

HVAA BASEBALL RULES

MINOR LEAGUE

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 each manager. A forfeit takes place if either 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 2 hours 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 8:00 pm. 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.

- c. Base distance is 60 feet.
- d. Distance from home plate to the pitcher's mound is 46 feet.
- e. Home team players will sit behind the third base line and the visiting players behind the first base line.

4. Reporting Game Results, Standing, and Playoffs

- a. It is the responsibility of the winning team to call in the final game score to the league commissioner. 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. The playoffs and championship games for all leagues will be in the format of a single elimination tournament.
- 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 team record against the other team with the same point total. If still tied, by
 - (2) The team with the greater number of wins. If still tied, by
 - (3) **The team that allowed the fewest runs against. 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. It is important to note that HVAA playoff schedules do not pit "the best against the worst" in the first round. This is not done to penalize the best teams, but rather to permit all teams to be more competitive during the playoffs.
- 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 at which it was suspended as soon as possible (i.e. the next day). 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 it's entirety as soon as possible.

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, **however no player will be bared from playing in any game if they do not have full in-house uniform**. 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, warm-ups 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 insuring that catchers do not participate without it.
- e. The home team shall provide (2) game balls. Balls can be re-used 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.

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 complete 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.***
- 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. **Teams must play 10 players in the field (with a 4th outfielder being the 10th fielder) to minimize bench time for players, provided there are enough players in attendance and available to play.**
- g. Players shall be limited to pitching no more than 3 innings per game. A single pitch shall constitute an inning for the purpose of this rule.
- 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.
- i. With two outs in an inning, a courtesy runner may be used in place of the catcher and pitcher in order to help speed up the game.
- j. **If a team only has 8 players available for the game, they are allowed to use ONE guest player, provided that player is not an HVAA travel player. The 'guest' player must play in the outfield only, and be inserted as the last hitter in the batting order.**

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 put outs, or when their sixth run of that inning crosses home plate.

8. General Rules Of Play

a. Fielding

- (1) The infield fly rule is **not** 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.
- (4) **Catchers do NOT have to through to first base on dropped 3rd strikes on balls that are either called 3rd strike by the umpire or are swung at and missed by the batter on a 3rd strike. The batter will be out, and runners can advance at their own risk. A catcher MUST, however, hold onto any 3rd strike that is 'tipped' by the batter with their bat. Failure to catch a 3rd strike on a foul tip, will allow for the batter to continue the at bat.**

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 not permitted in the league.
- (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.

c. Base Running

- (1) Stealing is permitted in this league. Teams are allowed **three** stolen bases per inning. Once this happens, he may only advance on a ball hit that is ruled in play, or if a direct play is made towards him, such as a pickoff attempt by the pitcher or catcher. Stealing of home is prohibited. The only way a runner can score is on a batted ball or a walk.
- (2) No leads are permitted. The runner can attempt to steal once the ball crosses the plate.
- (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 must stop at the stolen base.
- (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.

d. Pitching

- (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:
 - (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.

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 Minor 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.
 - (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 judgement 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. There is a ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY for player abuse toward umpire.
- 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. On-deck batters must be in the dead ball area with their equipment.

11. Interference and obstruction

- a. **Offensive interference** occurs when in the judgement 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 judgement 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 judgement 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 judgement 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 judgement of the umpire.