



NATIONS BASEBALL GUIDELINES & REGULATIONS

www.nations-baseball.com

The Internet version of these rules has priority at all times.

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I. THE PRIMARY GOAL

- A. The primary goal of Nations Baseball is to organize and promote youth baseball at its best: to provide equal competition on an equal playing field.

II. MEMBERSHIP

- A. A team must pay yearly membership dues in order to participate in Nations Baseball. Team insurance is included in the membership dues. The insurance covers the team in all events. Membership for Nations Baseball is August 1st – July 31st with insurance included from either of the following date ranges:
- ❖ August 1st – July 31st
 - ❖ January 1st – December 31st
- B. Nations Baseball sanctioned tournaments and leagues can qualify teams for State Championship, Regional Championship, and National Championship play.
- C. Nations Baseball offers the following classes, which reflect levels of skill, and Nations Baseball determines the class for each team:
- ❖ Premier Superior level of select play
 - ❖ Elite Advanced level of select play
 - ❖ Select Entry level of select play
 - ❖ Metro Recreational level of play; league teams

III. PLAYER REQUIREMENTS

- A. The season runs from August 1st – July 31st. In age divisions 14 and below, the player's age on April 30th determines the player's eligible age division for the current season that includes April 30th. Players can play up an age division but can never play down.
- B. High school divisions have a grade exception rule based on one age up. For example, a 16-year old freshman can play in the 15U - Freshman age division—but not a 17-year old.

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C. For high school divisions 15U – 18U, participation is based on age and high school grade.

Example: Age is always first. 15U is 15U, but if you are a freshman and 16 years old, not 17 years old, you are eligible to play 15U - Freshman.

- ❖ 15U – HS Freshman/Sixteenth
 - ❖ 16U – HS Sophomore/Seventeenth
 - ❖ 17U – HS Junior/Eighteenth
 - ❖ 18U – HS Senior/Nineteenth
- D. A player is eligible to compete in Nations Baseball as long as the player follows the “Nations Baseball Guidelines and Regulations.” The player’s full name must be listed as it appears on his or her government-issued birth certificate on the roster waiver and online roster. No nicknames, shortened names, or initials are allowed.
- E. The player remains listed on www.nations-baseball.com color coded in gray until approved by a parent or guardian to be on that team. Once a parent has approved the roster move, the player is color coded in red. Once a player has the proper paperwork sent to Nations Baseball and is accepted in the proper age division, the player is color coded in blue. The player cannot be protested for age in any Nations Baseball event once color coded in blue. This rule will be effective in the spring of 2011.
- F. A player who is in violation of the “Nations Baseball Guidelines and Regulations” is considered an illegal player.
- G. If a player is found to be an illegal player and is discovered during a game or event, or after the event, the offending team can be ejected from the event and placed last in the standings with the team forfeiting all awards from the event. Other penalties can occur.
- H. In age divisions 14 and under, all players that are color coded red on www.nations-baseball.com participating in Nations Baseball events are required to provide photocopies of their original government-issued birth certificate or other government-issued identification that specifies birth date (such as passport) to the manager or team representative. Teams must ensure **one** of the following for every player participating in an event:
- ❖ The player has a check mark in the BC column on the roster page of the Nations Baseball website, or
 - ❖ The team manager or representative possesses a photocopy of an original government-issued birth certificate or other government-issued identification that specifies birth date (such as passport). These documents must be with the team at the field for every participating player that does not have a check mark in the BC column.

Coaches must be able to present a government issued birth certificate or other government issued identification that specifies birth date upon request. Failure to present the document upon

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request will result in the immediate removal of the player from the game until the document can be provided.

- ❖ If the team is batting 9 with substitutes or 10 with an EH and substitutes, the team may replace the player with an eligible substitute with no penalty. Once the document is provided, if the player was a starter, he may re-enter the game as per substitution rules. If the player is listed as an eligible substitute and has not yet entered the game he will return as an eligible substitute. If the player was listed as a substitute and has already entered the game, he will be removed for the remainder of the game.
- I. If the team is batting the entire roster under rule IX.C.2, the player will be treated as an automatic out. Once the documents have been produced, the player may return to the lineup as if he had not been removed. In high school divisions 15U-18U, all players participating in Nations Baseball events are required to provide photocopies of their government-issued birth certificate, other government-issued identification showing birth date, or a photocopy of current report card to their manager or team representative. Teams must ensure **one** of the following for every player participating in an event:
- ❖ The player has a check mark in the BC column on the roster page of the Nations Baseball website, or
 - ❖ The team manager or representative possesses a photocopy of an original government-issued birth certificate, other government-issued identification that specifies birth date (such as passport), or a photocopy of a current report card. These documents must be with the team at the field for every participating player that does not have a check mark in the BC column.

Coaches must be able to present a government issued birth certificate or other government issued identification that specifies birth date upon request or a photocopy of a current report card. Failure to present the document upon request will result in the immediate removal of the player from the game until the document can be provided.

- ❖ If the team is batting 9 with substitutes or 10 with an EH and substitutes, the team may replace the player with an eligible substitute with no penalty. Once the document is provided, if the player was a starter, he may re-enter the game under rule IX.C.3. If the player is listed as an eligible substitute and has not yet entered the game he will return as an eligible substitute. If the player was listed as a substitute and has already entered the game, he will be removed for the remainder of the game.
 - ❖ If the team is batting the entire roster under rule IX.C.2.c-d, the player will be treated as an automatic out. Once the documents have been produced, the player may return to the lineup as if he had not been removed.
- J. A player can only participate on one team per weekend. Players can be on multiple rosters but can only be on one qualified (frozen) roster per age division.

IV. TEAM REQUIREMENTS

- A. All rosters can consist of no more than 22 eligible players.
- B. All players participating in any event (tournament or league) must be on the participating team's online roster at the time of the event. (See Rule IV D 3 for more information.)
- C. The majority of the team's residents constitute the team's state of origin. If residence of players is equal between states, the manager's home state becomes the team's home state.
- D. Qualified (Frozen) Rosters
 - 1. When a team earns a berth to State Championship, Regional Championship, or National Championship, the team's official roster is set, and the roster is listed as "qualified" (frozen) at the end of the event.
 - 2. Teams can add up to three additional players to their official online qualified (frozen) rosters.
 - 3. Additional players cannot be added to any qualified (frozen) or nonqualified (nonfrozen) roster on the start date of the tournament without prior approval of the tournament director. This rule does not apply to leagues.
 - 4. Team managers can release any player from their qualified (frozen) team's official online roster.
- E. Nations Baseball can approve or deny any roster move by a team on a qualified (frozen) roster.
- F. The team's manager is responsible for the eligibility of the players on the team. Team managers that intentionally or unintentionally add ineligible players to a roster are subject to suspension as are the ineligible players.
- G. Teams accept the rosters of their opponents once the home team has made the first preparatory pitch. If there are no preparatory pitches, the rosters are accepted when the first batter steps in the batter's box. Roster protests are not permitted after the game has begun except for age violations. No roster age protests are permitted after the umpire declares that the game has ended. (See Rules III H-A. for more information.) Players with a checkmark by their name on the online roster system, indicating that their government issued birth certificate has been validated by the Nations Baseball national office may not be protested for an age violation.
- H. A tournament director may protest the eligibility of a roster at any time before the event becomes finalized (the awarding of points).
- I. A State Director, Regional Director, National Director or a designee of the state or national office may protest the eligibility of a player or roster at any time including after the conclusion of the event.
- J. Once a player leaves a qualified (frozen) team, the player cannot return to that team during that season.

V. PLAYER & TEAM CLASSIFICATION GUIDELINES

A. Player Classification

Player classification is based on a numeric grading system. The grade is determined by adding the age level of the TEAM along with the appropriate classification (1=Metro, 2=Select, 3=Elite, 4=Premier).

Example: a 12U Select team would have grade of 14 (Age=12 + 2 (Select)). An 8U Elite team would have a grade of 11 (Age=8 + 3 (Elite))

The grading system consists of two (2) different grades that reflect a players eligibility to participate at a specific level.

- ❖ Last Year grade (LY) – The LY grade reflects a player’s expected grade of play for the current season based on the players roster history from last season (**Last Year**). The LY grade is set on August 1 of each season by the Nations Baseball National Office. This grade will not change during the season. The LY grade is also referred to as a player’s mandated level of play or his mandated grade. It is this grade that counts towards roster “exceptions”.
- ❖ This Year grade (TY) – The TY grade reflects the minimum grade level that a player can play This Year based on a players roster history from both the current season and the previous season. The TY grade is set on August 1 each season by the Nations Baseball National Office. At the start of the season, the TY grade will be one level lower than the LY grade, allowing a player to move down 1 grade from their expected level of play.
- ❖ The TY grade may go up during the season under certain circumstances, it will never be less than 1 grade below the LY grade.
 - If a player is added to a non-qualified (non-frozen) roster of a team that is two grade levels or more higher than the player’s current TY grade, the TY grade will change to become 1 grade lower than the teams grade.
 - When the team for which a player appears on a current roster becomes qualified (frozen) by competing in a qualifying event, the TY grade will become equal to grade level of the team on the effective date of the qualification.
 - When a player is added to the roster of a team that has already qualified, the player’s TY grade will immediately become the grade of the team.

Players are considered players of that class when the team for which they are playing qualifies for post-season play. For example, a team is classified as grade 15 and qualifies in a grade 15 qualifying tournament. At that point all of the players currently shown on that team’s roster are now considered grade 15 players. They can only play for grade 15 or higher teams for the remainder of the Nations Baseball season (August 1 thru July 31).

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If those players ever leave or are removed from a grade 15 team, they can only participate for another grade 15 or higher team for the remainder of the season (August 1 thru July 31). If the players ever become qualified (frozen) on a higher grade team, they can no longer play for the grade 15 team for the remainder of the season

If a player does not qualify at the level he is playing, he may be picked up by a team one level below as long as his TY grade is not higher than the level of the team he wishes to participate on. (Example: a player has a TY grade of 14 and is playing on a non-qualified (non-frozen) 12 Elite team (grade 15), he would be eligible to play at the 12 Select (grade 14) level. If he qualifies at the 12 Elite (grade 15) level, his TY grade will change to 15 and he would no longer be eligible to compete below that grade.)

Players that are playing up in age can go down a class in the next age level. When going down an age division, the player must play up one class. For example, if a 12-year-old player is listed on a 14 Select (grade 16) roster, then that is the same as being listed on a 12 Premier (grade 16) roster or a 13 Elite (grade 16) roster.

Playing Classification Chart for Teams and Players

This is the same chart for teams playing up in the next age level. For National Championship play, teams must play in the same class if they play up an age level. This chart is inclusive of all age divisions.

Figure 1. Player classification chart

7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Elite	Elite	Elite	Premier	Premier	Premier	Premier	Premier
Elite	Elite	Elite	Premier	Premier	Premier	Premier	Elite
Elite	Elite	Elite	Premier	Premier	Premier	Elite	Select
Elite	Elite	Elite	Premier	Premier	Elite	Select	Metro
Elite	Elite	Elite	Premier	Elite	Select	Metro	
Elite	Elite	Elite	Elite	Select	Metro		
Elite	Elite	Elite	Select	Metro			
Elite	Elite	Select	Metro				
Elite	Select	Metro					
Select	Metro						
Metro							

Example: 14 Select = 13 Elite = 12 Premier.

For each age down, the player goes up one class. For example, 11 Select = 10 Elite. Players always have the ability to play in their correct age division, so if the 12-year-old player is **qualified** (frozen) on a 14 Select roster and then wants to go back to the 12-year-old division, he or she can do so only on a 12 Premier team. If the player is listed on a 14 Select roster that is **not qualified**, (nonfrozen) then he or she can move one class down. State Directors have the authority to modify these guidelines in their state. A State Director may create and enforce rules limiting teams from playing outside of their classification. A State Director may approve changes to player or team classifications to maintain competitive play as they see fit.

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Hint: *Players move straight across the rows if they are moving from qualified (frozen) teams. Players can move down one row on the chart if they are moving from nonqualified (nonfrozen) teams.*

Note: *Players can only play in age divisions equal to or older than their own their roster age.*

Figure 2. Player movement chart

Important Note for players age 6–9

At ages 6, 7, 8 and 9 there is no Premiere class. Therefore, if a 7U-9U Select player plays up two age divisions and then moves back down to his or her age division, instead of becoming a Premiere-class player, he or she would be an Elite player (because there is no Premiere class in 7U-9U).

For example, 10 Select = 8 Elite. See Figure 1.

C. Adding Players to Rosters

Teams may add players to their roster whose TY grade is equal to or less than the grade of their team. The TY grade is automatically calculated by the Nations Baseball Online Roster system based on a players roster history from the current and previous seasons. (see player classification above).

If a player is added to a team that already has a qualified (frozen) roster, then he or she becomes a player of that grade for the rest of the season.

A team can also add a player that is qualified (frozen) at a different age division, but that player is eligible to play with that team only if both of the following criteria are met:

1. He or she meets the criteria above for playing in that age and class (the team must be the same grade number).
2. His or her other team is not playing, or he or she chooses not to play with that team on that given weekend.

Players can be qualified (frozen) on one team per age division. A player cannot play for two teams in the same weekend or cannot play with another team until the tournament event that he or she participated with one team has been completed.

WARNING: *This scenario seems to happen numerous times every year. Coaches, there is no such thing as a fill-in player or a part-time player. Don't take Johnny's little brother who plays 9U Select and put him on your roster to play RF for your 12U Select team. He is now no longer eligible to play at the 9U Select level. You're better off not playing, or playing short a player rather than playing any player out of class.*

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If the player you want is qualified (frozen) in the same age, then you cannot add that player to your roster until he or she is dropped from the roster on which he or she is currently qualified (frozen). If that qualified (frozen) roster is a class above your team, you cannot add that player to your team at all. If the player is qualified (frozen) in another age division, then you can add that player if he or she passes the class rules above.

Playing on a qualified roster creates a commitment between the team and the player. A team must commit to the players on their roster and they are limited to a total of 3 roster adds after their qualification date. Additionally, players on a qualified roster cannot play for another team for the remainder of the season unless they are released from a team's current roster by the team's manager (although this does not allow a manager the authority to hold a player). Removing a player from a qualified roster is a commitment for the season, when a player is removed from a qualified roster he cannot return to that roster for the remainder of the season.

In states that utilize player contracts, the player will be bound to the team for the entire season, regardless of roster qualification (subject to that state's guidelines). In order for a player contract to become valid, it must be signed by the team's registered manager, the player's parent or legal guardian and must be submitted to the respective State Director.

A team may be better served by playing short or not playing if you do not have enough players available on your roster. Coaches: Do not add and remove players from your roster just to have enough to play 1 weekend. When you have used all of your roster additions YOU CAN NO LONGER ADD PLAYERS.

VI. STATE QUALIFYING AND STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS

- A. State Directors have the ability to amend rules for their state, if needed, with proper approval from Nations Baseball.
- B. The State Director sets guidelines for local qualifying events and state championships.

VII. REGIONAL & NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS

- A. Nations Baseball uses pool play for Regional and National Championship events, and then moves into an elimination format to determine the champion.
- B. Teams must play in the State Championship to advance to a National Championship. The State Director can override this rule with proper approval from Nations Baseball.
- C. In states that conduct State Championships, the State Director may allow teams to opt out of participation in the Championship and at their discretion may impose a fee of not more than 50% of the registration cost to teams that choose not to participate.
- D. Teams must register for national events on the Nations Baseball website.

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Teams participating in a National Championship must finalize their online rosters 72 hours before the start of the first event. No roster changes are allowed within 72 hours of the first event. The Nations Baseball online computer blocks teams from adding players on the start date of the event.

- F. Teams that do not qualify for the State Championships or that opt to not play the State Championships (if one is offered), may participate in the Ultimate Open World Series.
- G. Teams can participate in a National Championship event one age above their registered age but not below their registered class unless Nations Baseball determines to allow the entire class to participate at that level.

Example: An 11U Premier team can play up in the 12U Premier National Championship, but cannot play in the 12U Elite National Championship.

VIII. POOL PLAY AND TIE BREAKER REGULATIONS

The following rules determine which teams advance out of their pools.

- A. Once a tie is broken with three or more teams, teams advance to the next tie breaker rule until the tie is broken.
- B. Tie breakers
 1. Win-Loss Record
 2. Head to Head¹
 3. Fewest Runs Allowed
 4. Highest Total Run Differential²
 5. Nations Baseball Points
 6. Coin Flip

¹ Head to head is considered only when two teams are tied. For three or more teams, head to head is skipped in favor of the next tie breakers, in order as above until the tie is broken.

² The maximum run differential **per game** is +8 or -8. Total run differential is the sum of each game's differential.

IX. RULES OF THE GAME

Playing rules not covered in the “Nations Baseball Guidelines and Regulations” Internet version on www.nations-baseball.com revert to the *Official Rules of Major League Baseball* by Triumph Books or the online MLB rules at http://mlb.mlb.com/mlb/official_info/official_rules/foreword.jsp. Local and State Directors have the right to adjust rules for local and state play with the approval from Nations Baseball.

A. THE PLAYING FIELD

Table 1 describes the recommended mound height, rubber-to-plate, base-to-base, and fence distances for each age division. The rubber-to-plate distance is measured from the rear of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber or coach’s pitching plate.

Table 1. Recommended playing field dimensions

Age Division	Rubber-to-Plate Distance	Base-to-Base Distance	Mound Height	Recommended Fence Distance
4U	44'	55'	0"	150'
5U	44'	55'	0"	150'
6U	44'	60'	0"	180'
7U	40'	60'	0"	180'
8U	40'	60'	0"	180'
9U	46'	65'	4"	200'
10U	46'	65'	4"	210'
11U	50'	70'	4"	250'
12U	50'	70'	4"	250'
13U	54'	80'	4"	300'
13U	60'	90'	6"	375'
14U	54'	80'	6"	300'
14U	60'	90'	6"	375'
15U-HS Freshman	60'	90'	6"	375'
16U-HS Sophomore	60'	90'	6"	375'
17U-HS Junior	60'	90'	6"	375'
18U-HS Senior	60'	90'	6"	375'

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B. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

1. Players must be uniformed with proper baseball attire. It is recommended that the numbers are at least 4" in height on all jerseys. Only the director can make rulings on uniform legality. No one can protest uniforms.
2. All offensive players participating in a Nations Baseball event must wear a double ear flapped helmet while on the playing field. This includes bat boys and bat girls while performing their duties. Youth coaches under 18 years of age must adhere to this standard.
3. If the umpire observes any violation of these rules, he or she directs the violation to be corrected.
4. The catcher must wear a head protector, body protector, protective cup, shin guards, and a mask with a throat protector. The throat protector, which is part of or attached to the mask, must adequately protect him. The helmet must have full ear protection. The head, face, dual ear flaps, and throat protector can be one piece.
5. Age divisions 12U and below cannot wear metal cleats.
6. Bats must be made of an approved material, and they must be smooth and round.
7. In 14U bats will be restricted to a -5 ratio or heavier. (The weight of the bat in ounces as compared to it's length in inches, must be no greater than 5).
Weight restrictions are HIGHLY recommended for fall 2010, the restrictions will become mandatory Jan 1, 2011.
8. For age divisions 13U and below, there are no bat size restrictions.
9. High school divisions must use NFHS (National Federation of State High School Associations) bat limitations for size, weight and performance.
10. Penalty – the bat will be removed from the playing field by the umpire and the manager of the team will be warned against further use. If the illegal bat is discovered after the end of the play, and the play results in the batter/runner safely reaching first base, the batter/runner will be declared out and all runners must return to the last base legally occupied prior to the play. No run may score on this play. Any out that results on the play will stand. On a second offense, the above penalties will apply and the manager of the offending team will be removed from the field and will be prohibited from managing for the remainder of the game.
11. A batter using an altered bat is declared out, and all runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. A batter is deemed to have used or attempted to use an illegal bat if the player brings such a bat into the batter's box. Any out or outs made during the play stand.

C. GAME RULES

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1. A flip of a coin between the two teams determines the home team for each pool play game. For bracket play games, the highest seed is home team, excluding the championship and "if" game when a coin is flipped to determine the home team.
2. Roster batting:
 - a) Teams can bat a nine-player lineup, a 10-player lineup using an extra hitter (EH), or roster bat all present uniformed players. The lineup must be declared before the start of the game and used the entire game.
 - b) If a team uses a lineup that contains 10 players, the player in the EH position, while not actually playing a defensive position, is treated as such for substitution purposes.
 - c) Any team that is not roster batting should declare all eligible substitutes by noting them as such on the official lineup that is exchanged with the opposing team and/or home plate umpire at the beginning of the game. Players not listed as eligible substitutes but appear legally on the online roster will be considered legal substitutes.
 - d) If a team chooses to roster bat, then all players other than the nine defensive position players are extra hitters and can move freely in defensive positions.
 - e) If a team is batting all present, uniformed players, with no eligible substitutes listed on the lineup card, and the number of players is nine or 10, that team is considered to be roster batting for the purposes of defensive substitutions and courtesy runners, unless the coach has specifically declared otherwise at the pregame plate conference. If additional players arrive after the game has started, those players are placed at the end of the batting order. If the coach declares at the pregame plate conference that he is not roster batting, the late players are listed on the lineup as eligible substitutes. (See Rule C.7)
3. For teams that are **not** roster batting, starting players can withdraw and re-enter once (including designated hitters, for age divisions that allow them), provided that the players re-enter in their original position in the batting lineup.
4. Teams can start a game with eight players provided they take an out for the ninth player. Teams must have a minimum of eight players to start a game. If the lineup drops below eight players, the game is declared a suspended game and is not rescheduled. The suspended game is then ruled a forfeit by the tournament or league director. Umpires have no authority to forfeit a game.
5. Teams having eight players to start a game are automatically the visiting team.
6. If a team's ninth player arrives late to the game, the manager of that team must make an announcement at the plate conference before the game begins and advise both the plate umpire and the opposing team that he or she has a player that will be arriving late. When the player arrives, the player is announced to both the plate umpire and the opposing team and is placed in the ninth position in the batting order. The game

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resumes as if he or she was there at the start of the game. Until the player arrives, an out is recorded in the ninth position.

7. If roster batting, players arriving after the game has started are added to the bottom of the batting lineup. If batting nine, or ten with an EH, players arriving after the game has started are legal substitutes as provided in rule 2.C above.
8. If a player is removed from the game for illness or injury there will be no out recorded for his spot in the batting order (subject to rule 9), his place in the lineup will simply be skipped.
9. 9U and above teams batting nine, ten, or the roster that drop below nine players are subject to the following:
 - a) If a team drops below nine players due to illness or injury, no automatic out is recorded.
 - b) If a team drops below nine eligible players due to an ejection or any reason other than illness or injury and leaves the game, an automatic out is declared in the batting order position of the player that left the game unless there is an eligible substitute.
 - c) If a team drops below eight players for any reason, the game is ruled a forfeit by the tournament or league director and is not rescheduled.
10. If a player is ejected from a game for malicious contact or any other unsportsmanlike act, the following penalties will apply:
 - a) If roster batting, the ejected player's position in the lineup shall be declared an out
 - b) If batting 9 or 10 with EH, the ejected player may be replaced by an eligible substitute. If there are no eligible substitutes available, the position in the order shall be declared out.
11. A player that has left the game for any reason by missing at bat cannot return to the game, except under rule C.12.
12. Any player, coach, or umpire who is visibly bleeding must leave the field of play to stop the bleeding. When the bleeding has stopped and the injury is bandaged (if necessary), the player may return. No penalty applies to any missed at bats.

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13. The designated hitter rules below apply to High School divisions 15U and older. There is no designated hitter in ages 14U and below.
- a) A hitter can be designated (not mandatory) for any one starting player and all subsequent substitutes for that player.
 - b) A starting defensive player cannot be listed as the designated hitter in the starting lineup.
 - c) Failure to declare a designated hitter prior to the game precludes the use of the designated hitter during the game.
 - d) The role of the designated hitter is terminated for the remainder of the game when either of the following occurs:
 - i. The defensive player or any previous defensive player for whom the designated hitter subsequently bats, pinch-hits or pinch-runs for the designated hitter.
 - ii. The designated hitter or any previous designated hitter assumes a defensive position.
14. A regulation game consists of six innings for age divisions 12U and below and seven innings for age divisions 13U and over, unless the game is shortened due to time limit, mercy rule, or field conditions or extended by extra innings due to tie.
15. Mercy rules for all six- and seven-inning games include
- ❖ 15 runs after three innings, or two-and-one-half innings (if the home team is ahead).
 - ❖ 10 runs after four innings, or three-and-one-half innings (if the home team is ahead).
 - ❖ 8 runs after five innings, or four-and-one-half innings (if the home team is ahead).
- If the home team has run-ruled the visiting team, the game is declared complete, and the winner is named.
16. If eligible, a courtesy runner can be used any time for the pitcher or catcher of record. A courtesy runner is defined as a player not currently active in the lineup. If roster batting, the courtesy runner is the player with last the recorded out. The courtesy runner does not have to be a legal substitute, but must be on the online roster and should be listed on the lineup card. The courtesy runner can only run for one player per inning.
17. In all live pitch divisions, an intentional walk is granted upon request.
18. Any outs recorded during a game once it is ruled a forfeit count toward the pitcher's recorded outs.

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19. If a runner slides, he or she must slide directly into the bag.
20. Runners are never required to slide, but if a runner elects to slide, the slide must be legal.
21. If a tag play is imminent, the runner should slide or seek to avoid contact. Jumping over a player is not considered avoiding contact.
22. No player can initiate malicious contact. It is the umpire's judgment call that determines whether the contact is malicious.

PENALTY: *The player initiating malicious contact is removed from the game.*

Note: *There can be a collision where both players go head over heels that is not malicious contact. The key for malicious contact is **intent**. Umpires must ask themselves when making the call, "Did the runner deliberately or intentionally run into the fielder to break up the play or cause harm to the fielder?" If the answer is yes, then you have malicious contact, if the answer is no, then it is a clean play and you have nothing. Umpires must be careful when making this call to avoid ejecting players if the intent is not there. Keep in mind that the younger ages are just learning the game, and sometimes there is contact by the runner not sliding and running into the catcher. Remember, the key word is **intent**.*

23. If a defensive player is obstructing the runner (judgment call by the umpire), contact by the runner is not illegal unless it is malicious.
24. If a game is called due to weather or other hazardous conditions, it is ruled an official game provided three and one half innings have been completed if the home team is ahead or four innings if the home team is behind for seven-inning games. It is ruled an official game provided two and one half innings have been completed if the home team is ahead or three innings if the home team is behind for six-inning games.
25. All games stopped by an event official for weather or other reasons before the game is declared official are suspended games.

D. PITCHING RULES AND LIMITATIONS

1. Limitations of pitching are based upon recorded outs while the pitcher is on the mound.
 - a. In all age groups that are scheduled for six innings, a pitcher cannot pitch more than 18 outs in any given day.
 - b. In all age groups 16 and younger that are scheduled for seven innings, a pitcher cannot pitch more than 21 outs in any given day.
 - c. For six-inning games, a pitcher cannot pitch more than 27 outs in three consecutive days, regardless of game guarantee.
 - d. For seven-inning 16U and younger games, a pitcher cannot pitch more than 30 outs in three consecutive days, regardless of game guarantee.
 - e. Any pitcher in the 16U or younger divisions that has pitched three days in a row must rest the 4th day regardless of outs recorded.
 - f. In the 17U-18U high school divisions, there are no pitching limitations.
 - g. Pitching limitations stop for the day when the park is shut down for the night and the teams leave.
 - h. When games are suspended and continued the next day, pitching limitations are split between the two days.

Comments: Outs recorded count for the day they are recorded. When the game resumes from suspension, all outs recorded count for the current day.

- i. In the case of a double or triple play, there is no penalty for exceeding outs recorded at the time of the play.
- j. It is the duty of each team's manager to protest pitching violations by contacting the event director prior to the start of the next game of the team in possible violation.
- k. Any outs recorded during a game once it is ruled a forfeit count toward the pitcher's recorded outs.
- l. Pitchers who violate pitching limitations are ejected from the game. Other penalties, including forfeit, may be imposed by the tournament or league director. A violation of the pitching limitation is determined when the pitcher has delivered a pitch to the next batter after reaching his pitching limit. If the limit is reached at the end of an inning, it shall be a violation if the pitcher toes the rubber to begin a new inning.

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2. Balks
 - a. Balks are enforced in 11U and above age divisions without warning. In age divisions 10U and below, balks are not enforced strictly unless a persistent violation of the balk rule occurs.
 - b. Nations Baseball uses OBR (MLB) rules for balks. The balk can be a live ball (depending on the situation). The intent is not to penalize the offense.
3. A second trip to the same pitcher in the same inning causes the pitcher's automatic removal from the mound (not the game).
4. When a pitcher takes his or her position at the beginning of each inning, or when he or she relieves another pitcher, he or she is permitted warm-up pitches, not to exceed eight preparatory pitches to the catcher or coach.
5. A pitcher removed from the pitching position cannot return to the pitching position during a game, but can re-enter to any other position.

E. 8U PLAYER PITCH GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS

1. There are nine defensive players on the field with three outfielders.
2. 8U player pitch is closed bases.
 - a. There are no lead-offs until the ball crosses the plate.
 - b. No balks are enforced or called.
 - c. Runners must stay on the base when the pitcher is in the pitching position and the catcher is in the catching position. If the runner leaves the base early, the umpire places the runner back on the last base occupied unless the runner was put out. This is not an appealable play. If forced, the runner advances one base ahead of the batter-runner. If the ball is put into play, the defense has the option of taking the play or placing the runner or runners back on base and the batter back in the batter's box.
3. The infield fly rule applies.
4. There is no advancement on dropped third strikes.
5. The runner cannot steal home. The only way the runner can advance from third to home is if batted or forced home.

F. 6U, 7U, & 8U COACH PITCH RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. A regulation team consists of nine players.
2. Teams can use either nine or 10 defensive players. One player must play the pitching position, and one player must play the catching position. For teams using 10 defensive players, four players must play outfield positions.
3. Teams must have a minimum of eight players to start and finish a game but must take an out for the ninth player. If the lineup drops below eight players, the game is declared a suspended game and is not rescheduled. The suspended game is then ruled a forfeit by the tournament or league director. Umpires have no authority to forfeit a game.
4. There is a 30-foot safety arc from the back tip of home plate and from the first-base line to the third-base line.
5. Fielders must stay beyond the arc until the ball is hit.
6. There is a pitching plate 40 feet from the tip of home plate from which the coach must pitch.
7. There is a circle drawn with a 10' diameter with the pitching rubber in the middle. This is a safety area for the player in the pitching position. The defensive player listed as the pitcher cannot leave the pitching circle until the ball is hit. If the pitcher leaves the circle early, the play continues. After the play has ended, the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or accepting a no-pitch and ruling of the play as over. If this occurs a second time by the same pitcher, that player is removed from the pitching position for the remainder of that inning. If it occurs any time after that by the same player, then he or she is removed from the pitching mound the remainder of the game.
8. Each batter is allowed six pitches or three strikes. If a batter hits a foul ball on the sixth pitch, he or she is allowed to continue batting until he or she either does not make contact with the ball or puts the ball in play.
9. There are a maximum of seven runs or three outs per inning.
10. A fair batted ball hitting a coach pitcher is declared a foul ball if the umpire rules that the coach pitcher's contact with the ball was unintentional. If, in the umpire's judgment, a coach pitcher intentionally makes contact with a batted ball, the batter is out, and no runner can advance.
11. Umpires call time after every play and declare the ball dead. Time should be called as soon as all three of the following occur:
 - a. The lead runner stops attempting to advance.
 - b. The ball is in the possession of a fielder in the infield.
 - c. No defensive play is imminent.

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Time does not have to be called by the defense for the purpose of this rule.

12. All teams must roster bat for all games.
13. Because teams are roster batting, there is free substitution on defense. The batting order must remain the same.
14. The catcher must be located in the catcher's box, no more than four feet behind home plate.
15. There are no
 - ❖ Base on balls
 - ❖ Base awards for hit by pitcher
 - ❖ Infield fly rule
 - ❖ Base stealing
 - ❖ Bunting (players must take a full swing)
 - ❖ Intentional walks
16. If a player bunts or takes a half-swing, it is a foul ball.
17. Runners cannot leave their bases until the pitched ball crosses the front edge of home plate. A runner who leaves early is declared out, and the pitch is declared a no pitch.
18. A coach pitcher is prohibited from coaching while in the pitching position either physically or verbally.
19. Courtesy runners are allowed for the catcher only.

G. 6U, 7U, & 8U MACHINE PITCH RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. There is a 30-foot safety arc from the back tip of home plate and from the first base line to the third base line.
2. The front of the pitching machine is set at forty-six feet in a straight line directly toward second base.
3. There is a box that extends five feet to either side of the pitching machine and five feet behind the pitching machine. This mark is considered a safety mark for the player playing the pitching position. The player playing this position is not able to cross this mark until the ball is batted.

Nations Baseball Guidelines and Regulations

4. Pitching Machine Speed Recommendations:

- ❖ 6U & 7U 34-38 MPH
- ❖ 8U 40-44 MPH

5. Each batter is allowed six pitches or three strikes. If a batter hits a foul ball on the sixth pitch, he or she is allowed to continue batting until he or she does not make contact with the ball or puts the ball in play.
6. There are a maximum of seven runs or three outs per inning.
7. A fair batted ball hitting the pitching machine is declared a dead ball and ruled a single. All runners advance one base from their original position.
8. Umpires call time after every play and declare the ball dead. Time should be called as soon as all three of the following occur:
 - d. The lead runner stops attempting to advance.
 - e. The ball is in the possession of a fielder in the infield.
 - f. No defensive play is imminent.Time does not have to be called by the defense for the purpose of this rule.
9. All teams must roster bat.
10. A regulation team consists of nine players.
11. Teams can use either nine or 10 defensive players. One player must play the pitching position, and one player must play the catching position. For teams using 10 defensive players, four players must play outfield positions.
12. Teams must have a minimum of eight players to start and finish a game but must take an out for the ninth player. If the lineup drops below eight players, the game is declared a suspended game and is not rescheduled. The suspended game is then ruled a forfeit by the tournament or league director. Umpires have no authority to forfeit a game.
13. Because teams are roster batting, there is free substitution on defense. The batting order must remain the same.
14. The catcher must be located in the catcher's box, no more than four feet behind home plate.
15. There are a maximum of seven runs per inning or three outs.

Nations Baseball Guidelines and Regulations

16. There are no
 - ❖ Base on balls
 - ❖ Infield fly rule
 - ❖ Base stealing
 - ❖ Intentional walks
17. Runners cannot leave their bases until the pitched ball crosses the front edge of home plate. A runner who leaves early is declared out, and the pitch is declared a no pitch.
18. Courtesy runners are allowed for the catcher only.
19. A team can bunt once in an inning.

H. 4U, 5U, & 6U T-BALL RULES & REGULATIONS

1. There are six infielders: first base, second base, shortstop, third base, catcher, and middle infielder (pitcher's position in most games). The middle infielder must be inside the pitching circle. There are four outfielders who must stay in the outfield area.
2. All teams must have nine players to start a game. A team can finish with eight players due to injuries.
3. There are five innings.
4. There is a 15-foot fair ball arc from the back tip of home plate and from the first-base line to the third-base line.
5. There is a 30-foot safety arc from the back tip of home plate and from the first-base line to the third-base line.
6. All teams must roster bat for all games and use 10 defensive players. Teams can begin a game with nine players, but one player must be a pitcher. The team must take an out for the 10th spot until a 10th player arrives.
7. Because teams are roster batting, there is free substitution on defense. The batting order must remain the same.
8. There are a maximum of seven runs per inning or three outs.
9. There are no
 - ❖ Infield fly rule
 - ❖ Base stealing
 - ❖ Bunting (players must take a full swing)

Nations Baseball Guidelines and Regulations

❖ Intentional walks

10. A base runner is out for leaving the base before the ball is hit. Stealing is not allowed, and there are no lead offs.
11. One defensive coach is allowed in the outfield and must coach from that area. Defensive coaches cannot enter the infield at any time unless approved by the umpire or for an injury.
12. If a player bunts or takes a half-swing, it is a foul ball.
13. Umpires call time after each play. Players can ask for time, which should be called as soon as the lead runner stops attempting to advance or all runners have stopped. Time does not have to be called by the participants. Players in control of the baseball can ask for time.
14. On an overthrow, a batter or runner can try to advance only one base. The defense can try to record an out against the runner or batter trying to advance on the overthrow. In the event of a double overthrow, the ball is declared dead by the umpire, and one base is awarded to the runner or batter.
15. The pitching area is 44 feet from the back point of home plate. The defensive player listed as pitcher cannot leave the pitching area until the ball is hit. It is recommended to draw a 10-foot diagonal line from first to third for the player pitcher to assume his or her defensive position.
16. A batter is awarded four swings to hit the ball fair or put it in play, or the batter is declared out.
17. Courtesy runners are allowed for the catcher only.
18. If a thrown ball hits a defensive coach, play continues.
19. Players cannot intentionally roll the baseball when a play is being made; the ball must be thrown to a defensive player.

I. 9U MODIFIED STEALING RULES AND REGULATIONS [OPTIONAL]

States and tournaments can adopt the following regulations if they so choose.

1. Follow all Nations Baseball rules apply **except** for base stealing.
2. Bases remain at 65 feet.
3. There is a 10-foot mark placed off first, second, and third base.

Nations Baseball Guidelines and Regulations

4. The runner can take a lead, but cannot cross the 10 foot mark until the ball crosses the plate.
5. The runner is allowed to steal when the ball crosses the plate.
6. If runner gets a **running start** in an attempt to steal **before** the ball crosses the plate:
 - a. The runner is placed back on the base,
 - b. If the runner is put out on the play, the runner is out.
 - c. If the ball is put in play, the runner is only allowed a base if forced up by the batter/runner.
 - d. If it is a passed ball or wild pitch, the runner does not have to return.
7. If the pitcher attempts a pick-off, the runner can advance to the next base on the play.

The purpose of modified stealing is to

- ❖ *Help the young pitcher gain confidence in attempting to learn how to hold runners on base.*
- ❖ *Help the catcher gain confidence in being able to throw the runner out. The runner still has to go 65 feet to get to the next base.*
- ❖ *Help the base runner learn how to take a lead.*
- ❖ *Keeps the game from becoming a track meet while teaching young players the basics of stealing and pitching.*

J. METRO LEAGUE RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. The Metro league represents the entry-level, neighborhood, traditional league-based program.
2. Metro league participants must be registered with Nations Baseball.
3. Only registered Metro leagues can register Metro teams.
4. Leagues must have an approved assigning system for players to be placed on teams for league play.
5. A league schedule must consist of at least eight games.

Nations Baseball Guidelines and Regulations

6. There can be a Metro League State Championship. The Metro League State Championship consists of local metro teams selected by your local representative. For this Metro League State Championship, you can add up to three players from other local metro teams in the same league.
7. All teams are eligible to play in the Metro League Regional Championship.
8. Teams are eligible to advance to the Metro League National Championship after playing in the Metro League Regional Championship
9. Teams must post rosters by April 1 to play in the Metro League post season.
10. A player cannot play in the Metro League post season if he or she is frozen on a Select team or higher or appears on the roster of a Select team or higher on or after April 1.
11. There is a seven run maximum per half inning.
12. Mathematical elimination applies.
13. If a half inning ends with seven runs before three outs are recorded, the pitcher of record is charged with the remaining outs so that the total outs recorded for the inning equals three.
14. All divisions must roster bat.
15. 9U and below divisions play closed bases.
16. Balks are not enforced in the 9U division.
17. 10U and above divisions play open bases.
18. In the 10U division, one balk warning is given to each pitcher. Subsequent balks are enforced.
19. In the 11U and above divisions, balks are enforced with no warnings.

K. METRO LEAGUE ALL STAR RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. Metro League All Star participants must have their All Star teams registered with Nations Baseball.
2. Each league must have an approved assigning system for players to be placed on a Metro League All Star team.
3. All Star teams must come from Metro leagues.
4. Players who play on Select, Elite, and Premier Teams are eligible to play on a Metro League All Star team provided they play in the league with approval by the league director and comply with rule K.

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5. Players in the American League All Star division must be registered in a Metro league but can be players of any class.
6. Players in the National League All Star division must be registered in a Metro league and be classed as Metro players. There can be a Metro League All Star State Championship. This State Championship consists of local All Star metro teams selected by your local representative.
7. Teams are eligible to advance to the Metro League All Star National Championship.

X. OFFICIALS

All officials must be registered with Nations Baseball.

XI. GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS

The umpires handle unsportsmanlike conduct if the unsportsmanlike conduct is on the field of play. If an umpire has a problem with a fan or parent, the umpire should see the manager of the offending team and have the manager handle the situation. If the manager fails to handle the situation, then the umpire addresses the tournament official.

Nations Baseball expresses the need for sportsmanship before, during, and after all events.

XII. GUIDELINES FOR PROTEST

If a team protests, the manager must notify the home plate umpire, and the umpire summons the tournament director to the field to address the protest. The protest fee is \$100 in cash. The fee is returned if the protest is ruled in favor of the protesting team. **Judgment calls cannot be protested.**

XIII. GUIDELINES FOR EJECTIONS

- A. When a manager, player, coach, or trainer is ejected from the game, he or she can take no further part of that game.
- B. Depending on the conduct of the manager, player, or coach, additional penalties can occur. The tournament official assesses the length of the suspension following the ejection based upon the incidents of the ejection.

Nations Baseball expresses good sportsmanship first and foremost.

XIV. GUIDELINES FOR SUSPENSION AND DISMISSAL

- A. Any member of Nations Baseball behaving in an unsportsmanlike manner can be subject to dismissal or suspension.
- B. Any verbal or physical attack on any Nations Baseball participant or member during a Nations Baseball event or following a Nations Baseball event can result in suspension or dismissal.
- C. Any player of Nations Baseball receiving compensation for playing in any Nations Baseball event is subject to suspension or dismissal.
- D. Any player competing under an assumed name or illegal birth certificate or ID card could result in suspension or permanent dismissal. This rule also applies to coaches and managers who have previous knowledge of such infraction.
- E. Submitting an insufficient check to an event director or league official can result in suspension or dismissal of the team if payment cannot be settled within a reasonable time frame.
- F. Any suspended member of Nations Baseball is not allowed to participate in any Nations Baseball event until such suspension is lifted. This rule applies to players, umpires, coaches, and directors.
- G. All records of suspension must be submitted to all parties involved including Nations Baseball in a timely manner.
- H. All suspended or dismissed parties have the right to present evidence and information on the reported infraction on their behalf within 7 days of notification of the suspension or dismissal. This evidence must be reviewed within thirty days by Nations Baseball.