

Official FVBL Playing Rules



ALL LEAGUE RULES

1. GENERAL GAME RULES:

- A. If any FVBL playing rule is violated, coaches & players involved are subject to disciplinary action, & game is subject to forfeiture upon FVBL Board review.
- B. Games must start within 10 minutes of scheduled time except umpiring or field difficulties. Before the game, the umpire shall announce the start time in collaboration with the Managers.
- C. Umpires have complete control and authority of games. Prior to the game, the home team shall rule on field conditions and the umpire governs safe playing conditions.
- D. Umpires and coaches are responsible for keeping bats and all unused equipment off the playing field during games.
- E. Pre-game meeting will determine Head Coach roles for each game. Umpire shall ONLY be addressed by the determined Head Coach for any in game rules or clarification. Players, Assistant Coaches, & Spectators are not to address the Umpire.
- F. Home Team uses 3rd base dugout. Visiting team uses 1st base dugout.
- G. Only registered adult coaches are allowed to be in the dugouts with the players. All other spectators are not allowed in the dugouts or on the field.
- H. All adult coaches either in the dugout or on the field must submit to & pass a background check. It is the responsibility of each town's organization to screen every coach on their teams.
- I. Adults must coach behind base paths & are to avoid interference at all times.
- J. Home team responsibilities include lining the base paths and batter's box, placing bases, and providing 2 game balls prior to the start of the game. Visiting team to assist when necessary.
- K. A minimum of eight (8) players must always be fielded during the game. Late arriving players must be added to the bottom of the batting order.
- L. Only league registered players can participate in practices or games.
- M. Jewelry shall not be worn, except religious or medical medals. These items must be taped down and worn under uniform, not visible.

N. A game is considered official upon reaching the designated time limit, or when the umpire ends the game early due to daylight or weather conditions.

O. Early-called games will not be resumed at a later date.

P. Time limits are determined by age divisions. A new inning begins when the third out in the previous inning is made.

Q. If it is determined that the time limit will be reached during one of the first 4 innings, that final inning will have no run limit.

R. If extra innings and no time limit restrictions, ie: Playoffs, the teams proceed with "California Rules" (start with last out on second base, 1 out and a 1-1 starting count for each batter) for the remainder of the game.

S. Any rescheduled game must go through FVBL and be approved by field assigner for that specific town.

T. Official League Standings will be maintained by FVBL and decided through (1) Winning Percentage (2) Head to Head (only if two teams) (3) Run differential (4) Runs allowed (5) Total Runs Scored

2. PITCHING RULES:

A. Pitching Eligibility Rules vary by league. Age-based limitations based on the grade on the registration form and not chronological age. Please see each league rule for specific age-based limitations and rules.

B. Pitchers may not return to the mound after being removed.

C. Pitchers shall not wear non-prescription sunglasses, wrist bands, or light-colored shirts/sleeves under uniform.

D. The pitcher must be removed after a second coach visit to the mound in the same inning.

E. If a pitcher hits 2 batters in one inning or 3 batters in a game, that pitcher must be removed from the mound.

F. There are no set pitch count limitations. However, a reasonable guideline that should be monitored is 5 pitches for every year of age. ie: 12u pitcher should be able to pitch about 60 pitches per game. Not 100.

G. There are Innings Pitched (IP) limitations:

a. Minor: 3 innings per game

b. Major: 4 innings per game

c. Pony: 4 innings per game

H. No restrictions on pitchers

I. Coaches are to use their best judgment regarding player pitch counts. If a player complains or shows signs of fatigue/injury, coaches need to operate in the interest of safety first. Our focus is on learning & development, not winning at all costs or gaining an advantage at the expense of player safety. Communicate this with your players & parents to minimize misunderstandings & excessive pitch count complaints.

J. In the event a team does not have enough players to satisfy the first year pitcher requirements, the team can elect to forfeit their defensive inning, & will award 5 runs to the opponents for each inning affected. This is a rare, emergency situation that should only be used in regards to player safety, not as a coaching strategy.

K. Violation for pitching Rules: Pitcher will not be allowed to pitch. 10 game mound suspension – Game subject to forfeiture. Coaches may also be subject to FVBL disciplinary actions.

3. HITTING RULES:

A. All team members present will bat in continuous rotation.

B. Continuous batting lineups are to be submitted prior to the start of the game. No designated hitter (DH) allowed. Late arrivals are placed at the end of the order.

C. Dropped third strike and bunt rules vary by league.

D. Slashing is not allowed (show bunt then swing at same pitch). The batter will immediately be called out and the ball is dead.

E. BAT RESTRICTIONS: Bats must be stamped BPF 1.15, USA, USSSA, BBCOR, or made of wood with a maximum diameter allowed of 2 3/4." If a player uses an illegal bat, they will be called out and the bat removed from the dugout.

4. BASERUNNING RULES:

A. Base path distance, stealing and leadoff rules vary by league.

B. Players must run within the basepath when there is a tag attempt. Umpire will determine if a player runs out of the basepath.

C. Players must avoid contact with players by sliding (except at first base). If a player does not slide when there is a play at a base, they will be called out and the play is dead.

D. No headfirst sliding allowed (except returning to a base). If a runner slides headfirst, they will be called out and the ball is dead.

E. Pitchers and catchers of record may have a courtesy runner if they are on base at any time, but must have a

courtesy runner with 2 outs. The courtesy runner must be the player who was the most recent out.

F. Any player who intentionally removes a safety helmet while in the field of play will be called out. The play treated as a hit baserunner.

G. If a safety base is present, it shall only be used for offensive purposes. A runner cannot be forced out if the fielder uses the safety base.

5. DEFENSIVE RULES:

A. All players present at a game will not sit out 2 consecutive innings; nor will they sit out a 2nd inning before all other players have sat out 1 inning.

B. Coaches are encouraged to utilize players in many different positions for instructional purposes. Care must be taken in assigning players, keeping in mind safety, skill, and ability.

C. Injuries, illness, and early leaving are exceptions to these rules.

D. Defensive players may not impede the runner by denying access to a base, **unless they actively possess the ball**. Fielders cannot stand on a base or in the base path in an attempt to block or slow down the runner.

6. CALL UP RULES:

A. If a Manager determines the team will be short players, they may call-up players from one league down only. No lateral callups from same-age teams allowed.

B. Replacement players must be announced at the start of the game, bat last in the lineup, and will not play more defensive innings than a rostered player.

C. Only league registered players can be considered for call up, & replacement players cannot play if their original team is scheduled to play at the same time.

7. PLAYOFFS:

A. Call ups will be allowed during playoffs. Lateral Call up players from another team in the same league are not allowed.

B. **Playoff games will have NO TIME LIMIT.**

C. All other regular season gameplay and conduct rules apply.

8. CONDUCT RULES:

- A. Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated. (unethical or dishonorable behavior: disrespectfully addressing an official, any flagrant behavior, intentional contact, taunting, criticizing, or using profanity directed toward others).
- B. No smoking, vaping or alcoholic beverages on or in the vicinity of the playing field, dugouts or stands.
- C. Managers, coaches, players, and fans may not argue or complain about an umpire's call. Any player or coach ejected from a game is not eligible to participate in the next game played.
- D. Ejection and/or disciplinary actions are at the umpire's discretion.
- E. Managers are 100% responsible for the conduct of their coaches, parents, and players. Parents, coaches, and players are to be informed of the rules before the season begins.
- F. **No protests allowed.**
- G. Each team is responsible for the removal of all trash from their respective dugouts, spectator areas, and the field.
- H. Any conduct violations will be subject to FVBL discipline.

9. SCHEDULING PROCEDURES:

- A. **Game schedule will be determined by FVBL, & should not be changed, except in cases of rainout. Teams should utilize call up players in instances of insufficient players.**
- B. **Once the regular season begins, schedule changes outside of rainout circumstances may be subject to a rescheduling fee.**
- C. **Scores must be reported by the HOME TEAM within 24 hours of game completion. Failure to report within 24 hours will result in a \$50 fine to the respective Team's organization. QR code/survey link provided.**
- D. **Score report must include game date, Division, Home Team (Score), Away Team (Score). (ie: 5/22, Majors, STC Blue 7, BYB Red 6)**

Official FVBL Playing Rules

MUSTANG LEAGUE

AGE 8: (2nd Grade)

PURPOSE: Non-competitive, instructional league to learn the basic skills of baseball; i.e., positions, hitting, running, defense and sportsmanship. A safety ball (flex-ball) will be used throughout the season.

1. GENERAL GAME RULES:

- A. One coach from the defensive team can be located in the outfield during the game for instructional purposes. During the instructional period a coach from the offensive team will be on the mound calling balls and strikes.
- B. The pitching team will place one coach with two additional game balls behind the catcher to keep the game moving.
- C. **INSTRUCTIONAL PERIOD (1st four (4) games of season):** Walks are not awarded and batters will not be given first if hit by a pitch (unless the player is noticeably distressed by the pitch). **NO UMPIRES USED IN FALL**
 - a. If Umpires are present on the field, walks are awarded two (2) per inning upon the third (3) walk and any walk after that batter shall stay in the box and receive pitches from the coach.
 - b. Three (3) strikes for a strike out, including called strikes.
 - c. A hit by pitch is also considered a walk.
 - d. At the Mustang level the strike zone is slightly expanded.
- D. Once Umpires are present on the field, a coach is welcome and encouraged to be behind the catcher. However, this coach is to be seen and not heard. I.e. the coach cannot speak and influence an umpire pitch call.
- E. An inning consists of all team members batting one time or 3 outs, or if 5 runs are scored, whichever occurs first. Players will bat in continuous rotation. An inning stops when the last batter is called-out or reaches base, or the 5th run is scored, whichever occurs first. If the last batter reaches second base, it will be considered a ground rule double. Any other base runners will advance that number of bases allowed for a ground rule double, which is two bases.
- F. No inning will start 1.5 hours after the start of the game. All attempts shall be made to play as many innings per game as possible within the time guideline.
- G. The pitching rubber shall be 40 feet from the furthest point of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber. Bases are to be 50 feet apart.
- H. A player will pitch to each batter until there are four (4) called balls. Once four (4) balls have been called, an adult will throw four (4) additional pitches. When the coach comes in to pitch and the count goes back to 0-0.

- I. Balls and strikes are called by a coach of the high team positioned behind the pitcher. This coach is to be the coach pitcher as well.
- J. No bunting is permitted in games; however, bunting will be included in practices for instructional purposes.
- K. No advancing to the next base on any overthrow, regardless if it is out of play.
- L. All players must rotate positions throughout the season. Please consider safety when placing a player to catch or play 1st base.

2. PITCHING:

- A. This is an Instructional League with an emphasis on skill development. All players that want to pitch will be given an opportunity to pitch during the season. All players should be taught the proper pitching techniques and encouraged to try to pitch.
- B. Only one (1) player per game can pitch more than one (1) inning, including extra-inning games. Other pitchers must be limited to 1 inning to promote pitcher development.
- C. During all six (6) innings a pitcher is allowed two (2) walks per inning. If after two (2) walks by the pitcher in an inning, that pitcher throws four (4) balls to another batter, then the coach will step in to pitch to the batter, since no more walks are allowed in that inning. After the batter has either gotten on base or gotten out, then the coach will step off the mound and return to the dugout and the pitcher will then pitch to the next new batter. This way, the pitcher pitches to every batter in the inning. The purpose of this league is to develop pitchers, so we need to have the kids pitching, not the coaches. We also need to keep the game moving. Each half inning will be limited to either three (3) outs or five (5) runs with the following exceptions. There is no limit to runs in the fifth (5th) or sixth (6th) innings. Pitching will proceed this way for the remainder of the season and into tournament play. Umpires will continue to call the game.
- D. **Pitching Helmet Agreement.** All players pitching in the Mustang League are required to wear a batter's helmet fixed with a caged face mask or sign the waiver to permit them to pitch without the helmet. Each manager will provide a Mustang Pitching Helmet Agreement listing the team roster. The parent must select a 'Yes' or 'No' option to wear or not wear the helmet when pitching. Parents may also choose to keep their player off the mound altogether by selecting the 'Do Not Pitch' category. Either way, the parent's signature is required. All completed forms must be returned to the League Commissioner prior to the start of the first game played.

3. BASE RUNNING:

- A. Base stealing (including passed balls) is not allowed at this level. This includes wild pitches and balls thrown from the catcher to the pitcher.
- B. When the ball reaches the infield and is SECURED by an infielder from any outfielder, all runners must stop at the closest base. ABSOLUTELY UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES MAY YOU TAKE HOME ON AN OVERTHROW.

For example, if there is a runner at 2nd base, and there is an overthrow to 1st base, the runner on 2nd base would only advance to 3rd base. If there is a play at 3rd base resulting in an overthrow at 3rd base, the runner may NOT score home. The runner must stay on 3rd base. The runner may NOT take home on an overthrow. YOU MAY NOT GO HOME TO SCORE A RUN ON AN OVERTHROW.

C. **Half-way baserunning:** When a ball is hit to the outfield, runners may advance as many bases as they can. However, if the runner is less than halfway to the next base when the ball is thrown into infield and secured by an infielder, including a catcher, the runner can continue to his forward base and can be played on and be put out. If the runner safely advances, the umpire shall call time and move the runner back to the previous base. ONCE THE BALL IS IN SECURED POSSESSION by the infielder, the halfway rule is in effect. It is important to teach players to take care of the ball! If an infielder picks up a ball in the infield and plays on a runner, that runner if more than halfway can stay at that base but cannot advance any further because the ball was secured by the infielder throwing the ball. NO OVERTHROWS.

D. Note: A ball thrown in from outfield cannot be considered an overthrow.

Official FVBL Playing Rules
MINOR LEAGUE
AGES 9 & 10 (3rd & 4th Grades)

PURPOSE: This is an early learning competitive league with the emphasis on teaching skills and sportsmanship.

1. GENERAL GAME RULES:

- A. Umpires will have complete control and authority of all games. Prior to the game, the home team or host organization shall rule on field conditions. Once the game starts, the umpire governs delays or whether the playing field is safe. Exception: at facilities equipped with lightning detection systems, the guidelines for the detection system must be followed.
- B. A minimum of eight (8) players and a maximum of nine (9) must be fielded at all times. A team can begin the game and play with eight (8) players.
- C. No player will sit out for two (2) consecutive innings, nor will a player sit out a 2nd inning before all the other players have sat out for one (1) inning.
- D. **A game is considered official upon reaching the designated time limit, or when the umpire ends the game early due to daylight or weather conditions.**
- E. **If the game is stopped by the umpire for any reason, & the home team is losing, the score will revert back to the score at the last complete inning. If the home team is ahead, home team wins. If the score is tied, the game ends in a tie.**
- F. Games will be 6 innings. An inning consists of 5 runs or 3 outs (whichever occurs first) in the first 4 innings. **No additional runs will be scored after 5 runs.**
- G. The 5th, 6th and extra innings have no run limits.
- H. Metal spikes are not allowed. Plastic cleats, turf or gym shoes are allowed based on the playing surface.
- I. No **NEW** inning will start 1 hour & 45 mins after the start of the game. Attempts shall be made to play as many innings per game as possible. A new inning begins when the third out of the previous inning is made.
- J. Game times are to be respected, but traffic may cause game delays due to travel between towns. Forfeits due to travel delays are discouraged and are only approved by the FVBL Commissioner.
- K. The pitching rubber shall be 44 feet from the furthest point of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber. Bases 60 feet apart (dictated by field used).
- L. Players are required to play at least 2 innings in the infield and 1 inning in the outfield within the first 4 innings.
- M. Players cannot play the same position more than 3 innings, except during extra innings.

N. Pitchers cannot pitch more than their 3 inning limit.

O. No Leadoffs allowed.

P. Base stealing of 2nd base only is allowed. No stealing of 3rd Base or home, & players stealing 2nd base cannot advance on an overthrow during the steal. Ball must be put in play for runners to advance from 2nd and/or 3rd base.

Q. Players must maintain contact with the base until the pitched ball reaches the plate.

R. Baserunners may advance 1 base on an overthrow while the ball is in play. Players cannot advance home on an overthrow.

S. If the ball is overthrown from catcher to pitcher after pitch is released, runners may not advance on that overthrow.

T. Any player who intentionally removes a safety helmet while in the field of play will be called out. The play will be treated as a hit baserunner.

U. Dropped third strike & infield fly rules are not in effect.

V. Play considered "dead" when the ball reaches the infield AND is in control by a fielder. Emphasis is on teaching fundamental base running to prohibit additional bases taken, when common sense would dictate that, with older players, no attempt would be made.

W. 15-run mercy rule is in effect after 4 innings (3.5 if home team is winning) and both teams have had an equal number of Jmes at bat.

X. BAT RESTRICTIONS: Bats must be stamped BPF 1.15, USSSA, USA, BBCOR, or made of wood with a maximum diameter allowed is 2 3/4. If a player uses an illegal bat, they will be called out and the bat will be removed from the dugout.

Y. No protests allowed.

Z. Playoff Rules: **No time limit for playoff games, but umpire can call game early due to daylight/weather issues.**

ii If the game is tied at the end of the 6th inning, California Rules will be in effect for extra innings (Runner starts on 2nd base with a 1-1 count on the batter, last player to make an out the inning before will be the runner at 2nd base).

2. PITCHING RULES:

A. A pitcher can pitch no more than 3 innings per game. A single pitch thrown counts as 1 inning pitched regarding their pitch limitation.

B. A 1st year (lower grade) player must pitch 2 COMPLETE innings out of the first 4 total innings. These complete innings require 5 runs scored, or 3 outs, whichever comes first.

C. Any attempt to use a 1st year player for only 1 pitch before being removed will be considered Unsportsmanlike Conduct, & the game may be subject to forfeiture.

Official FVBL Playing Rules

MAJOR LEAGUE

5th & 6th Grades

PURPOSE: This is a competitive league with emphasis on full skill development and good sportsmanship.

1. GENERAL GAME RULES:

- A. Umpires will have complete control and authority of all games. Prior to the game, the home team or host organization shall rule on field conditions. Once the game starts, the Umpire governs delays or whether the playing field is safe. Exception: at facilities equipped with lightning detection systems, the guidelines for the detection system must be followed.
- B. A minimum of eight (8) players and a maximum of nine (9) must be fielded at all times. A team can begin the game and play with eight (8) players.
- C. No player will sit out for two (2) consecutive innings nor will a player sit out a 2nd inning before all other players have sat out for one (1) inning.
- D. No player can play any position more than three (3) innings in a game. (4 inning max for Pitchers)
- E. All players must play a minimum of one (1) inning in the outfield during the first five (5) innings.
- F. Dropped third strike & infield fly rules are in effect.
- G. Metal spikes are not allowed. Plastic cleats, turf or gym shoes are allowed based on the playing surface.
- H. Unlimited defensive substitutions are allowed.
- I. **Game times are to be respected, but traffic may cause game delays due to travel between towns. Forfeits for game delays are discouraged and are only approved by the FVBL Commissioner.**
- J. Games will be seven (7) innings unless the time limit comes into effect.
- K. **A game is considered official upon reaching the designated time limit, or when the umpire ends the game early due to daylight or weather conditions.**
- L. **If the game is stopped by the umpire for any reason, & the home team is losing, the score will revert back to the score at the last complete inning. If the home team is ahead, home team wins. If the score is @ed, the game ends in a tie.**
- M. No **NEW** inning will be started after the actual game time has reached the 1 hour & 45 min time limit. The game will end once that inning has ended. A new inning begins when the third out in the previous inning is made.
- N. A 12-run mercy rule is in effect after five (5) innings (four and a half innings if the home team is winning) or 10 runs after six innings (five and a half innings if the home team is winning). **12 after 5, 10 after 6**

O. The first 4 innings will have a 5 run max rule. *The only exception to this rule is that the last play of the half inning shall be allowed to finish. If additional runs are scored on the final play, those runs shall count. Final play MUST be initiated with the ball in play via a "hit". For example, if a team has scored four (4) runs and has the bases loaded and hits a three (3) run triple all three (3) runs shall count for that team which would make their inning count seven (7) runs. The spirit of this rule is to reward the hi_er that put the ball in play. Any runs scored due to errant throws for dropped 3rd strike or pickoff throws would not be counted after 5 run max has been reached for the inning. Innings 5,6,7 will be unlimited and will revert to the Mercy Rule.

P. Jewelry shall not be worn, except for religious or medical medals. A religious medal must be taped down and worn under the uniform. A medical alert must be taped down but may be visible.

Q. Unsportsmanlike conduct is behavior that is unethical or dishonorable. It includes, but is not limited to, disrespectfully addressing an official, any flagrant behavior, intentional contact, taunting, criticizing, or using profanity directed toward any other individual. Ejections and/or disciplinary actions are at the umpire's discretion, & subject to FVBL review.

R. Only adults are allowed to coach the bases and must begin the play in the coach's area (the coach's box or an area where one would normally be if unmarked) when on the field of play. Coaches are not allowed to touch a player or move into fair territory while a ball is in play.

S. **No protests allowed.**

T. Official League Standings will be maintained by FVBL and decided through (1) Winning Percentage (2) Head to Head (only if two teams) (3) Run deferential (4) Runs allowed (5) Total Runs Scored.

U. Playoff Rules:

a. **No time limit for playoff games, but umpire can call game early due to daylight/weather issues.**

b. If the game is tied at the end of the 7th inning, California Rules will be in effect for extra innings (Runner starts on 2nd base with a 1-1 count on the batter, last player to make an out the inning before will be the runner at 2nd base).

2. PITCHING:

A. No player may pitch more than four (4) innings in one game. A single pitch thrown during an inning constitutes one (1) inning pitched towards this pitch limitation.

B. **A 1st year player (younger grade), must pitch 2 COMPLETE innings out of the first 4 innings. A complete inning consists of 5 runs or 3 outs, whichever comes first.**

C. No other pitch rest rules.

D. The pitching rubber shall be dictated by the home team or field restrictions, either 48' or 50' from the furthest point of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber.

E. A pitcher will receive one warning when a balk is committed. After subsequent infractions, all base runners will be awarded a base.

- F. A pitcher is limited to six (6) warm-up pitches between innings and up to eight (8) warm-up pitches following a pitching change either during an inning or between innings. No breaking pitches. If a pitcher is removed as a result of an injury, the relieving pitcher will be allowed an unlimited amount of warm-up pitches.
- G. Once a player has been removed from the pitcher position, that player may not pitch again for the remainder of the game.
- H. If a pitcher hits two (2) batters in an inning or three (3) in a game, that pitcher shall be removed from the pitching position for that game.

3. HITTING:

- A. All bats -5 or greater must be stamped "BPF 1.15 USSSA" or "USA Baseball". No restriction on weight or length as long as the bat has the "BPF 1.15" stamp. All -3 bats must be stamped "BBCOR". Wood bats are allowed. The bat's barrel cannot exceed 2 3/4".
- B. Dropped third strike is in effect.
- C. Slashing is not allowed (show bunt then swing away on same pitch). The batter will be immediately called out and the ball is ruled dead.
- D. Bunting is allowed.
- E. Batting helmets must be worn at all times while the batter or base runner is on the field of play.
- F. Continuous batting lineups shall be used and submitted prior to the game. No designated hitters are allowed. Late arrivals will be placed at the end of the batting order. Teams will not be penalized with an out if a player is removed from the lineup due to an injury or other circumstances. If player is ejected from the game, his at bat will be considered an out.

4. BASE RUNNING:

- A. Base paths to be set at seventy feet (70') apart with chalked foul lines.
- B. No headfirst sliding (except when returning to a base): If a runner slides head first they will be called out, as this is done for the safety of the players.
- C. If a play is made at a base, a player must attempt to avoid contact by sliding on plays at any base (except first base). A player may not run out of the baseline, or jump (leave the ground) over the catcher to avoid contact with the catcher. If it is determined by the umpire that the player jumped over a catcher to avoid contact that player will be called out and the ball is dead. If unintentional contact is made, the runner may be called out and the ball would be dead (umpire's discretion). If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected. The umpire's decision on the sliding rules is final and is not subject to protest.

- D. Catchers and pitchers may have an optional courtesy runner if they reach base with less than two outs. A courtesy runner is required with there are two outs for purposes of moving the game along. The courtesy runner must be the player who recorded the most recent out. If for some reason that player is also a catcher or a pitcher, then the next player who recorded the next most recent out will be the courtesy runner.
- E. No hidden ball tricks.
- F. Stealing and leadoffs are allowed.
- G. If safety base is present, it can only be used defensively on a dropped third strike, to avoid contact on a ball to first base side, otherwise it is for the baserunner only.

Official FVBL Playing Rules

PONY LEAGUE

7th & 8th Grades

PURPOSE: This is a competitive league with an emphasis on more advanced skills, continuing with instruction and sportsmanship as our highest values.

1.GENERAL GAME RULES:

- A. Umpires will have complete control and authority of all games. Prior to the game, the home team or host organization shall rule on field conditions. Once the game starts, the umpire governs delays or whether the playing field is safe. Exception: at facilities equipped with lightning detection systems, the guidelines for the detection system must be followed.
- B. A minimum of eight (8) players and a maximum of nine (9) must be fielded at all times. A team can begin the game and play with eight (8) players.
- C. No player will sit out for two (2) consecutive innings nor will a player sit out a 2nd inning before all other players have sat out for one (1) inning.
- D. Players are required to play at least 1 inning in the infield and 1 inning in the outfield within the first 5 innings.
- E. The only exception to rules C & D is when a 1st year player pitches the first 4 innings of a game. That player is exempt from playing the outfield during the first 4 innings. This player must either sit or play outfield in the fifth inning. If the player plays outfield in the fifth inning, they must sit in the sixth inning. And if the player sits in the fifth inning. They must play outfield in the sixth inning.
- F. Players cannot play the same position more than 4 innings in one game.
- G. The pitching rubber shall be 54 feet from the furthest point of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber.
- H. A Pitcher will receive one warning when a balk is committed. After subsequent infractions, all base runners will be awarded a base.
- I. Intentional walks are allowed.
- J. Games will be 7 Innings.

- K. The first 4 innings will have a 5 run max rule. *The only exception to this rule is that the last play of the half inning shall be allowed to finish. If additional runs are scored on the final play, those runs shall count. Final play **MUST** be initiated with the ball in play via a “hit”. For example, if a team has scored four (4) runs and has the bases loaded and hits a three (3) run triple all three (3) runs shall count for that team which would make their inning count seven (7) runs. The spirit of this rule is to reward the hitter that put the ball in play. Any runs scored due to errant throws for dropped 3rd strike or pickoff throws would not be counted after 5 run max has been reached for the inning.
- L. The 5th, 6th, 7th and extra innings have no run limits, & will revert to the Mercy Rule.
- M. All bats -5 or greater must be stamped “BPF 1.15 USSSA” or “USA Baseball”. No restriction on weight or length as long as the bat has the “BPF 1.15” stamp. All -3 bats must be stamped “BBCOR”. Wood bats allowed. The bat’s barrel cannot exceed 2 3/4”.
- N. No NEW inning will start **2 hours** after the start of the game. A new inning starts when the last out of the previous inning is made. Attempts shall be made to play as many innings per game as possible.
- O. **A game is considered official upon reaching the designated time limit, or when the umpire ends the game early due to daylight or weather conditions.**
- P. **If the game is stopped by the umpire due to daylight/weather, & the home team is losing, the score will revert back to the score at the last complete inning. If the home team is ahead, the home team wins. If the score is tied, the game ends in a tie.**
- Q. Game times are to be respected, but traffic may cause game delays due to travel between towns. Forfeits for game delays are discouraged and are only approved by the FVBL Commissioner.
- R. Metal spikes allowed where field conditions permit.
- S. Leadoffs and base stealing of any base permitted.
- T. The “Infield-Fly” rule and “Dropped Third Strike” rules are in effect.
- U. A 12-run mercy rule is after 5 innings (4.5 if home team is winning) or 10 runs after 6 innings (5.5 if home team is winning). **12 after 5, 10 after 6.**
- V. If a safety base is present, it can only be used defensively on a dropped third strike, to avoid contact on a ball to first base side, otherwise it is for the baserunner only.
- W. **No protests allowed.**

2. PITCHING LIMITATIONS:

A. A pitcher can pitch no more than 4 innings per game. A single pitch thrown counts as 1 inning pitched regarding this pitch limitation.

A first year (younger grade) player must pitch 2 COMPLETE innings out of the first 4 innings. A complete inning consists of 5 runs or 3 outs, whichever comes first.

No other pitch limitations are in effect.

3. BASE RUNNING:

A. Base paths to be set at eighty feet (80') apart with chalked foul lines.

B. No headfirst sliding (except when returning to a base): If a runner slides head first they will be called out, as this is done to promote the safety of the players.

C. If a play is made at a base, a player must attempt to avoid contact by sliding on plays at any base (except first base).

D. A player may not run out of the baseline, or jump (leave the ground) over the catcher to avoid contact with the catcher. If it is determined by the umpire that the player jumped over a catcher to avoid contact that player will be called out and the ball is dead. If unintentional contact is made, the runner may be called out and the ball would be dead (umpire's discretion). If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected, & subject to FVBL consequences. The umpire's decision on the sliding rules is final and is not subject to protest.

E. Catchers and pitchers may have an optional courtesy runner if they reach base with less than two outs. A courtesy runner is required when there are two outs for purposes of moving the game along. The courtesy runner must be the player who recorded the most recent out. If for some reason that player is also a catcher or a pitcher, then the next player who recorded the next most recent out will be the courtesy runner.

F. No hidden ball tricks.

G. Stealing and leadoffs are allowed.

H. If safety base is present, it can only be used defensively on a dropped third strike, to avoid contact on a ball to first base side, otherwise it is for the baserunner only.

I. Playoff Rules:

- a. **No time limit for playoff games, but umpire can call games early due to daylight/weather issues.**
- b. If the game is tied at the end of the 7th inning, California Rules will be in effect for extra innings (Runner starts on 2nd base with a 1-1 count on the batter, last player to make an out the inning before will be the runner at 2nd base)