

2025 - Vernon Hills Cougars Baseball Tournament Rules

General Policies and Procedures

- The Tournament Directors reserve the right to change the game schedule, time limit, rules, and/or matchups if weather, time constraints, or pandemic events interfere with the established schedule or for the betterment of the tournament. All decisions and interpretations made by the Tournament Directors shall be final.
- To participate in Vernon Hills tournaments, teams must be registered in a community-based league (i.e. LSFBL, MSBL, WSBL, KCBL or etc.). Tournament only teams will not be permitted. During registration teams will need to supply their league affiliation and level of play. If a team changes to a higher level after their tournament registration, it's their responsibility to contact VHTournament@vhcbs.com, as soon the change is made, to receive a refund *minus the \$75 service fee*. The Tournament Directors reserve the right to remove teams from the tournament with NO REFUND if they are caught participating at a higher level than the tournament level they registered for (i.e. An elite league team playing in an "A" tournament or an "A" league team playing in a "B" tournament).
- All teams must submit a copy of their certificates of insurance (COI) and waivers to VHTournament@vhcbs.com by the date requested by the tournament director. All teams must also submit their rosters to Tourney Machine by the deadline date. Your team is subject to REMOVAL WITH NO REFUND if these items are not completed by the deadline date, which will be communicated prior to the tournament.
- Teams will be allowed to roster only **13 playing members** (*note: only 12 trophies will be awarded*). No additions to the roster will be allowed after the first pitch of the first game of the tournament is thrown. All rostered players who are not injured and are in attendance must be placed in the batting order.
- All teams must have an electronic or printed copy of their players' birth certificates if requested by opposing teams and/or Tournament Directors. A team not complying with the age restrictions is subject to forfeit and removal/disqualification from the tournament.
- Any head coach that would like to formally challenge the eligibility of a player must make this known to a Tournament Director/s at least one (1) hour prior to the player's next game. A \$100 cash challenge deposit fee should be posted at the time of the challenge (the purpose of this fee is to minimize unsubstantiated challenges). If this process is followed, the Tournament Directors will review the request and if the player is ruled eligible the \$100 cash deposit will be forfeited. If the challenge is found to be valid, the \$100 cash deposit will be returned to the challenging head coach and the team that produced the ineligible player will be forced to forfeit their remaining games and will be removed from the tournament. A score of 7-0 will be applied to all forfeited games for tiebreaker purposes.
- Players may not play in both A & B tournaments for the same community organization without prior approval from the Tournament Director.
- The birthday cutoff is May 1st.
- The dugout is limited to players, coaches, and one scorer.
- All teams must be ready to play **30 minutes** prior to the scheduled start of their game. Teams unable to field the minimum number of players at game time may be subject to a forfeit. Teams must be present at the complex to advance.
- Batting practice with non-hard balls is allowed on the fields or in designated grass areas if time and weather permits. All hard ball batting practice **MUST** take place on the field, and **MUST** be hit into a net. Hitting nets will not be provided. No balls of any kind may be hit into the fences. Teams breaking these rules **WILL** be subject to game forfeiture.
- Bats may not be swung for any purpose outside of the playing field or designated warm-up areas. This is for the safety of the fans.
- No warmups of any kind are allowed on the infield. If time and conditions allow, teams can warm-up in the outfield.
- A forfeited game shall be recorded as 7-0 for tie-breaker purposes. Any team forfeiting a game may be disqualified from participating in the remainder of the tournament.
- Immediately after each game, the winning team is required to email the game score with both team's names and divisions to VHTournament@vhcbs.com.

- **Vernon Hills tournaments have a “ZERO TOLERANCE” policy regarding inappropriate behavior.** Foul language, disparaging remarks, and confrontational behavior will not be tolerated. Removal from the game and facilities is at the discretion of the umpire or tournament directors. Coaches are responsible for their conduct and that of their team’s coaches, players, parents, and fans. If a parent or fan is ejected, the head coach may also be ejected, and the team may be subject to forfeit and removal from the tournament. **Any player or coach removed from a game must leave the facility and is disqualified for the remainder of the tournament.** If the opposing team is losing, when the player or coach is removed from the game, the time clock will be paused until the removed player or coach leaves the premises.
- No alcohol is allowed at the facility. Anyone caught with alcohol is subject to removal from the facility and the team they are associated with is subject to forfeit as well.
- Shelled peanuts, sunflower seeds, & gum are prohibited from the dugout & playing field.
- Teams are responsible for cleaning all trash from their dugout after each game.
- All post-game meetings should be held outside of the field area, and all gear should be immediately removed from the dugout to allow the next games teams time to enter.
- Teams should not enter the dugout until the other team completely exits.
- **REFUND POLICY FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER**
 - 0 baseball played full refund minus \$75 service fee.
 - 1 game started \$225 refund
 - 2 games started no refund
 - **NOTE: If any team withdraws after registration has been confirmed and payment has been made no refunds will be given**

General Game Play Rules

- All rules follow the Illinois High School Association rules except as noted in the tournament rules.
- No protests are allowed. All decisions of the umpire and/or Tournament Directors are final. Tournament Directors reserve the right to modify rules in the best interest of the tournament and will rule on all matters not covered in these rules.
- Pool games have a “no new inning” time limit of 1 hour and 40 minutes. The time will be determined by when the last out of the bottom half of the inning is made, to avoid stalling. A pool game is over when either the time limit, inning limit or the mercy rule is reached. Pool games will not have extra innings and can end in a tie.
- All bracket elimination games will be played until there is a winner, subject to a “no new inning” time limit of 1 hour and 40 minutes. If a bracket elimination game is tied at the end of regulation play (i.e. either the time limit or the inning limit being reached), extra innings will be played using the rules below.
 - Each ½ inning will start with 1 out and the player that made the last batted out on second base.
 - All hitters will start with a 1-1 count.

Tie Breakers To Determine Elimination Seeding:

The following criteria will be used to determine seeds:

1. Overall Record
2. Head-to-Head Record (only applies when two teams are involved)
3. Least Runs Allowed
4. Runs Scored
5. Coin Flip

- The out of play boundary rules for the dugout opening is 90 degrees from the pole closest to the field. All bats and buckets should be inside the dugout to not interfere with the live ball.
- The wood along the top of the dugout is considered in play. The net is out of play.
- During pool play, a coin flip will determine the home team with the team that traveled the furthest calling the flip. During elimination games as well as championship games, the higher seed will be the home team. The home team is the official scorekeeper for the game. If the field has a scoreboard, the home team is responsible for providing adult operators. If the home team cannot or will not provide an adult operator, then the other team may become the home team and will provide an adult to operate the scoreboard.
- A minimum of eight (8) players are required to play a game.
- **All teams will use a continuous batting order and will bat their entire roster.** Players leaving the game early will not be called out when their turn in the order comes to bat. Once a player skips an at-bat for any reason, they are officially out of the game. Please note that after a batter receives his first pitch, if for any reason that batter cannot finish their at bat, the batter will be deemed out for that at bat. Then the batter can then return to the lineup for a subsequent at bat in their place in the batting order.
- Once a player is removed as a pitcher, he cannot return as a pitcher for the remainder of the game.
- A team is allowed one visit to the mound per pitcher per inning. A second visit in an inning will result in the removal of the pitcher.
- **Pitching limits** are based on innings/consecutive outs as listed in the grid below. Please note that once a player enters a game and throws their first pitch, there is a 1 inning (3 out) minimum charged to that pitcher. This 1 inning (3 out) minimum applies even if this pitcher records no outs, 1 out, or 2 outs in the game. If this pitcher pitches for 3 outs or more, they are charged with the actual number of outs they recorded in the game.
- If a pitcher goes longer in a game than the consecutive out limit, the pitcher shall be removed from pitching as soon as the error is discovered. The offending team will start their next offensive inning with one out and the head coach will be removed from this game only and must leave the premises. If the opposing team is losing, when the infraction is found, the time clock will be paused until the removed coach leaves. If the coach has not left by the time the new pitcher completes warm-ups, the coach will be disqualified for the remainder of the tournament. The game shall then proceed without any additional penalty. *Please track both team's pitching rotations to avoid any issues with this rule. It is for the safety of the pitcher's arms.*
- **Headfirst slides while advancing a base are allowed only at the 13U & 14U levels (headfirst slides while advancing a base for the 9u through 12U levels will result in the runner being called out).** A player is always allowed to dive headfirst back to the base they previously occupied. (i.e. pick off attempts or run downs.)
- A courtesy runner may be used at any time, for the catcher for the next inning. The courtesy runner must be the last batted out.
- Squaring to bunt and then taking a full swing is prohibited. The penalty for a fake bunt followed by a full swing is an automatic out, the player is removed from the game and an out will be recorded every time that position comes up to bat for the remainder of the game.
- If a player is called for a "thrown bat", that team will receive a warning the first occurrence. If any player on that team subsequently throws their bat again in the same game, that player will be called out.
- The mercy rules are as follows for all games:
 - 12 runs after 3 innings, or 2 ½ innings if the home team is ahead.
 - 10 runs after 4 innings, or 3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead.
 - 8 runs after 5 innings, or 4 ½ innings if the home team is ahead.
- Players arriving after first pitch must be added to the bottom of the order. A late arriving player can be added at any time during the game **(as long as the 8-player minimum has been met to start the game)**.
- Intentionally walking a batter can be done by telling the umpire.
- If an umpire believes a team is purposely delaying the game, that team will be given a warning. A second offense will result in a game forfeiture as decided by the umpire or Tournament Directors.

- If weather or darkness halts a game, it will be considered a complete game if 4 innings (3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead) have been played. If continued poor weather becomes a problem, games could be considered complete even if these inning minimums are not met in order to continue with the tournament.
- If a game is ended due to weather, the score will revert back to the last finished inning, unless the home team is ahead, and the top half of the inning has been completed.
- Tie scores in pool play will be considered final.
- The tournament director will have final say on if the game is final.
- If a game has started and a weather delay occurs the “no new inning” timeline clock continues to run.

Age Specific Rules

Rule	9U	10U	11U	12U	13U	14U
Innings	6	6	6	7	7	7
Bases Path Distances	60	65	70	70	80	90
Pitching Distances	44	46	48	50	54	60.6
Drop 3 rd Strike	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lead Offs	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Stealing	Yes – After ball crosses plate	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Steal Home	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Suicide Squeeze	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Infield Fly Rule	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Game Pitching Limits	2 innings (6 outs)		3 innings (9 outs)		4 innings (12 outs)	
Daily Pitching Limits	4 innings (12 outs)		5 innings (15 outs)		6 innings (18 outs)	
Balks	No	Yes – 1 Warning per pitcher			Yes (No Warnings)	
Breaking Balls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Metal Spikes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Bat Restrictions	Yes – Max drop of 12 and max barrel size of 2 3/4	Yes – Max drop of 12 and max barrel size of 2 3/4	Yes – Max drop of 12 and max barrel size of 2 3/4	Yes – Max drop of 12 and max barrel size of 2 3/4	Yes – Max drop of 8 and max barrel size of 2 3/4	Yes – Max drop of 5 and max barrel size of 2 3/4

Notes:

1. **For 9U ONLY:** Hard Wall at 3rd Base -- A player can only advance to home on a batted ball or walk. If the runner is off the base, it is at their own risk. If the runner on 3rd advances to home and crosses home plate on a play that is not the result of a batted ball or walk, the runner will automatically be called out. A runner cannot score on a passed ball. Teams can score on batted balls in play if there are overthrows.
2. **For 9U -11U:** If an illegal pitch/breaking ball is thrown as determined by the umpire, that pitch will count as a BALL and a warning for that pitcher will be issued. If the same pitcher that was warned receives a second warning that pitcher will not be able to pitch the remainder of the tournament.

3. **For 9U – 14U:** All bats must have either a BPF 1.15, BBCOR, or USA stamp. Any bat that does not have the stamp will be deemed illegal. Any batter that enters the batter's box with an illegal bat (i.e. does not comply with the Bat Rules) shall be called out immediately upon discovery (via appeal or umpire's call). The batter may also be called out after his / her time at bat is complete so long as the illegal bat is discovered prior to the first pitch of the following batter. In this case the defense has the option of taking the penalty (an out) or the result of the play. If the penalty is taken, then all runners shall return to their original bases.
4. **For 9U – 14U:** If a game is suspended, once the game is restarted the pitcher's innings from that game will be counted first against the game pitching limits as well as the day totals if they pitch again when the game is restarted.

