

## 2026 South Valley League Baseball – Majors, Ponies, Seniors Code of Conduct

All players, coaches, and spectators are expected to act responsibly and demonstrate sportsmanlike behavior at all South Valley League Baseball games, practices or other activities. A primary goal of the Summer Baseball Program is to help our children grow and mature through participation in baseball. At all activities we want players to have fun, to get as much playing time as possible, to be put in positions where he or she can improve and experience success, and to learn and exhibit good sportsmanship.

### **PLAYER CONDUCT** Any

#### **player who:**

- ◆ Demonstrates poor sportsmanship through language, gestures, or other displays intended to degrade the activity or participants including use of profanity or verbal assaults.
- ◆ Intentionally throws equipment (bat or helmet).
- ◆ Intentionally disregards a Summer Baseball rule(s).
- ◆ Verbally abuses an umpire, coach or other players. Players are not allowed to confront umpires on calls, both during and after a game. **Shall:**
  - 1st offense – receive a warning from the umpire or player's head coach.
  - 2nd offense – be ejected for remainder of game. Ejection is to be reported to the League Commissioner and Chief Umpire. Present and future ejections will be reviewed and may result in suspension/expulsion.

#### **Any player who physically abuses an umpire, coach, or other players, or uses tobacco, vaping products, alcohol or illegal drugs:**

Any offense – player is ejected for remainder of game (no warning required). Player is not allowed to participate further until the player, his/her parents, and coaches meet with the commissioner or designee to discuss past behavior and future involvement, which may include expulsion from the league.

Note – these offenses are cumulative throughout the entire baseball season. Depending on severity of behavior, steps may be omitted.

### **COACH CONDUCT**

Coaches are expected to maintain a good example for both players and adults. Verbal abuse of or any act of aggression or intimidation toward umpires, other coaches, spectators or players **WILL NOT BE** tolerated. Coaches are not allowed to use tobacco or vaping products on or within site of the playing field or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at games or practices.

1st offense – Coach receives a warning from the umpire or League Baseball Committee member present.

2nd offense – Coach is ejected for remainder of game. Ejection is to be reported to the League Commissioner and Chief Umpire.

Present and future ejections will be reviewed and may result in suspension/expulsion.

3rd offense – Coach is removed until he/she meets with the commissioner and a committee designated representative to discuss further involvement.

Note – depending on severity of behavior, steps may be omitted. Disciplinary action may also be taken upon substantiated reports of code of conduct violations (at games or practices) that are reported to South Valley League Committee.

### **TEAM CONDUCT**

Any team involved in two or more ejections of players, coaches, or spectators over 2 or more games within a single season will be subject to review of further participation by the commissioner or his designee. Teams that are repeatedly warned of inappropriate behaviors not necessarily resulting in ejections are also subject to review. Coaches are responsible for behavior of players and are expected to take appropriate actions against players repeatedly violating rules of conduct. After review, sanctions may include team suspension, removal of players, or removal of coaches from participation. If a coach is removed and a suitable replacement is not available, the team will not be allowed to participate in future games.

### **SPECTATOR CONDUCT**

If a spectator demonstrates unsportsmanlike behavior or any act of aggression or intimidation directed towards umpires, coaches, players or other spectators, the following will take place:

Initial offense – umpire will notify both coaches of the problem. Coaches are expected to take the appropriate action.

If behavior continues – umpire will give warning to the spectator's team head coach.

If the behavior still continues – umpire will declare a forfeit on spectator's team.

It is the policy of BAC that no spectator may use tobacco, vaping products, alcohol, or illegal drugs at games/practices. Note

– depending on severity of behavior, steps may be omitted.

**Enforcement of these conduct rules and omitting steps are at the discretion of the umpires or South Valley League Baseball Committee members present at the game. Any game ejection will result in a one game suspension in accordance with Minnesota State High School League rules. South Valley League Baseball Committee will review all game ejections.**

# South Valley League Baseball

## “Spirit of the Game”

In an effort to make Baseball an enjoyable experience for all participants, the South Valley League Baseball Directors have developed a “Spirit of the Game” philosophy.

South Valley League Baseball should be an enjoyable and learning experience at all levels. Every effort should be made to play all games when players from both teams are present. Should circumstances prevail that dictate forfeiture (i.e., not enough players from one or both teams), an effort should be made to play, call it a scrimmage if you like.

Treat other participants with respect, cooperate with officials, coaches and fellow participants. Support all players, fans and coaches who teach and display good sportsmanship.

Sportsmanship is contagious! If coaches and parents exhibit good sportsmanship, players will do the same.

This is all in the “*Spirit of the Game*”.

## **The South Valley League Baseball Committee**

The National Federation of High School rules govern the baseball program of the South Valley League. The only exceptions are contained in the following special rules.

## **LEAGUES**

Grades apply to the school year at the time of registration.

1. MITES ..... Kindergarten and 1st Grade
2. SQUIRTS 2 ..... 2nd Grade
3. SQUIRTS 3 ..... 3rd Grade 4. MINORS 4 ..... 4th Grade
5. MINORS 5 ..... 5th Grade
6. MAJORS ..... 6th and 7th Grade
7. PONIES ..... 8th and 9th Grade
8. SENIORS ..... 10th, 11th and 12th Grade

## **BAC PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND LEAGUE LEVELS**

AGE LEVEL	BAC	VAA	PLAY	EAGAN	EASTVIEW
Mites (K-1 Grade)	•				
Squirts (2-3 Grade)	•	•		•	•
Minors (4-5 Grade)	•	•	•		•
Majors (6-7 Grade)	•	•	•	•	•
Ponies (8-9 Grade)	•	•	•	•	•
Seniors (10-12 Grade)	•	•	•	•	•

## **TEAM ROSTERS**

1. Each team roster consists of a minimum of 10 players, but no more than 13, except for SENIORS, which have a maximum of 15 players. All other exceptions must have the approval of the Baseball Commissioner and of the respective Area Director.
2. With the exception of the SENIORS division, teams will be formed geographically within the various areas. Every effort will be made to assign players to teams within their own neighborhoods. However, availability and location of coaches, number of registrants, late registrations, etc. may result in players being assigned to other teams in other geographic areas.

## **PARTICIPATION OF PLAYERS**

1. Each eligible player in attendance must appear at bat in every scheduled game. The batting order is continuous for all divisions. All players present bat in order throughout the game. If 13 players are present, then all 13 bat in rotation, while only 9 players are in the field at any one time.
2. For MAJORS and PONIES divisions, each eligible player must play at least 4 full innings in the field for each 7-inning game. A full inning is defined as three consecutive outs. The innings need not be played consecutively. This rule does not apply to called games, discipline

actions (must alert umpire/coach BEFORE game,) when a player is injured either prior to or during a game, or when the 12-run rule is invoked. Parents and/or players are encouraged to contact the appropriate Division Director if a coach is not enforcing playing time. Violations of this rule shall be dealt with and adjusted at the time of the infraction. All infractions of this rule shall be reported to the league director after the game. An offending coach will be warned of any complaints and that any subsequent violations, either reported by a parent, player, coach, or committee member, will result in a GAME FORFEIT of future games played in violation of this rule. For SENIORS division, there is no minimum participation requirement, although coaches are encouraged to include all players in defensive positions during the game.

3. When a player is removed from the game because of an injury, the home plate umpire AND the opposing coach must be notified at the time the injured player is removed. If the situation changes and the injured player is able to return to the game, both the home plate umpire and the opposing coach must be notified that the injured player has returned to his original spot in the batting order. The participation rule is amended for that player to the number of innings played plus the number of innings outlined in 2 above, whichever is less.
4. Substitutes present for any game MUST play, subject to participation rules up to a maximum of 11 players (10 players for playoffs and tournaments).

EXAMPLES:

- a. If 10 regular team members are present, 1 substitute may play, but may not start the game on defense. (not allowed in playoffs)
- b. If 9 regular team members are present, up to 2 substitutes may play, but may not start on defense. (1 sub in playoffs)
- c. If 8 regular team members are present, up to 3 substitutes may play, but only one may start on defense. (2 subs in playoffs)

### SUBSTITUTES

1. Coaches are **REQUIRED** to use substitutes from a lower South Valley League Baseball division (see rule 2) when conditions are such that violations of the following rules are possible:
  - a. A game shall be forfeited to the opposing team when a team cannot provide 8 eligible players within 15 minutes of game time.
  - b. A game shall be forfeited to the opposing team when a team cannot provide 8 players to finish a game.
2. Substitute players may not play in two consecutive games for the same team, unless two consecutive games are played on the same day (doubleheader) in which case the same substitute players may play in both games. PONIES are limited to MAJORS substitutes; SENIORS are limited to PONIES substitutes.
3. Substitutes must wear their own current team uniforms (*South Valley League Baseball ONLY – traveling players are not permitted*).
4. Substitutes are not eligible to pitch but may play any other position.
5. In all cases where substitute players are involved – please remember “THE SPIRIT OF THE GAME”. Coaches must advise each other as to intentions *PRIOR TO PLAYING!*
6. PENALTY FOR VIOLATION OF SUBSTITUTE RULES: GAME FORFEIT.

### GROUND RULES

1. The distance to the backstops, outfield boundaries and location of player benches are dictated by the limitations of the available fields.
2. The home team shall occupy the dugout on the first base line, and the visiting team shall occupy the dugout on the third base line.
3. Special ground rules for each field are determined by the two opposing coaches prior to the game with the approval of the umpire.
4. Coaches are responsible to ensure that equipment used in games is safe and complies with equipment regulations. Umpires may verify equipment compliance and may disallow use on non-conforming equipment or require repair of equipment before play can resume.
5. The Division Umpire Coordinators are responsible for scheduling umpires. Two umpires are scheduled for each game through MAJORS division and one umpire for PONIES and SENIORS. Rotation of umpires is not permitted during the regular season or playoffs, i.e. the umpires will work the assigned position (plate or bases) for the entire game unless an injury to one of the umpires occurs.
6. BAC: Fields may only be scheduled for practices by coaches in the designated BAC system. Fields are available for practices on a “first come, first served” basis. Scheduled games or make-up games have precedence over practice. PLAY, VAA, and EVAA coaches should consult with their program leadership and scheduling coordinator for questions and procedures for scheduling practice fields. Scheduled games or make-up games have precedence over practice.
7. In cold weather/hot weather/rain conditions, **BOTH** head coaches must agree to postpone a game. Home team coach must inspect the field and contact the opposing coach **BEFORE** contacting his team. If the opposing coach cannot be reached, **BOTH** teams are expected to show up at the fields and mutually agree to postpone the game. After the first pitch is thrown, the umpire and **NOT** the coaches must postpone the game. **NOTE: Leaving a message on a voice mail or with another person is considered “NOT REACHED”.**

### GAME CONDUCT

A Code of Conduct (printed on the back cover of this handbook) has been developed which applies to all participants. In addition to the Code of Conduct rules, the following game conduct rules apply.

1. The umpires or any Baseball Committee Member/Area Director in attendance at a game has the authority to enforce the conduct rules.
2. When a dispute or a question of rules arises, only the team’s **HEAD** coach may confer with the officials/umpires.
3. The head coach is responsible for the conduct of assistants, players, parents and spectators. Upon request of the officials, he/she will take whatever action is necessary to allow the game to continue.
4. Spectators, players and coaches are **NOT** allowed behind the backstop during the course of the game, with the exception of fields where there are bleachers behind the backstop. In this case, spectators are allowed behind the backstop.
5. Coaches, players and spectators will not interfere with or harass umpires. The head coach will ensure the enforcement of this rule for his/her team.

6. All players, when not in the field or at bat must be on the bench, except for the on-deck batter who must not interfere with the home plate area.
7. All equipment must be behind the bench/backstop in an orderly manner and not on the field of play.
8. Only coaches and roster players are permitted in the bench/dugout areas during the games. The head coach will ensure enforcement of this policy for his/her team. Upon request of the officials, he/she will take whatever action is necessary to allow the game to continue.
9. Coaches may not mutually agree to suspend any rule(s) for any given games.
10. Alcoholic beverages are **NOT** permitted at or near practices or games.
11. The use of tobacco products by anyone during a practice or game is not allowed.
12. Profanity and racial comments are not permitted and will not be tolerated. We strive to create a family environment at our events, and this behavior shall not be permitted. There are no warnings required prior to an ejection occurring. Coaches may be ejected if the offending player cannot be identified. Umpires will be instructed to enforce a ZERO-TOLERANCE policy in this regard.
13. Electronic rule books are not permitted on the playing field. Use of electronic devices for rule interpretation by coaches or players will result in ejection from the game. The use of electronic scorekeeping devices is permitted.
14. Players shall not be permitted to have or use cell phones on playing field. Any player found with a cell phone on the field with a cell phone shall receive a warning and must remove the device from the field of play, and each bench (both teams) shall receive a bench warning about cell phone usage. Any subsequent offense by either team after the bench warning shall result in player ejection.
15. Malicious play – players who instigate malicious behavior (intentionally running over a fielder, intentionally spiking another player, or other intentional malicious play) shall be ejected from the game, which aligns with MN high school rules. Offending players shall be required to meet with the league director prior to be cleared to return to play. As with any ejection, the offending player will not be permitted to participate in the next game.
16. Fighting or throwing a punch – player(s) shall be ejected and suspended play in any future game until the player(s), parents and head coach meet with the league director, home association director/commissioner and Greg Jensen. The outcome of the meeting will determine when (and if) the player(s) will be permitted to continue play again. As with any ejection, at a minimum the player(s) will not be allowed to participate in the next game.

#### STANDINGS

Standings will be kept throughout the season. Standings will be calculated by providing each team 2 points for a win, 1 point for a tie, and 0 points for a loss. Any un-played regular season games shall constitute a loss in the standings. The tiebreakers for teams with the same point total at the end of the season are: 1) team with the most wins; 2) Head to head, if tied the run differential between the two teams in head to head 3) if still tied after (more than two teams tied), winning percentage of head to head games of tied teams. If after the two tiebreakers the standings remain equal, the tiebreaker will be the least defensive runs allowed averaged for total games played.

#### POSTPONED GAMES – REGULAR SEASON

1. The umpire-in-charge may call any game when conditions, in his/her opinion, become hazardous or unplayable. Such conditions are, but not limited to rain, hail, lightning, darkness and/or sound of city sirens. See guidelines in this rule book for lightning disturbances. Games may be postponed or cancelled in their entirety if weather conditions support the decision.
  - a. A game in which 2 complete innings have not been completed will be replayed in its entirety at a mutually agreed date and time. Upon completion of 2 full innings or more, a game which is suspended will be continued from the point it was stopped. For continuance, coaches and umpires are required to initial a Score sheet to establish: last batter's order, pitch count, current pitcher and number of outs. If the Score Sheet suspended game pitcher does not start at game continuation, an inning will count against that pitcher's weekly inning count maximum. Upon game continuation, the recorded batter in the order will begin the game with the recorded pitch count, and recorded number of outs. The intent of this rule is to continue a game as if no interruption had occurred and to minimize incentives to prematurely suspend a game.
2. If at the point of a postponement a game IS NOT a legal game and does not have 2 complete innings, then it must be rescheduled and completely re-played at a later date.
3. If at the point of a postponement a game IS NOT a legal game and does have 2 complete innings or more, then it must be rescheduled and the continuation of the suspended game is played at a later date
4. If at the point of a postponement a game IS a legal game, then the score at the end of the last completed inning determines the winner.
5. If at the point of postponement a game IS a legal game and the score is tied, then it is considered a tied game in the standings. Innings pitched in such a game count toward per week pitching restrictions.
6. Postponed games must be re-scheduled by contacting the league director and/or division umpire coordinator. Games must be rescheduled within one (1) week of the postponement. If the game does not get rescheduled and played, both teams forfeit and the game will be recorded as a LOSS for both teams.
7. If re-scheduling is needed for any other reason but weather, the coach requesting the change shall be responsible for the field and umpire coordination. NO GAMES CAN BE POSTPONED/RESCHEDULED WITHIN 72 HOURS PRIOR TO A SCHEDULED GAME unless field/weather conditions dictate a postponement on the date of the game. A team unable to provide enough players must forfeit the game. Games may be rescheduled prior to 72 hours with mutual consent of the coaches and notification of the umpire coordinator prior to 72 hours before the game.

## SPECIAL RULES – ALL DIVISIONS

1. Runners who intentionally charge into any fielder are out. If in the judgment of the umpire, intentional and significant contact was made in an effort to dislodge the ball or interfere with the fielder's ability to receive the ball, the runner will be ejected.
2. A fielder without the ball is not allowed to block the base or baseline at a spot preventing the runner from running or sliding into the base ("obstruction"). The runner shall make efforts to avoid charging into the player and be called safe on fielder interference. (Example – a catcher waiting to receive the ball cannot block the baseline at a spot that would prevent a slide into the base.)
3. All bats (including wood bats) must have a grip. Softball bats may **NOT** be used. All bats must be in compliance with MYAS bat regulations at each age level.
4. A bat may be swung during a game only while in the on-deck circle or in the batter's box. The first offense will be a warning; the second offense will result in the player being ejected from the game. This does not have to be the same player as the original offense. A maximum of two offensive players (batter and on-deck batter) shall be permitted to swing bats on the field.
5. To help speed up the pace of the games, if possible batters must keep at least one foot in the batter's box at all times. *Penalty: A strike may be called for each unforced violation (at the discretion of the umpire).*
6. The appeal play for base running infractions does not apply. The umpire, in his/her judgment, may call a runner out for failure to touch a base after all playing action has ended (delayed dead ball).
7. A batter-runner who reaches first base safely and over runs or over slides may immediately return to the base without liability of being put out provided he does not attempt or feint an advance to second base. This is a judgment call by the umpire.
8. No head-first sliding is permitted (except at SENIORS). *Penalty: This is a delayed dead ball play. At MAJORS and PONIES divisions, runner who used the head-first slide is called out after play has stopped.* This rule does not apply to runners diving back to a base on an attempted pickoff play.
9. Each team, when on defense, is permitted not more than THREE charged conferences during a game, without penalty, to permit coach and his/her representative to confer with a defensive player or players. In an extra inning game, each team is permitted ONE charged conference per inning (not cumulative) while on defense. Time out granted for an injured player is not a charged conference. *Penalty: The umpire denies subsequent requests for charged conferences, and the pitcher has to be removed from the game. Two conferences in one inning requires the removal of the pitcher on the second conference.*
10. Each team, when on offense, is permitted no more than ONE charged conference per inning to permit the coach or his/her representative to confer with a batter or a base runner. Time out granted for an injured player is not a charged conference. *Penalty: The umpire denies subsequent requests for charged conferences.*
11. For MAJORS, PONIES and SENIORS, a ball that goes out of play (according to the ground rules set prior to the game), the runner will be awarded 1 + 1 from the time the ball goes out of play if the player was halfway to the next base.
12. NO MODIFICATION CAN BE MADE TO THE LEAGUE-ISSUED UNIFORM WITH THE EXCEPTION OF NAMES ON THE BACK OF THE JERSEYS. For example, SLEEVES CANNOT BE CUT OFF. A Player with a modified uniform will not be allowed to play in the game. This rule is enforceable by the umpire, or if prior to the game, by a BAC committee member. Names on jerseys must be consistent with the South Valley League Code of Conduct.
13. Protective safety equipment issued by the League to include catcher's helmets, throat guards, chest protectors, shin guards, and batting helmets MUST be properly worn during games and practices. Batting helmets are to be worn by batters, on deck batters, runners and players coaching a base. Issued safety equipment for catchers is to be worn at all times while in that position.
14. Any baseball used must be issued from the League for that specific age level.
15. Starting pitcher may re-enter the game one time only. No other pitchers may re-enter the game at any time.
16. If your team is up by more than 7 runs, and you are close to the two hour time limit for starting another inning, or there is concern over inclement weather, it is acceptable for a team to choose to skip your at bat (and the runs you could score) to advance the game in order to complete a legal game. In keeping with the Spirit of the Game, this is the ONLY situation where skipping an at-bat is acceptable during the regular season.
  - a. Continuous batting rules apply, and no batters may be skipped as a result of this decision.
  - b. The forfeiture of an at-bat must be determined and communicated to the other team and umpire prior to the start of a half inning. If a batter steps into the batters box, then that half-inning must be played.
  - c. The first pitch of the next half inning must be delivered before the time limit.
  - d. In order to prevent the misuse or abuse of this decision, any team that forfeits an at bat will also forfeit unlimited runs in the final inning, if applicable.
17. Pinch runners are not allowed. Courtesy runners can be used in specific situations. The courtesy runner must be the player who was the last out made. The substitution of a courtesy runner should be clearly communicated to opposing coaches and the umpire(s).

Courtesy runners can be used in the following situations only:

  - a. When there are two outs in the half-inning and the runner will be playing the position of catcher or pitcher in the following half inning.
  - b. In the event of an injury where the baserunner cannot reasonably or safely continue to run bases. (Note: if a player cannot run bases, coaches should also be taking full precautions regarding continued participation of that player in the game.)

#### SPECIAL RULES – MAJORS

1. High School Rules apply, with the exceptions as noted below.
2. Sliding is NOT REQUIRED. The runner IS REQUIRED per NFHS rules to avoid any significant contact with the fielder. No head-first sliding shall be permitted. *PENALTY FOR HEAD-FIRST SLIDE – runner shall be called out.*
3. See Special Rules page below for pitching limits. Pitching in any part of an inning constitutes a full inning. Innings pitched in a game do not need to be consecutive.
4. The 12-run rule applies only after the completion of 5 at bats by the losing team. If the home team is losing by 12 or more runs in the middle of an inning, that team is still allowed to finish the bottom of the inning.
5. No new inning may start more than 2 hours after the schedule start of the game. **Games that have another game scheduled after the one in progress will have a 1:45 limit for new innings, and a 2 hour hard stop to allow the following game to start on time. Games tied at the end of the regulation will go into extra innings only if the inning can be started within 2 hours of the scheduled start.** If the time limit is reached, the game will be considered a legal game, regardless of the number of innings played. If any inning cannot be completed due to weather or darkness, the score of the last complete inning is final.
6. If in the act of the catcher returning the ball to the pitcher, the ball becomes loose in fair territory, the ball is LIVE and the runners may advance at their own risk and attempt to score. Time called is solely at the discretion of the umpire.
7. The balk rules, infield fly rule and drop third strike rule DO apply.
8. Courtesy runners are permitted for the catcher only when there are two outs. If used, the player making the last out shall be used for the courtesy runner.
9. A team remains at bat until 3 outs have been put out or until 6 runs have been scored, whichever comes first, with the exception of the 7th inning, in which unlimited runs may be scored.
10. When games are played on a field with a mound, the mound must be used. DO NOT PITCH FROM A SPOT IN FRONT OF THE MOUND. Measure a distance of 52 feet from the front edge of the rubber on the mound to the tail of home plate. Adjust distance by moving home plate. Exception – this rule does not apply where there is a fixed pitching rubber in front of the mound, or where fixed bases are used.

#### SPECIAL RULES – PONIES

1. High School Rules apply, with the exceptions as noted below.
2. See Special Rules page below for pitching limits. Pitching in any part of an inning constitutes a full inning. Innings pitched in a game do not need to be consecutive.
3. Sliding is NOT REQUIRED. The runner IS REQUIRED per NFHS rules to avoid any significant contact with the fielder. No head-first sliding shall be permitted. *PENALTY FOR HEAD-FIRST SLIDE – runner shall be called out.*
4. The 12-run rule applies only after the completion of 5 at bats by the losing team. The 15-run rule applies after the completion of 4 at bats by the losing team. If the home team is losing by the run-rule or more in the middle of an inning, that team is still allowed to finish the bottom of the inning.
5. No new inning may start more than 2 hours after the schedule start of the game. Games tied at the end of the regulation will go into extra innings only if the inning can be started within 2 hours of the scheduled start. If the time limit is reached, the game will be considered a legal game, regardless of the number of innings played. If any inning cannot be completed due to weather or darkness, the score of the last complete inning is final.
6. The balk rules, infield fly rule and drop third strike rule DO apply.
7. Courtesy runners are permitted for the catcher only when there are two outs. If used, the player making the last out shall be used for the courtesy runner.
8. A team remains at bat until 3 outs have been put out or until 8 runs have been scored, whichever comes first, with the exception of the 7th inning, in which unlimited runs may be scored.
9. Each team must have a parent or coach present at each game on the bench or field responsible for player supervision. These persons must have completed required background check and have passed required concussion training. Failure to follow this rule will result in forfeiture of the game by the offending team. Umpires and South Valley League Baseball Committee members have the authority to enforce this rule.

#### SPECIAL RULES – SENIORS

1. High School Rules apply, with the exceptions as noted below.
2. See Special Rules page below for pitching limits. Pitching in any part of an inning constitutes a full inning. Innings pitched in a game do not need to be consecutive.
3. Sliding is NOT REQUIRED. The runner IS REQUIRED per NFHS rules to avoid any significant contact with the fielder.
4. The 10-run rule applies only after the completion of 5 at bats by the losing team. The 15-run rule applies after the completion of 4 at bats by the losing team. If the home team is losing by the run-rule or more in the middle of an inning, that team is still allowed to finish the bottom of the inning.
5. No new inning may start more than 2 hours after the schedule start of the game. Games tied at the end of the regulation will go into extra innings only if the inning can be started within 2 hours of the scheduled start. If the time limit is reached, the game will be considered a legal game, regardless of the number of innings played. If any inning cannot be completed due to weather or darkness, the score of the last complete inning is final.
6. The balk rules, infield fly rule and drop third strike rule DO apply.

7. Courtesy runners are permitted for the catcher only when there are two outs. If used, the player making the last out shall be used for the courtesy runner.
8. Each team must have a parent coach present at each game on the bench or field responsible for player supervision. These persons must have completed required background check and have passed required concussion training. Failure to follow this rule will result in forfeiture of the game by the offending team. Umpires and South Valley League Baseball Committee members have the authority to enforce this rule.
9. Players ejected from a game will be suspended from playing in the next game. This conforms to MN high school rules. In the event player ejection occurs in the last game of the regular season, the player shall not be permitted to participate/play on the first game of the post-season. There are no appeals for the suspension rule.
10. Uniform requirements – players must wear shirts issued by their governing South Valley League association. No cutoff sleeves or number alterations shall be permitted. Each player shall have his/her own jersey number – no duplicate numbers are permitted. Each player shall wear baseball pants, full-leg jeans, or sweatpants – no shorts or cutoff pants are permitted. *PENALTY FOR UNIFORM VIOLATION – players shall not be permitted to play without proper uniforms (shirts and pants) as defined above.*
11. Player identification – due to unfortunate actions by some teams in the past, we have been forced to implement methods to validate players identification and to make sure all players are rostered. During the season, post-season and tournaments, umpires will conduct random ID checks. Players must show picture ID when requested. *PENALTY FOR FIRST OFFENSE FOR ILLEGAL PLAYER(S): the game is forfeited, and the head coach is suspended for the next game. PENALTY FOR SECOND OFFENSE FOR ILLEGAL PLAYER(S): the game is forfeited, and the head coach will be removed for the remainder of the season. The offending team may finish the season if they are able to find a league-approved new head coach but will not be permitted to participate in post-season play.*

#### **INFIELD FLY RULE – MAJORS, PONIES and SENIORS**

With less than 2 outs and runners occupying first and second or first, second and third, a fair fly ball that can be caught by a player playing any infield position with ordinary effort shall immediately be declared an “infield fly”, or if near the baseline, “infield fly if fair” by the umpire. Once declared and remaining fair, the batter is out and the runners may advance at their own risk of the ball being caught. If the ball is caught, the runner leaving a base may be forced out at the base he occupied, the same as a caught fly ball. If the ball is left to drop, the runners do not need to leave the base they occupied, but may do so at their own risk. The decision to call an “infield fly” is a judgment call by the umpire and is not subject to appeal. The infield fly rule does not apply to line drives or attempted bunts. If the umpire does not immediately declare an “infield fly”, the play continues as any normal fly ball. If a declared infield fly falls untouched to the ground, and then bounces foul within the infield area (before passing first or third base), the play becomes a foul ball. If the umpire mistakenly fails to call the infield fly in a situation he clearly should have, he may return the runners to the base and call the batter out before the next pitch is thrown.

#### **DROPPED THIRD STRIKE – MAJORS, PONIES, and SENIORS**

If a third strike (either called or swung at) is not caught by the catcher, the batter may attempt to become a runner and advance to first base if first base is unoccupied prior to the pitch **OR** there are two outs, regardless if first base is occupied or not. The runner is out if he is tagged with the ball or first base is tagged before the runner reaches the base.

## SUMMARY BASEBALL RULES BY DIVISION

<u>TYPE OF RULE</u>	<u>MAJORS</u>	<u>PONIES</u>	<u>SENIORS</u>
GRADE	6 <sup>TH</sup> + 7 <sup>TH</sup>	8 <sup>TH</sup> + 9 <sup>TH</sup>	10 <sup>TH</sup> THROUGH 12 <sup>TH</sup>
LENGTH OF REGULATION GAME	7 INNINGS	7 INNINGS	7 INNINGS
LEGAL GAME	5 INNINGS OR TIME LIMIT REACHED	5 INNINGS OR TIME LIMIT REACHED	5 INNINGS OR TIME LIMIT REACHED
LENGTH OF BASES	75 FT	90 FT	90 FT
PITCHING DISTANCE	52 FT	60 FT - 6 INCHES	60 FT - 6 INCHES
PITCHING RESTRICTIONS (PER-GAME)	4 INNINGS OR 85 PITCHES	4 INNINGS OR 85 PITCHES	4 INNINGS
PITCHING RESTRICTIONS (PER-WEEK, MON → SUN)	8 INNINGS OR 115 PITCHES	8 INNINGS OR 115 PITCHES	8 INNINGS
SHOES (ONLY ATHLETIC TYPE)	NO STEEL CLEATS	STEEL CLEATS ALLOWED	STEEL CLEATS ALLOWED
BASE STEALING	HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL RULES APPLY	HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL RULES APPLY	HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL RULES APPLY
WHEN RUNNER CAN LEAD OFF	WHENEVER BALL IS IN PLAY	WHENEVER BALL IS IN PLAY	WHENEVER BALL IS IN PLAY
PENALTY – LEAVING BASE TOO SOON	DOES NOT APPLY	DOES NOT APPLY	DOES NOT APPLY
DROPPED THIRD STRIKE	HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL RULES APPLY	HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL RULES APPLY	HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL RULES APPLY
INFIELD FLY RULE	HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL RULES APPLY	HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL RULES APPLY	HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL RULES APPLY
BALK RULE	HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL RULES APPLY	HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL RULES APPLY	HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL RULES APPLY
HEAD-FIRST SLIDE	NOT PERMITTED	NOT PERMITTED	ALLOWED
PITCH LIMIT PER BATTER	DOES NOT APPLY	DOES NOT APPLY	DOES NOT APPLY
RUN RULE ("MERCY RULE")	12 RUNS AFTER 5 AT-BATS BY LOSING TEAM	12 RUNS AFTER 5 AT-BATS BY LOSING TEAM  15 RUNS AFTER 4 AT-BATS BY LOSING TEAM	10 RUNS AFTER 5 AT-BATS BY LOSING TEAM  15 RUNS AFTER 4 AT-BATS BY LOSING TEAM
RUN LIMIT PER INNING	6 (UNLIMITED IN 7 <sup>TH</sup> INNING)	8 (UNLIMITED IN 7 <sup>TH</sup> INNING)	DOES NOT APPLY

## PITCHING RESTRICTION NOTES/CLARIFICATIONS

1. The pitch limits are designed to protect players and encourage coaches to use and develop more pitchers. Note that there may be times during the season when teams will play 3 or more games in a single week (with makeup games). Coaches should manage their pitching staffs accordingly.
2. Coaches are responsible to track pitch counts and should verify pitch counts with the opposing team after each inning. In the event of non-matching pitch counts between the head coaches or both teams, the home team's pitch count shall be deemed to be correct. Note that umpires do not track pitch counts or manage pitching limits (except during tournament play, when umpires are responsible for tracking innings pitched). Violations or abuses of the pitching limits discovered during game play should be discussed with the age-level league director or a BAC committee member. Violation of the pitch limits will result in head coach ejection from the game.
3. If a pitcher reaches the pitch count limit during (in the middle of) an at-bat, the pitcher is permitted to finish pitching the at-bat and then must be replaced prior to the next batter.
4. Innings pitched and pitch count are both tracked. Whichever limit is reached first is the limiting factor.
  - a. Example #1: Pitcher A at Majors-level throws 85 pitches in 3 innings and is then removed. The player then has only 30 pitches or 4 innings remaining for the game, whichever occurs first.
  - b. Example #2: Pitcher B at Majors-level throws 50 pitches through 4 innings before being removed. The player then has 65 pitches or 4 innings remaining for the game, whichever occurs first.
5. For continuation games, innings pitched and pitch count are to be included in the continued game total and will apply to the game total when the game resumes. Note that only innings pitched and pitch count from the current week apply to the weekly totals.
  - a. Example: Pitcher C at Majors-level throws 1 inning and 20 pitches before the game is stopped due to inclement weather. If the pitcher has available innings or pitches during the week the continuation game is being played, the player could pitch 3 innings or throw 65 pitches for the continuation game. Any innings pitched or pitches thrown in the continuation game would apply toward the weekly limits (MON → SUN) for the week the game is played.
6. For tournament play, the pitch limits in the table above will apply to the 3-day tournament duration.

## SOUTH VALLEY LEAGUE BASEBALL GUIDELINES ON BALK RULINGS

The purpose of this document is to provide general guidelines for balk rulings. These guidelines are derived from the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) rules but are simplified to allow for age/league level and to promote South Valley League "Spirit of the Game" philosophy.

In general, a balk is an attempt to deceive a base runner (or in some cases the batter). Either the plate or field umpire may signal a balk by raising both arms and calling "balk". At this point play stops and the ball is considered dead. The penalty for a balk ruling is that all base runners advance one (1) base. The ball-strike count is not affected by a balk call, even if the pitcher proceeds with delivering the ball after the balk is signaled and called.

Balks can be difficult to call because they happen very quickly, are often subtle and must be called right away – not several seconds after they happen. Note that umpires (and coaches) can get far too technical and look for balks that aren't actually there, often to the point of detracting from the game. Be consistent in your calls and explain your calls to the pitchers and coaches if needed.

**DEFINITIONS** – let's start with some definitions that come into play later for the balk calls.

1. **Wind-up position** – for the wind-up position, the pitcher is not restricted as to how he shall hold the ball. A pitcher assumes the wind-up position when his hands are (a) together in front of the body; (b) both hands are at his side; (c) either hand is in front of the body and the other hand is at his side. The pitcher's non-pivot foot shall be in any position on or behind a line extending through the front edge of the pitcher's plate (rubber). He is limited to no more than two pumps or rotations. After he starts his movement to pitch, he must continue the motion without interruption or alteration. With his feet in the wind-up position, the pitcher may only deliver a pitch or step backward off the pitcher's plate. After the pitcher has placed his pivot foot clearly behind the pitcher's plate, he has the right to change to the set position or throw or feint (fake a throw) to a base the same as that of any infielder. During delivery, he may lift his non-pivot foot in a step forward, a step sideways, or in a step backward and a step forward, but he shall not otherwise lift either foot.
2. **Set position** – for the set position, the pitcher shall have the ball in either his gloved hand or his pitching hand. His pitching hand shall be down at his side or behind his back. Before starting his delivery, he shall stand with his entire non-pivot foot in front of a line extending through the front edge of the pitcher's plate and with his entire pivot foot in contact with or directly in front of the pitcher's plate. He shall go into the set position without interruption and in one continuous motion. He shall come to a complete and discernible stop (a change of direction is not considered an acceptable stop) with the ball in both hands in front of his body. During these preliminary motions and during the set position until a delivery motion occurs, the pitcher may turn on his pivot foot or lift it in a jump turn to step with the non-pivot foot toward a base while throwing or feinting to a base, or he may lift his pivot foot in a step backward off the pitcher's plate. In order to change to a wind-up position, he must first step clearly backward off the pitcher's plate with his pivot foot first. After the pitcher has placed his pivot foot on the ground clearly behind the plate, he then has the right to throw or feint to a base the same as that of any other infielder.

**MAJORS/PONIES/SENIORS DIVISION** – the following violations shall be called as balks for South Valley League Majors-division, PONIES-division and SENIORS-division play.

1. Attempting a pickoff play from the wind-up position – a pickoff attempt may only be executed from the set position. A balk shall be called for a pickoff play from the wind-up position.
2. From the set position, stepping towards home plate and throwing to an occupied base – in order to throw to a base from the set position, the pitcher must step towards the base being thrown to. Using an imaginary line from the pitcher's plate to half-way between the bases (home plate to first, first to second, etc.), the pitcher's non-pivot foot must land toward the side of the base being thrown to. A balk shall be called when the pitcher attempts a pickoff move and his non-pivot foot falls on the other side of the imaginary line away from the base being thrown to. The pitcher must not throw to a base unless he clearly steps first with his non-pivot first toward that base.
3. From the set position, throwing to an unoccupied base – a pickoff attempt may only be thrown to an occupied base. A balk shall be called for any pickoff attempt where the ball is thrown to an unoccupied base.
4. Failure to come to set position – applicable to the set position setup, the pitcher must come to a legal (discernible) stop in the pitching motion. A balk shall be called if the pitcher fails to have a discernible stop in his pitching motion.
5. Double/multiple set – only one legal (discernible) stop in the pitching motion is allowed. A balk shall be called for any double/multiple set.
6. Interrupting the pitching motion once started – this applies to both windup and set positions. A balk shall be called if the pitcher starts his motion and then stops before delivering the pitch, unless he steps off the rubber legally. This is not the same interruption as the discernible stop described in the set position. From the set position, this would be failure to complete the pitch after the discernible stop and the start of the pitching motion.
7. Any shoulder movement after the set position is achieved – while checking the base runners after the pitcher has come to the set position, the shoulders shall remain immobile. A balk shall be called for shoulder movement while in the set position, as determined at the umpire's discretion.
8. Proximity to the pitcher's plate without the ball – the pitcher shall not place his feet on or astride the pitcher's plate or position himself within five feet of the pitcher's plate without having the ball. A balk shall be called when the pitcher is near the pitcher's plate (as defined above) without having the ball.
9. Pitching movements while not touching the pitcher's plate – a balk shall be called if, while one or more runners are on base, the pitcher makes any movement naturally associated with his pitch while he is not touching the pitcher's plate.
10. Stepping forward off the rubber with the pivot foot – applies to both windup and set positions. A balk shall be called if the pitcher disengages the pitching rubber by stepping forward with his pivot foot (as opposed to the legal step back from the rubber).
11. Feints toward first base occupied by runner – the pitcher may not fake or feint a throw to first base while standing on the pitching rubber.
12. Quick-return pitch – a balk shall be called if, in the opinion of the umpire, the pitcher (after receiving the ball from the catcher) deliberately hurries the pitch in an attempt to catch the batter off balance.
13. Pitch dropped during delivery with at least one runner on base – a balk shall be called if the ball does not cross a foul line.
14. References:
  - a. NFHS 2026 Baseball Rules Book

**SOUTH VALLEY LEAGUE BASEBALL  
GUIDELINES ON HANDLING CONTESTS DURING LIGHTNING DISTURBANCES**

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a default policy to those responsible for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of contests based on the presence of lightning. Player and participant safety should be the overriding decision criteria for weather-related matters. The South Valley League guidelines are derived from the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) guidelines, and differ primarily in the time delay requirements for suspension of play.

Prior to the start of the game, the coaches are responsible for decisions regarding weather-related postponements and cancellations. Following the start of the game, the umpires assume the responsibility for weather-related decisions.

1. Monitor local weather conditions before and during events.
2. Criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
  - a. As soon as lightning is seen or thunder is heard, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play and take shelter immediately.
  - b. For facilities with multiple ball diamonds, coordinate activities with the adjacent teams and/or umpire crews when possible, to maintain consistency in actions taken.
  - c. 30-minute rule: Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning is witnessed or thunder is heard prior to resuming play.
  - d. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count should reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
  - e. Games may be postponed or cancelled in their entirety if weather conditions support the decision.
  - f. Note – tournament and Championship Weekend guidelines may vary. If different, these will be posted or announced for each event.

3. Additional notes:
  - a. Lightning is one of the most consistent causes of weather-related deaths and injury in the US. According to the National Severe Storms Laboratory, there are approximately 100 lightning-related deaths and over 1000 injuries yearly.
  - b. The National Weather Service (NWS) issues storm watches and warnings during times of severe weather. A watch means that the conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop, while a warning indicates severe weather has been reported and appropriate precautions should be taken. It's important to note that any thunderstorm poses a risk of injury, even if not deemed "severe" by the NWS.
  - c. People who have been struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge. Therefore, it's safe to perform CPR, if needed. Ideally, injured persons are moved into a safe shelter. Lightning-strike victims who show signs of cardiac or respiratory arrest need emergency help.
4. References:
  - a. NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook, Fourth Edition, May 2011
  - b. NFHS Guidelines on Handling Contests During Lightning Disturbances, October

**SOUTH VALLEY LEAGUE BASEBALL  
GUIDELINES ON HANDLING CONTESTS DURING EXCESSIVE HEAT CONDITIONS**

High temperatures will be monitored by the league, similar to other types of inclement weather. The National Weather Service will be used for forecasts of heat index for local communities.

1. For hot temperatures, coaches should always prioritize player safety and be prepared with the following actions:
  - a. Provide ample amounts of water. This means water should always be available and athletes should take in as much water as they desire.
  - b. Ice-down towels for cooling
  - c. Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action 2. For events when the heat Index is under 95 degrees:
    - a. Optional water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes duration.
    - b. Heat index 95 to 99 degrees:
      - c. Mandatory water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes duration.
3. For events when the heat Index is 100 to 104 degrees:
  - a. Mandatory water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes duration.
  - b. Game start times may be adjusted to potentially cooler times.
  - c. Game durations will be reduced to 90 minutes.
  - d. Practices should be postponed or canceled.
  - e. Coaches can mutually agree to postpone the game to a later date.
4. Heat Index above 104 degrees:
  - a. All events will be cancelled.

**SOUTH VALLEY LEAGUE BAT STANDARDS  
(FROM NFHS/GOPHER STATE/MYAS GUIDELINES)**

In the interest of safety and consistency, South Valley League has adopted the MYAS/Gopher State/USSSA bat standards. Since MYAS guidelines are age-specific, we have modified these guidelines slightly to match up to BAC grade-level leagues.

Bat standards encompass the regulation of big barrel (larger than 2-1/4" diameter) and small barrel (2-1/4" diameter and less) bats. These standards must be used in all South Valley League baseball games and South Valley League hosted tournaments. All bats must be manufactured by an approved USSSA bat licensee and have the new USSSA mark on its taper, be a qualified BBCOR bat, or an unmodified wood bat.

The USSSA finger-print of "1.15 BPF" is based on fundamental laws of physics that measure the relative performance of bats used in USSSA play. A qualified BBCOR bat standards for "Batted Ball Coefficient of Restitution" and it focuses on how much of a trampoline effect the barrel of a bat has on a ball. Bat manufacturers will have to in effect "deaden" the trampoline bounce that pitched balls experience when a batter makes contact. Basically, aluminum bats will theoretically be the same as wooden bats.

The following describes the legality of bats for all South Valley League programs:

**MAJORS AND PONIES DIVISIONS:**

**Big Barrel Bats** (larger than 2-1/4" diameter) – only the following big barrel bats made by approved USSSA licensed manufacturers will be allowed:

1. Is made with the NEW USSSA mark (see image); or
2. Is made with the USA Baseball mark (see image); or
3. Is a qualified BBCOR bat (see image); or
4. Is wooden.

**Small Barrel Bats** (2-1/4" diameter and less) – only the following small barrel bats made by approved USSSA licensed manufacturers will be allowed:

1. Is made with the NEW USSSA mark (see image); or
2. Is made with the USA Baseball mark (see image); or
3. Is a qualified BBCOR bat (see image); or
4. Is wooden.

**SENIORS DIVISION:**

All SENIORS division teams will follow the bat standards adopted by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).



DIVISION	MAX DIAMETER AT THICKEST PART	LENGTH	WEIGHT DIFFERENTIAL	EXAMPLE
MAJORS	2-1/4"	Unlimited	Unlimited	31 inch bat cannot weigh less than 21 ounces
	2-1/2"	36" or less	-10	
	2-5/8"	36" or less	-10	
	2-3/4"	36" or less	-10	
PONIES	2-1/4" **	36" or less	-10	31 inch bat cannot weigh less than 21 ounces
	2-5/8"	36" or less	-3	32 inch bat cannot weigh less than 29 ounces
	2-3/4"	36" or less	-5	32 inch bat cannot weigh more than 27 ounces
SENIORS	2-5/8"	36" or less	-3	32 inch bat cannot weigh less than 29 ounces

\*\* Small barrel 2-1/4" bats at Ponies-level games are only permitted for Majors players substituting ("playing up") for Ponies games.