- **Keep a stout heart in defeat.**
- **Keep pride under control in victory.**
- **Keep a sound soul, a clean mind, and a healthy body.**

South Dakota VFW Baseball Rules

9. 12U Rules

January 1, 2026

9.1.NFHS, SDHSBA, SDHSAA and SD VFW Baseball Varsity/JV/7-9th Grade baseball rules will apply to all games unless a change is listed below.

9.2.Competition is open to boys and girls who are 12 and under years of age and eligible to play VFW Baseball. A boy or girl who has reached his or her 13th birthday by January 1st of the current year is not eligible for the 12 and under programs. The number of teams that register and average daily membership (ADM) of the high school/co-op they are in will be factors when teams are placed in a division (see V/JV/7-9th Grade General Rules for specifics).

9.3.All games in the 12U age group will be **six (6) innings**. The 10-run rule will be in effect after 4 innings and the 15-run rule will be in effect after 3 innings. During pool play, no new inning will start after **1 hour 45 minutes**. Ties in pool play **only if** game time is completed. The new inning starts on first pitch of the inning. The game is over immediately, if the home team is winning and batting when the time limit completes. Pool play should be completed on Friday or Saturday morning to determine seeding. **Bracket games don't have a time limit** and will go extra innings if needed to determine the winner.

9.4.Bases will normally be 65 feet but can be (60-65) sixty to sixty-five feet apart. Pitching distance is normally 48 ft but can be between 44-48 ft or at appropriate proportional distance with base length as coordinated with [VFW Baseball Executive Committee](#). All other distances must have a written waiver request or approved with the Host Tournament Bid Package by VFW Baseball Executive Committee.

9.5.Teams participating in 12U age group VFW Baseball sanctioned tournaments/games will be allowed one extra hitter and a designated hitter (IAW designated hitter rules) for any player or coach can bat the roster submitted to VFW Baseball. If the coach elects to start the game roster batting, they must roster bat the entire game.

9.6. South Dakota VFW Baseball will apply, execute and enforce pitch count rules in addition to providing several age-appropriate recommendations listed below. Pitch Smart (USA Baseball's Pitch Smart Guidelines) are a series of practical, age-appropriate guidelines to help parents, players and coaches avoid overuse injuries and foster long, healthy careers for youth pitchers. VFW Baseball elected to establish these rules to ensure the safety, wellbeing and yet have fun while playing in VFW sponsored events.

9.6.1. Ultimately, it's the responsibility of the coaches, parents and the athlete to ensure that the player follows the guidelines for his age division over the course of the year especially since they will often play in multiple leagues with different affiliations covering various times of the year.

9.6.2. Required: Pitch count limits and required rest recommendations follow players between SD VFW Baseball age divisions as well as any pitching events outside of SD VFW Baseball sanctioned events.

9.6.3. SD VFW Baseball rest days in accordance with the age division completed in when a player transitions to the next SD VFW Baseball age division.

9.6.4.

A player pitching outside the SD VFW Baseball program will determine their SD VFW Baseball days rest by using their last total daily pitch count (regardless of when they started their last batter) applied to the SD VFW Baseball age division they will be playing. For example: if a player pitches 40 daily pitches in a game and is going to pitch during the SD VFW Baseball 12U tournament, the player would require 2 days rest from the previous outside pitching event.

Age Group*	Daily Max Pitch Count	Required Rest (Pitches)					
		0 Days	1 Days	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days	5 Days
11-12	85	1-25	26-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A

***The age group of the tournament being played will be used to determine the daily pitch count, not the age of the player pitching.**

Exception: If a pitcher reaches the Daily MAX or desired Required Rest Pitch Count limit for his/her age division while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until any one of the following conditions occurs: 1. The batter reaches base; 2. That batter is put out; 3. The third out is made to complete the half-inning.

When confirming pitch count after the game, the coaches and official book will agree on which days rest is in effect however, the total pitch count will carry over the Max Daily Pitch Count if the pitcher pitches another game the same day. For example, if the pitcher reaches 25 pitches but requires 30 pitches to finish the batter, the pitcher will qualify for “zero” rest days but have a daily pitch count of 30 thus impacting the number of pitches during his second outing on the same day.

NOTE 1: (IAW 2023 NFHS Rule Change to 6-1-1, 2, 3) The pitcher shall take or simulate taking the sign from the catcher with the pivot foot in contact with the pitcher’s plate.

NOTE 2: Intentional walk: only pitches thrown by the pitcher will be counted (**doesn’t throw, doesn’t count**).

NOTE 3: A player may appear in a game as a pitcher for three consecutive days but will not exceed their zero days rest pitch count per day the first two days and the 1-days rest

pitch count for the 3rd day. For example; 12U 25, 25, **35 (1 pitch = 25 or 35 pitches in that day)**.

NOTE 4: Pitchers once **removed** from the mound or pinch hit for, he/she will not return to the mound in the same game.

9.6.5. 12U additional recommendations

- 9.6.5.1. Focus on athleticism, physical fitness and fun
- 9.6.5.2. Focus on learning baseball rules, general techniques and teamwork
- 9.6.5.3. Do not exceed 80 combined innings pitched in any 12-month period
- 9.6.5.4. Take at least 4 months off from throwing every year, with at least 2-3 of those months being continuous
- 9.6.5.5. Make sure to properly warm up before pitching
- 9.6.5.6. Set and follow pitch-count limits and required rest periods
- 9.6.5.7. Avoid throwing pitches other than fastballs and change-ups
- 9.6.5.8. Avoid playing for multiple teams at the same time
- 9.6.5.9. Avoid playing catcher while not pitching
- 9.6.5.10. Players should not pitch in multiple games on the same day
- 9.6.5.11. Play other sports during the year
- 9.6.5.12. Monitor for other signs of fatigue

9.6.6. **For VFW sanctioned events, the tournament host committee and/or the regional coordinator (or designee) is responsible for keeping the official pitch count.** During VFW sanctioned games, both coaches, umpire crew chief (or designated official) and official book are responsible for keeping the pitch count. Between innings or as required, the coaches, umpire crew and official book (Team Manager or GameChanger app if used) will compare pitch count.

9.6.6.1. The official book pitch count will be used as final.

9.6.6.2. Disagreements on pitch count will be presented to the Tournament Director. Appeals may be brought to the VFW Director of Operations or VFW Assistant Director of Operations for arbitration.

9.6.6.3. When a pitcher has been discovered to have exceeded the above age-division appropriate **daily max pitch count**, they will be removed from the mound, IAW with the notes above, and allowed to play any position. In addition, the player will be placed in appropriate pitching days rest status determined by the number of pitches performed.

9.6.6.4. If an **ineligible** player, in required rest days, pitches and is found “in-game,” he/she will be disqualified from the game and removed from the field of play. The player will also be placed in the appropriate/previous performed pitching days rest status. In addition, the Head Coach will be ejected from the game, removed from the field of play/dugout area and suspended for the next game. If the game has been completed when the ineligible player is discovered, the entire team shall be disqualified and all games forfeited that have been played up to that point in time.

- 9.7. Pitchers will be allowed **4** warm up pitches between innings. There is no balk rule, there will be no balks. If a pitcher takes another position on the field, he/she may not pitch again in that game.
- 9.8. Batter, base runners, bat boys, any players acting as base coach and any players out of the dugout must wear a helmet that covers both ears.
- 9.9. Catchers must wear protective headgear and throat protectors (hockey style mask), chest pad and catcher's cup. Warm-up catchers must wear protective headgear and throat protectors. This includes catchers warming up a pitcher.
- 9.10. Metal cleats are not allowed.
- 9.11. Bat requirements for 12U Age Division. All bats for 12U teams must be in accordance with USABAT Standard or NFHS wood bat drop requirement. The bat shall include the official stamp of USA Baseball. See this [link for USABAT](#). Any illegal bats will be removed from the game and the batter is out.



- 9.12. Base running. Stealing is permitted, however, the runner cannot leave the base until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. The runner is out if he/she leaves the base early. The batter may run on a dropped third strike.
- 9.13. See V/JV/7-9th Grade Section 6.7 Pace of Play for courtesy runner guidance.
- 9.14. The avoid contact or "Slide" rule is in effect if a fielder has the ball before the runner reaches 2nd, 3rd, or home. The runner is out if contact is made, umpire discretion will be applied and decision is final.
- 9.15. You may replace starters during the game, but if he/she re-enters the game, he/she must go into the game for the player he/she was replaced by and in the same spot in the batting order. When the sub comes out, **he/she is out of the game**. In the event of a severe injury and there are no players left on the bench who have not played, the last player taken out may be placed back in the game in place of the injured player. In the alternative, in case of severe injury, a team may continue to play with eight players and the team will receive an automatic out when that player's turn to bat occurs.

South Dakota VFW Baseball Code of Sportsmanship

(It is recommended that this Code is recited by both teams before a game during the season. At regional and state tournaments, it is a requirement.)

- **Keep the rules.**
- **Keep faith with my teammates.**
- **Keep my temper.**
- **Keep myself fit.**
- **Keep a stout heart in defeat.**
- **Keep pride under control in victory.**
- **Keep a sound soul, a clean mind, and a healthy body.**

South Dakota VFW Baseball Rules

10. 10U Rules

January 1, 2026

- 10.1. NFHS, SDHSBA, SDHSAA and SD VFW Baseball Varsity/JV/7-9th Grade baseball rules will apply to all games unless a change is listed below.
- 10.2. The **10U** competition is open to boys and girls who are 10 and under years of age and eligible to play VFW Baseball. A boy or girl who has reached his or her **11th birthday by January 1st** of the current year is not eligible for the 10U programs. The number of teams that register and average daily membership (ADM) of the high school/co-op they are in will be factors when teams are placed in a division (see V/JV/7-9th Grade General Rules for specifics).
- 10.3. Bases will normally be 60 feet but can be sixty to sixty-five (60-65) feet apart. Pitching distance is normally 45 ft but can be between 44-48 ft or at appropriate proportional distance with base length as coordinated with VFW Baseball Chairman. All other distances must have a written waiver request or approved with the Host Tournament Bid Package by VFW Baseball Executive Committee.
- 10.4. All games in the **10U** division will be **(5) five innings during pool play** and **(6) six innings in bracket play**. No new inning after **1 hour 45 minutes**, however the 10-run rule will be in effect after 4 innings and the 15-run rule will be in effect after 3 innings. **(10U) Ties in pool play only if game time is completed**. New inning starts on first pitch of the inning. Any **inning** starting before 1 hour and 45 minutes **(10U)** will be completed if the outcome of the game is in doubt. The game is over immediately, if the home team is winning and batting when the time limit completes. Pool play should be completed on Friday or Saturday morning to determine seeding. Bracket games don't have a time limit and will go extra innings if needed to determine the winner.
- 10.5. South Dakota VFW Baseball will apply, execute and enforce pitch count rules in addition to providing several age-appropriate recommendations listed below. Pitch Smart (USA Baseball's Pitch Smart Guidelines) are a series of practical, age-appropriate guidelines to help parents, players and coaches avoid overuse injuries and foster long, healthy careers for youth pitchers. VFW Baseball elected to establish these rules to ensure the safety, wellbeing and yet have fun while playing in VFW sponsored events.
- 10.5.1. Ultimately, it's the responsibility of the coaches, parents and the athlete to ensure that the player follows the guidelines for his age division over the course of the year especially since they will often play in multiple leagues with different affiliations covering various times of the year.
- 10.5.2. Required: Pitch count limits and required rest recommendations follow players between SD VFW Baseball age divisions as well as any pitching events outside of SD VFW Baseball sanctioned events.

10.5.3. SD VFW Baseball rest days in accordance with the age division completed in when a player transitions to the next SD VFW Baseball age group.

10.5.4. A player pitching outside the SD VFW Baseball program will determine their SD VFW Baseball days rest by using their last total daily pitch count (regardless of when they started their last batter) applied to the SD VFW Baseball age division they will be playing. For example: if a player pitches 40 daily pitches in a game and is going to pitch during the SD VFW Baseball 10U tournament, the player would require 2 days rest from the previous outside pitching event.

Age Group*	Daily Max Pitch Count	Required Rest (Pitches)					
		0 Days	1 Days	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days	5 Days
7-8	50	1-20	21-35	36-50	N/A	N/A	N/A
9-10	75	1-25	26-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A

***The age group of the tournament being played will be used to determine the daily pitch count, not the age of the player pitching.**

Exception: If a pitcher reaches the Daily MAX or desired Required Rest Count limit for his/her age division while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until any one of the following conditions occurs: 1. The batter reaches base; 2. That batter is put out; 3. The third out is made to complete the half-inning.

When confirming pitch count after the game, the coaches and official book will agree on which days rest is in effect however, the total pitch count will carry over the Max Daily Pitch Count if the pitcher pitches another game the same day. For example, if the pitcher reaches 25 pitches but requires 30 pitches to finish the batter, the pitcher will qualify for “zero” rest days but have a daily pitch count of 30 thus impacting the number of pitches during his second outing on the same day.

NOTE 1: (IAW 2023 NFHS Rule Change to 6-1-1, 2, 3) The pitcher shall take or simulate taking the sign from the catcher with the pivot foot in contact with the pitcher’s plate.

NOTE 2: A player **may** appear in a game as a pitcher for three consecutive days but will not exceed their zero days rest pitch count per day the first two days and the 1-days rest pitch count for the 3rd day. For example; 10U 25, 25, **35 (1 pitch = 25 or 35 pitches in that day)**.

NOTE 3: Pitchers once **removed** from the mound or pinch hit for, he/she will not return to the mound in the same game.

NOTE 4: (10U) No intentional walks

10.5.5. 10U additional recommendations

- 10.5.5.1. Focus on athleticism, physical fitness and fun
- 10.5.5.2. Focus on learning baseball rules, general techniques and teamwork
- 10.5.5.3. Do not exceed 80 combined innings pitched in any 12-month period
- 10.5.5.4. Take at least 4 months off from throwing every year, with at least 2-3 of those months being continuous
- 10.5.5.5. Make sure to properly warm up before pitching
- 10.5.5.6. Set and follow pitch-count limits and required rest periods
- 10.5.5.7. Avoid throwing pitches other than fastballs and change-ups
- 10.5.5.8. Avoid playing for multiple teams at the same time
- 10.5.5.9. Avoid playing catcher while not pitching
- 10.5.5.10. Players should not pitch in multiple games on the same day
- 10.5.5.11. Play other sports during the year
- 10.5.5.12. Monitor for other signs of fatigue

10.5.6. For VFW sanctioned events, the tournament host committee and/or the regional coordinator (or designee) is responsible for keeping the official pitch count. During VFW sanctioned games, both coaches, umpire crew chief (or designated official) and official book are responsible for keeping the pitch count. Between innings or as required, the coaches, umpire crew and official book (Team Manager or GameChanger app if used) will compare pitch count.

10.5.6.1. The official book pitch count will be used as final.

10.5.6.2. Disagreements on pitch count will be presented to the Tournament Director. Appeals may be brought to the VFW Director of Operations or VFW Assistant Director of Operations for arbitration.

10.5.6.3. When a pitcher has been discovered to have exceeded the above age-division appropriate **daily max pitch count**, they will be removed from the mound, IAW with the notes above, and allowed to play any position. In addition, the player will be placed in appropriate pitching days rest status determined by the number of pitches performed.

10.5.6.4. If an **ineligible** player, in required rest days, pitches and is found “in-game,” he/she will be disqualified from the game and removed from the field of play. The player will also be placed in the appropriate/previous performed pitching days rest status. In addition, the Head Coach will be ejected from the game, removed from the field of play/dugout area and suspended for the next game. If the game has been completed when the ineligible player is discovered, the team shall forfeit the last game played and given 10 runs allowed and -10 runs differential when in pool play. Once declared a forfeit, the opposing team is declared the winner and in pool play is award 0 runs allowed and +10 runs differential.

10.5.7. No balks, if a pitcher leaves the mound, he/she cannot pitch again in that game.

- 10.5.8. **(10U) No curve balls**, curve ball will be called a ball at the discretion of the umpire. If curve ball is put in play the offense can choose to accept the play or take a ball. Any violation of the pitching rules (inning pitch) will result in the pitcher being removed from the mound and can play any position but catcher.
- 10.6. **(10U)** Pitchers will be allowed **4** warm up pitches between innings. There is no balk rule, there will be no balks. If a pitcher takes another position on the field, he/she may not pitch again in that game.
- 10.7. **(10U)** Batters, base runners, batboys, any players acting as base coach, and any players out of the dugout must wear a helmet that covers both ears.
- 10.8. **(10U)** Catchers must wear protective headgear and throat protectors (hockey style mask), chest pad and catcher's cup. Warm-up catchers must wear protective headgear and throat protectors. This includes catchers warming up a pitcher for 10U.
- 10.9. **(10U)** Metal cleats are not allowed.
- 10.10. **(10U)** Bat requirements for 10U Age Division. All bats for 8U/10U teams must be in accordance with USABAT Standard or NFHS wood bat drop requirement. The bat shall include the official stamp of the USA Baseball. See this [link for USABAT](#). Any illegal bats will be removed from the game and the batter is out.



- 10.11. **(10U)** Base running.
- 10.11.1. No leading off.
- 10.11.2. Players may steal after the ball crossed home plate. If a player leaves early, he will be out.
- 10.11.3. Home plate is closed. A player only scores on a hit ball. Or a walk with the bases loaded.
- 10.12. **(10U)** A courtesy runner is encouraged but not required for a pitcher or catcher at any point in the game. The courtesy runner shall be the player that made the previous out. If no outs have been recorded in the game, the courtesy runner shall be the previous batter not on base. This rule is to keep time between half innings to a minimum.
- 10.13. **(10U)** The avoid contact or “Slide” rule is in effect if a fielder has the ball before the run reaches 2nd, 3rd, or home. The runner is out if contact is made, umpire discretion will be applied and decision is final. A player may not intentionally create contact with another player at any

time. If the defensive player has the ball and a play is being made, the offensive player must either slide or make every **effort to avoid contact** with the defensive player. Should a player run over or crash into another player, he or she may be ejected from the game and the out is awarded to the offensive team. If a defensive player is in the base path without the ball and contacts, or impedes the path of the offensive player, interference may be called on the defensive player. Any runner obstructing a throw to attempt a double play will result in a double play being called.

- 10.14. **(10U)** A minimum of eight (8) players is required to start a game. When batting, the ninth (9) position will be an out. Any fewer players will require a forfeit.
- 10.15. **(10U)** Teams participating in 10U age division VFW Baseball sanctioned tournaments will be allowed one extra hitter and a designated hitter (IAW designated hitter rules) for any player or coach can bat the roster submitted to VFW Baseball. If the coach elects to start the game roster batting, they must roster bat the entire game.
- 10.16. **(10U)** When roster batting, free substitution for all players except pitchers. This will not affect batting order. Roster batting order will stay intact and in order as per rule 10.20.
- 10.17. **(10U)** No dropped third strike
- 10.18. **(10U)** Bunting is allowed.
- 10.19. **(10U)** If a player cannot bat due to an injury there is no out, if 9 batting positions are still used, but he is out of the game defensively and offensively. If the injury leaves the team with only 8 players, then an out will be charged for the 9th batter.
- 10.20. **(10U)** Infield fly rule will be used. *See complete rule below.
- 10.21. **(10U) INFIELD FLY RULE:** An infield fly ball (not including a line drive nor an attempted bunt), which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, when first and second, or first, second and third bases are occupied before two are out. The pitcher, catcher, and any outfielder who stations himself in the infield on the play shall be considered infielders for the purpose of this rule. When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an Infield Fly, the umpire shall immediately declare “Infield Fly” for the benefit of the of the runners. If the ball is near the baselines, the umpire shall declare “Infield Fly, if Fair.” The ball is alive and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or retouch and advance after the ball is touched, the same as any fly ball. If the hit becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul. If a declared Infield Fly is allowed to fall untouched to the ground, and bounces foul before passing first or third base, it is a foul ball. If a declared Infield Fly fall untouched to the ground outside the baseline, and bounces fair before passing first or third base, it is an Infield Fly. On the Infield Fly rule, the umpire is to rule whether the ball could ordinarily have been handled by an infielder – not by some arbitrary limitation such as the grass, or the baselines. The umpire must rule also that a ball is an infield fly, even if handled by an outfielder, if, in the umpire’s judgment, the ball could have been as easily handled by an infielder. The infield fly is in no

sense to be considered an appeal play. The umpire's judgment must govern, and the decision should be made immediately.

South Dakota VFW Baseball Code of Sportsmanship

(It is recommended that this Code is recited by both teams before a game during the season; at regional and state tournaments it is a requirement.)

Keep the rules.

Keep faith with my teammates.

Keep my temper.

Keep myself fit.

Keep a stout heart in defeat.

Keep my pride under control in victory.

Keep a sound soul, a clean mind, and a healthy body.

11. 8U Rules

January 1, 2026

- 11.1. NFHS, SDHSBA, SDHSAA and SD VFW Baseball Varsity/JV/7-9th Grade baseball rules will apply to all games unless a change is listed below.
- 11.2. The **8U** competition is open to boys and girls who are 8 and under years of age and eligible to play VFW Baseball. A boy or girl who has reached his or her **9th birthday by January 1st** of the current year is not eligible for the 8U programs. The number of teams that register and average daily membership (ADM) of the high school/co-op they are in will be factors when teams are placed in a division (see 17U and 14U General Rules for specifics).
- 11.3. Bases will normally be 60 feet but can be sixty to sixty-five (60-65) feet apart. Pitching distance is normally 45 ft but can be between 44-48 ft or at appropriate proportional distance with base length as coordinated with VFW Baseball Chairman. All other distances must have a written waiver request or approved with the Host Tournament Bid Package by VFW Baseball Executive Committee.
- 11.4. **(8U)** All games in the **8U** division will be **(5) five innings during pool play** and **(6) six innings in bracket play**. Max of 5 runs per **inning**. There isn't a run cap on the final inning in either pool or bracket play. There will be a continuous batting order, all players will bat in the batting order. No new inning after **1 hour 30 minutes**, the game will be completed if the outcome of the game is in doubt. The game is over immediately, if the home team is winning and batting when the time limit completes. The 10-run rule will be in effect after 4 innings and the 15-run rule will be in effect after 3 innings. Ties in pool play **only if** game time is completed. Pool play should be completed on Friday or Saturday morning to determine seeding. Bracket games don't have a time limit and will go extra innings if needed to determine the winner.
- 11.5. **(8U)** No intentional walks
- 11.6. **8U Machine Pitch Rules:**
- 11.6.1. **Fair Ball Arc:** There shall be a fifteen (15) foot arc drawn from first (1st) baseline to third (3rd) baseline in front of home plate. A batted ball must go past this line to be a fair ball. If a catcher touches a moving ball in the fair ball arc, it's a fair ball. **All markings**, other than foul lines, may be marked with chalk, marking whiskers, and/or any marking materials that will not cause risk of injury or alter the game. This is to allow the field to be maintained/refreshed and conserve the use chalk.
- 11.6.2. **Safety Arc:** There shall be a thirty (30) foot arc drawn from first (1st) baseline to third (3rd) baseline in front of home plate. Infielders must stay behind this line until the ball is hit. When a defensive player is attempting a dangerous play near the pitching machine, the umpire may call dead ball.
- 11.6.3. **Pitching Mark/Line:** One eight-foot straight mark/line will be drawn parallel with the back leg of the pitching machine. The player pitcher must be behind the line at the time of the pitch.

- 11.6.4. **Pitching Machine:** The front leg(s) shall be set at a distance of 36 to 38 feet from the rear point of home plate.
- 11.6.5. Recommended pitching machine speeds should be 25 M.P.H. – 37 M.P.H. out of the machine for the 8U age division.
- 11.6.6. **Pitching Machine Operator:** The Pitching Machine operator shall be an adult at least eighteen (18) years of age.
- 11.6.7. **Catcher’s Box (NFHS rule exception):** a youth catcher’s box is required. See Attachment 3 for dimensions and image.
- 11.6.8. Ten (10) defensive players shall play in the field with four (4) outfielders. The fourth (4th) outfielder shall not assume an infield position. All outfielders shall stay behind the baseline.
- 11.6.9. The defensive player listed as pitcher shall not leave the pitching circle until the ball is hit. **Penalty:** The play continues. After the play has ended, the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or no-pitch. **Additional Penalty:** First Offense: Warning; Second Offense: Removal of player from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.
- 11.6.10. Defensive coaches may be allowed on the field of play but be beyond the farthest defensive player or foul territory.
- 11.6.11. The Infield Fly Rule **shall not** be in effect at any time.
- 11.6.12. The batting order shall constitute all present players on the team roster submitted to VFW Baseball, unless the player is not physically available to play. Late arrivals shall be inserted at the bottom of the batting order. All players on the roster shall bat before returning to the top of the batting order.
- 11.6.12.1. Teams may start a game with eight (8) players. The ninth (9th) & tenth (10th) positions in the batting order shall be declared an out each turn at bat.
- 11.6.12.2. Approved Ruling: A ninth (9th) & tenth (10th) player and all subsequent players may be added to the bottom of the batting line-up as soon as they become available.
- 11.6.13. Teams may use free substitution on defense, but the batting order shall remain the same.
- 11.6.14. No bunting allowed.
- 11.6.15. The batter shall receive a maximum of six (6) pitches or three (3) swinging strikes.
- 11.6.16. Runners shall not lead off or steal bases. A runner is out for leaving the base before the ball is hit or reaches home plate.
- 11.6.17. A courtesy runner for catcher of record only the previous inning may be used. The courtesy runner shall be the player that made the previous out. If no outs have been recorded in the game, the courtesy runner shall be the previous batter not on base. If the team batting has not played defense yet and a courtesy runner is used for a player, the player that was run for must assume the catching position the next inning. This scenario only applies in the first inning for the visiting team.
- 11.6.18. A team may score a maximum of five (5) runs per inning.
- 11.6.19. Umpires shall call “Time” after every play and declare the ball dead. “Time” shall be called as soon as all runners are not attempting to advance. “Time” does not have to be called by the defense for the purpose of this rule.
- 11.6.20. **Comment:** When a runner stands off a base and “jukes” or “feints” back and forth, this is to be interpreted as “not attempting to advance” and “Time” shall be called.

- 11.6.21. When a batted ball hits the pitching machine or baseball storage container, the ball is dead, the batter is awarded first (1st) base and all runners shall advance one (1) base
- 11.7. (8U) Batters, base runners, batboys, any players acting as base coach, and any players out of the dugout must wear a helmet that covers both ears.
- 11.8. (8U) Catchers must wear protective headgear and throat protectors (hockey style mask), chest pad, shin guards and catcher's cup. Warm-up catchers must wear protective headgear and throat protectors. This includes catchers warming up a pitcher for 10U.
- 11.9. (8U) Metal cleats are not allowed.
- 11.10. (8U) Bat requirements for 8U Age Division. All bats for 8U teams must be in accordance with USABAT Standard or NFHS wood bat drop requirement. The bat shall include the official stamp of the USA Baseball. See this [link for USABAT](#). Any illegal bats will be removed from the game and the batter is out.



- 11.11. (8U) The avoid contact or “Slide” rule is in effect if a fielder has the ball before the run reaches 2nd, 3rd, or home. The runner is out if contact is made, umpire discretion will be applied and decision is final. A player may not intentionally create contact with another player at any time. If the defensive player has the ball and a play is being made, the offensive player must either slide or make every **effort to avoid contact** with the defensive player. Should a player run over or crash into another player, he or she may be ejected from the game and the out is awarded to the offensive team. If a defensive player is in the base path without the ball and contacts, or impedes the path of the offensive player, interference may be called on the defensive player. Any runner obstructing a throw to attempt a double play will result in a double play being called.
- 11.12. (8U) If a player cannot bat due to an injury there is no out, if 9 batting positions are still used, but he is out of the game defensively and offensively. If the injury leaves the team with only 8 players, then an out will be charged for the 9th batter.

South Dakota VFW Baseball Code of Sportsmanship

(It is recommended that this Code is recited by both teams before a game during the season;
at regional and state tournaments it is a requirement.)

Keep the rules.

Keep faith with my teammates.

Keep my temper.

Keep myself fit.

Keep a stout heart in defeat.

Keep my pride under control in victory.

Keep a sound soul, a clean mind, and a healthy body.

Attachment 1: Seed determination using specific league statistics to determine a weighted, composite score

Composite score for baseball teams based on the statistics provided. We'll consider the following criteria:

1. **Win-Loss Records:** Reflects a team's overall performance.
2. **Runs Scored:** Indicates offensive strength.
3. **Runs Allowed:** Reflects defensive performance.
4. **Run Differential (total):** Overall performance efficiency.

Now, let's proceed step by step:

1. **Assign Weights:**
 - We assign weights to each criterion. These weights represent their relative importance. Let's use the following weights:
 - Win-Loss Records: 40%
 - Runs Scored: 25%
 - Runs Allowed: 25%
 - Run differential (total): 10%
 - Tie breaker, head-to-head performance first followed by overall win percentage, final run differential between the two teams, finally 2 of 3-coin flip
 - The sum of all weights is 100%.
2. **Collect Data:**
 - Gather the actual statistics for each team in the league.
3. **Calculate Weighted Scores:**
 - For each team, multiply the value of each statistic by its corresponding weight and sum up the weighted scores.
 - Example for Team A:
 - $\text{Weighted Score} = (\text{Win} - \text{Loss Records} \times 0.40) + (\text{Runs Scored} \times 0.25) - (\text{Runs Allowed} \times 0.25) + (\text{Run Differential} \times 0.10)$
 - Repeat this calculation for all teams.
4. **Composite Score:**
 - The final composite score for each team is the sum of their weighted scores.
5. **Interpretation:**
 - Higher composite scores indicate better overall team performance across the chosen criteria.

Handling ties in win-loss records can be crucial for accurate team evaluations. Here are a few common approaches:

1. **Half-Win Method:**
 - Assign half a win and half a loss for each tie.
 - Example: If a team has 3 wins, 2 losses, and 1 tie, calculate their win percentage as $(3.5 / (3.5 + 2.5))$.
2. **Win Percentage with Ties:**
 - Calculate the win percentage by considering ties as a fractional win.
 - Example: If a team has 3 wins, 2 losses, and 1 tie, their win percentage is $(3.5 / 6)$.

3. **Separate Tiebreaker Statistic:**
 - Introduce an additional criterion to break ties (e.g., run differential, head-to-head performance, etc.).
 - For instance, if two teams have the same win-loss-tie record, compare their run differential or other relevant stats.
4. **Ignore Ties:**
 - Some systems ignore ties altogether and treat them as neither wins nor losses.
 - This approach simplifies calculations but may not accurately reflect team performance.

Choose the method that aligns best with our context and preferences. **We need to remember to document our approach for transparency!**

For demonstration purposes, here are some statistics for three teams: Team A, Team B, and Team C. Remember that these are fictional numbers, but we can replace them with actual data.

Here's the data:

1. **Team A:**
 - Win-Loss Record/Percentage: 80 wins, 60 losses, 2 ties
 - Runs Scored: 750
 - Runs Allowed: 600
 - Run Differential: 150
2. **Team B:**
 - Win-Loss Record/Percentage: 75 wins, 65 losses, 2 ties
 - Runs Scored: 720
 - Runs Allowed: 650
 - Run Differential: 70
3. **Team C:**
 - Win-Loss Record/Percentage: 78 wins, 62 losses, 2 ties
 - Runs Scored: 780
 - Runs Allowed: 620
 - Run Differential: 160

Now let's calculate the composite scores:

1. **Assign Weights:**
 - Win-Loss Records: 40%
 - Runs Scored: 25%
 - Runs Allowed: 25%
 - Run Differential: 10%
2. **Calculate Weighted Scores A:**
 - For each team:
 - Team A Weighted Score = $((80 + (0.5 \times 2)) \times 0.4) - ((60 + (0.5 \times 2)) \times 0.4) + (750 \times 0.25) - (600 \times 0.25) + (150 \times 0.10) = (32.4 - 24.4) + 187.5 + 150 + 15 = 360.5$
 - Team B Weighted Score = $(30.4 - 26.4) + 180 - 162.5 + 7 = 353.5$
 - Team C Weighted Score = $(31.6 - 25.2) + 195 - 155 + 16 = 372.4$
3. **Calculate Weighted Scores B:**
 - For each team:

- Team A Weighted Score = $((80 + (0.5 \times 2)) \times 0.4) - (((60 + (0.5 \times 2)) \times 0.40) + (750 \times 0.25) - (600 \times 0.25) + (150 \times 0.10)) = (32.4 - 24.4) + 187.5 - 150 + 15 = 60.5$
- Team B Weighted Score = $(30.4 - 26.4) + 180 - 162.5 + 7 = 33.5$
- Team C Weighted Score = $(31.6 - 25.2) + 195 - 155 + 16 = 62.5$

4. **Composite Score:**

- Team A Composite Score: 317.73
- Team B Composite Score: 316.53
- Team C Composite Score: 327.27

5. **Interpretation:**

- Team C has the highest composite score, indicating better overall performance across the chosen criteria.

Attachment 2: Seed determination using SD High School Baseball Association Power Points Seeding Process modified to meet SD VFW Baseball Terminology

SDHSBA Power Points Seeding System

1. Seed points will be awarded based upon opponent's win percentage as shown in the chart below.
2. *Win percentage = number of varsity wins divided by the number of varsity contests played.

Opponent's Winning Percentage	Points for Win	Points for Loss
.750 and above	50	39
.500 - .749	47	36
.250 - .499	44	33
.249 and below	41	30

Seeding Criteria

Seeding for Playoffs

The High School Tournament Divisions Committee may use the SDHSAA Power Point System, see chart above, to determine seeding. Each team is required to play each team in their league once. If two teams do not play each other, both will receive a 30-point loss calculated in their score. All games played will count towards the Power Point System. A team may play the same opponent a maximum of four (4) times. Team schedules are final once submitted to the League Office. The top 8 teams will qualify and be seeded using the SDHSAA Power Points System mentioned above.

State Tournament Brackets

The High School Tournament Division Tournaments may be reseeded based on Power Points, the Weighted Statistics Process or SD VFW Baseball Tie Breaker/Seeding System. End of Regular Season Power Points or League/Season Statistics will be used or the statistics from region game play.

Attachment 3: 8U Catcher's Box Dimensions and Image

