

HVAA BASEBALL RULES

MAJORS LEAGUE

4/19/23

1. Purpose

These programs are intended to teach the youth of our community fundamental skills, sportsmanship and teamwork, and also to provide friendly competition and enjoyment. They are not intended as a staging center for adult egos. Any adult participant or spectator who is overly aggressive, uses abusive language, or creates a climate which is contrary to the goals stated above, will be asked to leave the playing field and risk expulsion from HVAA sponsored activities.

2. Schedule

a. Game times are shown on the schedule furnished by each manager. A forfeit takes place if neither side is unable to field a team 15 minutes after the scheduled game start time passes.

b. No inning of a Saturday game may begin more than **1 hour 45 minutes** after the time the game was started. The umpire will note the time at the beginning of the game. This rule does not apply during playoffs.

c. No inning may begin after **7:45 pm on a weekday**. This rule does not apply during playoffs or night games (lights).

d. The visiting team is entitled to the use of the field from 20 minutes prior to scheduled game start time to 10 minutes prior to scheduled game start time. The home team is entitled to the use of the field for practice for the 10 minutes prior to the scheduled game time. Any time prior to 20 minutes will be shared.

3. Playing field

a. Home team coaches are responsible for preparing the field prior to the game. Preparation consists of placing bases at the proper location, raking the infield if needed, and removing any foreign objects from the field that would hinder play or present a hazard to the players during the conduct of the game. All field preparations must be completed at least 20 minutes prior to the scheduled game time to permit warm-up time for both teams as mandated by rule 2b above.

b. The umpire shall decide on the fitness of the playing field before the game begins. Once the game begins, the umpire shall have complete control of the game, including decisions relating to darkness and playing conditions. In case of lightning, the game must be stopped immediately and all players be taken off the field. **Teams must wait 15 minutes between lightning strikes before re-entering the field..**

c. Base distance is seventy feet.

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d. Distance from home plate to the pitcher's mound is fifty feet.

e. Home team players will sit behind the first base line and the visiting players behind the third base line. 2

4. Reporting Game Results, Standing, and Playoffs

a. It is the responsibility of the winning team to go onto the HVAA website to record the score. This can be found under "Coaches Guide" titled score reporting. Scores must be reported within 48 hours of game completion. In the event of a tie or cancellation, the home team will contact the commissioner.

b. Standings will be determined on a point basis. Points will be awarded as follows:

- Win - 2 points
- Tie - 1 point
- Loss - 0 points

c. All games during the regular season will be completed. In the event of a rainout, the teams involved will make up the game as soon as possible with the help of the league commissioner.

d. Left blank intentionally

e. The home team advantage for the playoffs will be awarded to the team with the highest number of points during normal league play.

f. In the event two or more teams finish with the same number of points, the final standings (for the playoffs) will be determined by:

(1) The Head-2-Head record. If still tied, by (2) The team with the least amount of runs allowed. If still tied, by (3) The team with the most runs forwarded. If still tied, by (4) a coin flip supervised by the league commissioner.

g. Playoffs follow the regular season immediately. Opponents for all teams are based on final regular season standings, and dates will be added as soon as the regular season has concluded.

h. During the playoffs, games tied at the end of regulation play will be continued until completion.

i. All playoff games must be a minimum of six innings long.

- j. If three full innings of any playoff game have been completed, and the game is suspended due to foul weather or darkness, the game shall be continued at the exact same point

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at which it was suspended as soon as possible (i.e. the next day). Unless the baseball director and/or commissioner deem the game over, due to timing of the next round of playoffs. At which point the team in the lead will advance to the next round of playoffs. Coaches must make a note of the game situation at the time of game's suspension, and the existing lineups will continue forward. Normal pitching rules still apply, and innings pitched prior to the game's suspension still count towards the three inning pitching limit.

- k. If a playoff game has not reached three full played innings and foul weather or darkness causes a suspension in play, the game shall be replayed in its entirety as soon as possible. This will also be at the discretion of the baseball director and/or commissioner.

5. Equipment

- a. Shoes with metal spikes are prohibited. Shoes with molded rubber cleats are permissible and recommended for all players.
- b. The wearing of approved helmets by the batter and all base runners is mandatory.
- c. Each player should be in full in-house uniform, including cap. A player on the playing field may wear no jewelry (i.e. earrings, rings, watches, bracelets, and necklaces).
- d. Catchers must wear all protective equipment provided by HVAA, including mask, helmet, chest protector, and leg guards during practice, warmups and regular games. Catchers must also wear athletic cups at all times. This item of protective equipment is **NOT** provided by HVAA, but coaches are responsible for ensuring that catchers do not participate without it.
- e. The home team shall provide (2) game balls. Balls can be reused if in decent condition.
- f. Managers are responsible for returning equipment at the end of the season. The league commissioner will arrange for the return immediately following the final game.
- g. During games, all equipment must be kept in the dead ball area.

H. USA and wood bats are approved. USSSA and BBCORE bats are NOT permitted.

6. Participation

- a. Five minutes before the game begins, the umpire shall proceed to home plate and meet with the two managers for an exchange of lineups and a discussion of the ground rules.

- b. All players must bat and do so in the batting order.
- c. Youths must play at least 2 innings in the field within the first 4 innings. The purpose of this rule is to insure youths playing time prior to darkness. A youth arriving after the first inning of play has been completed will immediately be placed last in the batting order and forfeit their mandatory fielding innings. ***Failure to adhere to this rule will result in forfeiture of that game.***

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- d. If a player leaves the game, the manager must notify the umpire and opposing manager immediately. If notification has not been given prior to the inning in which the youth would bat, an automatic out will result at that player's next turn at bat.
- e. Free substitution in the field is permitted except for the pitcher. If a pitcher is removed from the mound, he cannot return more than once as a pitcher during the balance of the game and he cannot return during the same inning.
- f. Each team must field 9 players, provided they are in attendance and available to play. When needed a player can be borrowed from the opposing team. This borrowed player can only play the OUTFIELD and doesn't bat for the borrowed team. This player will continue to play on his assigned team. The opposite team can assign a different player each inning a player is needed. Borrowed players will be allowed to pitch ONLY 1 inning as a last resort, but must be discussed prior the start of the game). Borrowed players can be from an opposing in-house team other than the team playing against.
- g. Players shall be limited to pitching no more than 3 innings per game or a total of 75 pitches regardless of the inning. A single pitch shall constitute an inning for the purpose of this rule. Travel pitchers (10 and 11) will be limited to 2 innings per game, with the permission of their coach prior to the start of the game. There will be NO exception to this rule, since travel players are on a monitored pitch count. However travel 12 pitchers are NOT eligible to pitch but the travel 12 non-pitcher is eligible to pitch 1 inning.
- h. A team shall not be permitted, at any time during the game, to play with less than 7 players. Playing with 6 or fewer players constitutes a forfeit. A team may find and use a "guest" player in the event they can't field a team for a game. Guest players must be approved by the commissioner. Guest players may NOT pitch. Please refer to 6F for how to handle "guest" players.

7. Regulation Game and Innings

- a. Six innings is a regulation game. A game that has completed at least 3 full innings will be considered official.

b. A game called due to weather conditions or darkness reverts to the score at the end of the previous full inning.

c. A regulation inning is any inning that has six official outs or six runs scored (per side) whichever comes first. A team's half of an inning ends when they have three official putouts, or when their sixth run of that inning crosses home plate.

8. General Rules Of Play

a. Fielding

- (1) The infield fly rule is applied in this league.
- (2) Hidden ball tricks are not permitted.
- (3) Any ball that gets by a fielder and does not enter the dead ball area is alive and considered to be playable; runners may advance at their own risk.

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b. Batting

(1) The strike zone is that space over home plate, and extending 3 inches to the side opposite the batter ("outside" the plate), which is between the batter's shoulders and the middle of his shin, when the batter has assumed a normal batting stance.

(2) Bunting is permitted in the league. ***However, once the batter commits to a bunt, he is not allowed to swing away. Should this occur, the play is dead, all runners will return to previous base and the batter will automatically be out.***

(3) Each team will be given one warning when a batter throws the bat. The second bat-throwing incident by that team will cause the batter to be called out by the umpire.

(4) A batter shall be awarded first base if a pitched ball strikes him, unless it strikes him in the strike zone, or unless he makes no attempt to avoid the ball. If the ball is in the strike zone when it touches the batter, it shall be called a strike, whether or not the batter tries to avoid the ball. If the ball is outside the strike zone when it touches the batter, it shall be called a ball if he makes no attempt to avoid being touched. When the batter is touched by a pitched ball which does not entitle him to first base, the ball is dead and no runner may advance.

(5) A team may only walk 3 batters in a row, at which point the 4th batter must perform. This means the batter must either get a hit or strike out. After the 4th batter performs, the walks will reset for the 5th batter and so forth. This will include a hit by pitch as a walked batter. 2

(6) There will be no run limits per inning. However if either team has a 15 run lead in the 4th inning the game will be called. But if the losing team is the HOME team, they will get a chance to bat. If they fail to score any runs the game is over. If they score 1 run, the 5th and 6th innings will be played.

c. Base Running

(1) Unlimited steals per inning, with the exception of stealing home. Players will NOT be allowed to steal home. Players may advance on a ball hit that is ruled in play, or if a direct play is made towards him or **another** batter/baserunner, such as a pickoff attempt by the pitcher or catcher.

(2) left blank intentionally

(3) If the catcher or any other player attempts to throw out the base runner and the infielder fails to field the ball, the runner may advance at his own risk as long as the ball is in play. See paragraph 8c(4) below if the ball leaves the field of play and enters the dead ball area.

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(4) **Advancing on overthrows.** Overthrows occur when a thrown ball enters the dead ball area (goes outside the fenced area, travels past the imaginary line extending from these fences toward the outfield, or goes over or on the backstop). Balls hitting the fence will be considered live. For fields on which there are no fences, the dead ball area shall be agreed upon prior to the game.

(a) On an overthrow, the ball is dead and each runner will get the base he is heading toward, plus one additional base.

(b) On pickoff attempts that enter the dead ball area, a runner may advance one base.

d. Pitching

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(1) Pitchers must start their pitching motion with one foot in contact with the pitching rubber.

(2) The manager or coach must remove a pitcher from the mound on the second visit to the mound during an inning.

(3) Any pitcher striking two batters with pitched balls in one inning must be removed from the mound for the balance of that inning. See rule 8b(4) above for the definition of a batter struck by a pitch. Return to the mound for a pitcher removed under this rule must be in accordance with rule 6e and 6g above.

(4) A strike is a legal pitch, which meets any of the following conditions:

2(a) It is struck at by the batter and is missed.

(b) It enters the strike zone in flight and is not struck at.

(c) It is fouled by the batter while he has less than two strikes.

(d) It hits the batter as he strikes at it (the ball is dead).

(e) It becomes a foul tip.

(5) The catcher must hold the third strike or it becomes a live ball, unless there is a runner on first base with less than two outs.

(6) left blank intentionally

(7) Balks are illegal and will be called in the following situations:

(a) A balk move may not be used to pick off runners. The umpire will immediately halt play and warn pitchers and managers by doing so. If in the judgment of the umpire a pitcher continues to use a balk move for this purpose (following the umpires warning), the umpire may award the base runner the next base.

(b) If there is a balk during an attempted steal, the ball is "dead", and the base runner will be awarded the base he was attempting to steal. Base runners who were not attempting to steal may not advance.

(c) If neither of the situations above apply, no balk has been committed.

9. Appeals, Grievances, and Rules Not Covered by This Document: a.

Appeals: Appeals may be made in this league for the following situations:

(1) Base runners missing a base: A runner shall be called out on appeal when he fails to touch a base. The appeal is made while the ball is alive and before the next pitch. The ball is returned to the pitcher who in turn appeals to the umpire by pointing to the base that the runner had missed.

(2) Appealing a call based on incorrect application of HVAA Senior League Rules (as set forth in this document):

(a) When play has stopped, the coach appealing the call must gain the umpire's attention and ask for the umpire to call time and stop the game.

(b) Both managers will meet with the umpire.

(c) After the question is asked and understood by both managers, the umpire will consult the rules. The rule then will be read to both managers. In the event this does not resolve the question, the umpire may opt to call the game and have it rescheduled.

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(d) If a copy of the rules is not available, the umpire may disregard the question or he may call the game and have it rescheduled.

(3) Appeals *are not permitted for any judgment calls* made by the umpire, such as the call of balls and strikes, the umpire's call on tag outs or force outs, etc.

b. **Grievances:** The commissioner of the league shall resolve any disagreement between team managers because of an interpretation of the written HVAA rules. Any party to the disagreement may appeal the commissioner's ruling to the HVAA baseball director, and if still not satisfied with the ruling, may request the board of directors of HVAA to rule on the issue. All decisions of the board are final.

c. **Rules Not Covered by This Document:** Rules not specifically dealt with herein shall be in accordance with the official Little League rules and Major League Baseball rules, whichever applies.

10. Conduct

- a. All players, coaches, and spectators must be kept under control at all times. Profanity and harassment of the umpire will not be tolerated.
 - a. There is a ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY for player abuse toward umpires.
- b. All players and spectators must be kept away from the backstop. Players are required to remain on the player's bench unless at bat, on deck, on base, or on the playing field. No harassment of the batter will be permitted.
- c. All managers and coaches must position themselves at the players bench, or in the designated field areas for 1st and 3rd base coaches. While a manager's team is at bat, the manager must remain 10 feet from the batting cage, unless the batting cage is closer than 10 feet to the players bench, in which case the coach may be closer to the batting cage. Violation of this rule will result first in a warning, second in a ball or strike being called on the play, whichever is disadvantageous to the offending manager or coach.
- d. Throwing or kicking of equipment is forbidden and may result in ejection of the offending player.
- e. Only base coaches may be on the base lines.
- f. All players not involved in play must remain on the bench.
- g. Managers and coaches of the defensive team must remain in the dead ball area.
- h. Ondeck batters must be in the dead ball area with their equipment.

11. Umpires

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- a. The home plate umpire will be provided by HVAA.
- b. Should no home plate umpire HVAA umpire be present, a substitute umpire may be chosen only with the consent of both managers. Without such agreement, the game is declared a tie.

12. Interference and obstruction

a. **Offensive interference** occurs when in the judgment of the umpire a base runner interferes illegally with the conduct of play. When the umpire calls offensive interference, the runner involved is out and the ball is dead. The following acts are considered offensive interference:

- (1) When, in the judgment of the umpire, the base runner hinders or fails to avoid any

fielder attempting to make a play.

(2) When a fair ball touches the base runner before the ball has been touched by an infielder. If a batted ball goes through or by an infielder and touches a runner immediately in back of him, the ball remains in play (alive) and the runner is not out.

(3) Interference shall be called when, in the judgment of the umpire, a coach physically assists a base runner in returning to or leaving a base.

(4) Offensive interference shall be called when a base runner runs over or crashes into a defensive player who is attempting to tag the runner out. When a defensive player has the ball and is waiting to tag a runner at a base, the runner must slide or avoid the defensive player. If the runner crashes into the defensive player, the runner is out whether or not the ball is held. The ball becomes dead and the other runners return to the last base that they legally touched at the time of the collision. This rule applies at any base except first base. The runner may be ejected from the game if, in the judgment of the umpire, the runner deliberately attempted to injure the fielder.

b. Obstruction is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding the ball, impedes the progress of any runner. This applies to fielders who position themselves directly in the base path, even though they are not fielding the ball. If they do not move out of the base path and yield to an oncoming runner, the runner will be awarded the base he is going to or the base he would have gained in the judgment of the umpire