



Sports Force Parks Baseball Tournament Rules

****Sports Force Parks reserves the right to adjust these rules prior to the start of a tournament.**
The Tournament Director will only address questions and concerns from a Manager or Coach.
Updated: March 28, 2019**

TEAM AND PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- A player's age as of April 30, 2019 determines the age group in which the player is eligible to play.
- The team must hold proof of birth for all players registered throughout the duration of the tournament.
- No player shall be allowed to register with more than one team or switch to another team during the tournament.
- Each player must provide a medical release and liability waiver signed by parent or guardian. You must use our form provided on the tournament website.

Example: A player born in March of 2005 will play in the 14U age group for all 2019 spring/summer tournaments.

ONLINE CHECK-IN:

All teams are **REQUIRED** to complete the online check-in via our website **30 days** prior to the tournament start date. Teams must provide:

- Roster
- Parental Waiver, Release of Liability and Indemnification Agreement
- Certificate of Insurance

TOURNAMENT CHECK-IN

Coaches are required to check in 1-hour prior to the start of their first game to receive their welcome package and Cedar Point tickets.

LINEUPS:

9U-14U Tournaments: 9 bat format in which all nine position players must be in the batting lineup. 9U-14U teams also have the option to bat more than 9. Example: if a 9U-14U team has 12 players on their roster, they have the ability to bat 9, 10, 11 or their entire lineup. A team in this situation could bat 9 with 3 substitutes; bat 10 with 2 substitutes; bat 11 with 1 substitute; or bat all 12 players with no substitutes. All players starting in the lineup but not in the field are extra hitters (EH,) which are considered defensive starters for substitution purposes.

15U-18U Tournaments: Teams may bat anywhere from 9 players to the whole roster and have the option of using 1 DH (designated hitter) for any position player. The number of batters in your lineup must stay the same throughout the game. Example: If you have 14 players on your roster, you can bat anywhere from 9 players – 14 players. If you bat 12 players – you will have 2 substitutes available – and the lineup must stay at 12 players for that game. All players starting in the lineup but not in the field are extra hitters (except the DH) which are considered defensive starters for substitution purposes. *The DH and the player being hit for are locked together in the same spot in the lineup for substitution purposes.

Batting the entire lineup – When a team chooses to bat the entire lineup, each player is considered a starter and the team has free defensive substitution for that game. Furthermore, if a player is injured during the game in which a team is batting the entire lineup, their spot in the lineup is skipped with no penalty. Once the spot in the lineup is skipped due to an injury, that player is not eligible to return to the game in any capacity. If a player is ejected in the game, that spot in the lineup will be recorded as an out.



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C-FLAPS:

Players are permitted to use c-flaps on their helmets if they choose to do so.

CATCHER'S HELMETS:

Either Two-piece catcher's helmets or single piece, hockey style helmets are permitted.

INJURIES / SUBSTITUTIONS:

If a player is injured and no substitute is available, that spot in the lineup will be skipped with no penalty. If an injury occurs during an at-bat and the player can't continue the at-bat, the next batter in the lineup will take over that at-bat and assume the count. If an injury occurs while on the base paths and there no substitute is available, the player that made the last recorded out will take the place of the injured player on the bases.

RE-ENTRY:

If a team does not bat the entire lineup and substitutes are available, the standard NFHS re-entry rule applies. Starters may re-enter once (including the DH for 15U-18U), as long as the player occupies their original position in the batting order.

PITCHER RE-ENTRY:

If a pitcher is removed after throwing a pitch and goes to another defensive position, they may not return as a pitcher in that game. In other words, as soon as another pitcher throws a warm-up pitch (becoming the new 'pitcher of record'), the previous pitcher is no longer able to pitch in that game. If a team substitutes for the pitcher when on offense, but then re-enters the pitcher before going out on defense, that pitcher is still the 'pitcher of record' and can continue to pitch in the game.

PITCHER OF RECORD:

Once a pitcher throws a warm-up pitch, they must face at least one batter. If the pitcher is hurt during their warm-up pitches, another player may come in to pitch. The previous pitcher of record will not be allowed to re-enter back onto the mound after a pitcher has thrown a warm-up pitch.

It is the responsibility of the opposing team to verify the accuracy of the other team's lineup prior to the start of each game. Managers must bring any issues to the attention of a tournament official before the game. If a lineup issue is discovered during the game, the ruling will be that the lineup is corrected at that point for the rest of the game. If it is brought to our staff's attention after the game – there will be no penalty. There will not be a forfeit in this situation since the opposing team is responsible for verifying the other team's lineup prior to the start of the game.

PITCHER'S EQUIPMENT:

Pitchers are allowed to wear a protective helmet or head gear. The helmet/head gear can't be glossy nor have anything else on it that can be deemed distracting to the batter (umpire's discretion). It is the umpire and tournament director's discretion to deem whether any other equipment or clothing that the pitcher is wearing is distracting to the opposing batter. This includes but is not limited to: Batting gloves, sunglasses, long sleeves, compression sleeves, athletic tape on wrist/arm, and two-toned fielder gloves.



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AVOID CONTACT RULE:

Players must attempt to avoid contact with other players in tag-out situations. If, in an umpire's judgment, there is intentional contact, that umpire may call the runner out on that play. If the contact is judged as intentional and malicious, that umpire may also eject the player from the game. If a player is ejected for this reason, they may face suspension for their team's next game with the possibility of further sanctions as well. The Tournament Director will make the final ruling on a possible suspension.

On force out situations, if the runner slides, they must slide directly into the base. A slide that is not directly into the base is grounds for an interference call (umpire's judgment) and the runner could be declared out. In this instance, the batter/runner could also be declared out if the fielder was attempting to make a play on that batter/runner. It is important to note that if the runner makes a legal slide directly into the base and contact is made with the fielder, interference will not be called.

TIME LIMIT:

No new inning may start after the time limit elapses. The standard time limit for all age groups is 2 hours from the time of the first pitch of the game to the last out of an inning. Games can go into extra innings as long as the time limit has not expired. Pool play games can end in a tie. If the time limit is reached during an inning, that inning will be the last one of the game. If the home team is winning after the top half of that last inning, they will be declared the winner of the game and will not hit in the bottom half. If the home team is trailing and must hit in the bottom half of the last inning, the game will end at the moment the home team scores the winning run or at the moment of their third out. If the time limit is reached during the bottom half of an inning and the home team is winning at that moment, we will let the current batter complete the at-bat and then the game will end. Elimination games – depending upon the format, elimination games may have a time limit. If so, the details will be placed on the game schedule.

Consolation games that are not elimination games will have a 2-hour time limit. Time in-between innings should be limited to 2 minutes in between innings. Pitchers are permitted to throw 8 warm-up pitches in their first inning of work or 5 warm-up pitches every other inning. If a catcher is still getting dressed, a coach should be ready to warm-up the pitcher.

INTENTIONAL DELAYS:

Intentionally delaying a game because of the time limit is considered unsportsmanlike conduct and will not be tolerated. It is the discretion of the umpires and/or tournament officials at the game to eject a coach or player for intentionally delaying a game or possibly declare a forfeit if these actions continue.

LINE-UP CARDS

Teams must provide their own line-up cards. A copy must be given to opposing team before each game.

ON-DECK BATTER:

All on-deck batters must stay near their team's dugout on the warning track with a helmet on at all times.

OFFICIAL SCOREBOOK

The home team will keep the official scorebook for each game.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Teams are permitted to start and/or end a game with a minimum of 7 players. Anything less than 7 available players at any time during a game will result in a forfeit.



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JEWELRY

In general, jewelry is not permitted during game play. Breakaway nylon necklaces are allowed (must be breakaway). Rubber bracelets that are not a distraction are also permitted. Jewelry worn for medical reasons is also allowed. Any item that is deemed unsafe or distracting, at the discretion of the tournament director, will not be allowed. The team will receive a warning if a player wears improper jewelry during the game and any players found wearing jewelry after the warning will be ejected for the remainder of the game.

CELL PHONES / ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell phones, iPads, and other electronic devices are permitted in the dugout ONLY. A coach, manager, or scorekeeper is not permitted to have them on the field during the game. Failure to comply may result in ejection.

CONDUCT:

Players, coaches, and spectators are expected to conduct themselves in the spirit of the law as well as the letter of the law. An Umpire or a Field Marshal can remove any coach or fan that is disturbing a game being played. If coaches or fans refuse to leave, the game will be forfeited.

If a player or coach is ejected during the tournament, that person may be suspended for their next scheduled game. A player or coach may agree to appear before the Tournament Committee to be reinstated. Receipt of a second offense may result in ineligibility to finish the tournament.

Follow all park rules while at the park.

FORFEITS:

If a team forfeits a game, they are not eligible for the championship round and could be suspended from participating in future tournaments. The final score of the forfeited game will reflect the losing team giving up one (1) run per inning. If a team forfeits a Championship game, that team is not eligible to receive tournament awards.

TOURNAMENT STANDINGS:

In the event of a tie in the standings, the following divisional tie breakers will be used:

Divisional Tie Breakers (2 Teams)

1. Head to Head Results
2. Runs Allowed
3. Run Differential
4. Coin Flip

Divisional Tie Breakers (3 Teams)

1. Head-to-head results (only applicable if all of the tied teams played each other)
2. If one team beat all of the other tied teams, they will be the highest seed of the tied teams. (Even if all tied teams have not played each other)
3. Continue to use head to head results to seed the rest of the teams in the tie. -If one team has been beaten by all of the other tied teams, they will be the lowest seed of the tied teams. (Even if all tied teams have not played each other) -If all tied teams have the same record against each other, then they are tied at head-to-head and you move to the next item on the list (least runs allowed) -If all of the tied teams did not play each other, head-to-head is not applicable.
4. Continue down the 2-Team Tie Breaker list as stated above.



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MERCY RULE

ALL games will utilize a competitive balance rule that ends the game if a team is up by 15 runs after 4 innings or 10 runs after 5 innings.

UMPIRES

All pool play and elimination games will have 2 umpires, including the championship game. Certified umpires will be utilized from a professional organization.

BALLS & EQUIPMENT

Six (6) game balls will be provided by Sports Force Parks for every game. Teams are to bring their own balls for practice and additional game balls. Water coolers will be provided at each field with ice water and cups. All other baseball equipment is the responsibility of each team.

TOURNAMENT OFFICIAL:

A Tournament Official will be used to help facilitate a timely schedule of games.

The Tournament Official will have a radio communication base to the tent in the case of an injury or if medical attention is needed.

The Tournament Official will assist the umpires with pre-game team check-ins and with reporting scores as needed.

INCLEMENT WEATHER:

All weather decisions will be made by the Sports Force Parks Tournament Director.

Sports Force Parks will try to maintain the originally planned schedule as much as possible, however, in the event of inclement weather:

- The first priority is always to reach minimum number of games for each team.
- We will always attempt to have a championship game.

In order to achieve these goals, Sports Force Parks reserves the right to change the tournament schedule as needed, including shortening games.

- If a game is suspended due to darkness or weather, it is considered complete if:
 - o Baseball/Softball – 4 innings completed for a 6-inning game OR 5 innings completed for a 7-inning game.
 - o Soccer/Lacrosse – If 1 full half has been completed.
- If an elimination game is suspended:
 - o If one inning has NOT been completed, the higher seed will advance
 - o If the game is tied at the end of the last inning, the higher seed will advance
 - o If the Championship Game starts, is suspended and cannot resume, the game would be considered official at the end of the last inning.
 - If tied, the teams would be considered co-champions.

Weather will be continuously monitored by Sports Force Parks staff and play will be suspended at the appropriate time. Once suspended, play will resume after the storm activity has stopped for 30 minutes.



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TOURNAMENT FORMATS

ALL 2-day weekend tournaments will have a 3-game minimum format, with the possibility of playing up to five (5) games in a weekend. Each team will start with pool play with the number of teams advancing to bracket play depending on the total number of teams in the tournament.

3-day weekend tournaments will have either a 3 or 4-game guarantee. Refer to the tournament detail page on www.sportsforceparkssandusky.com to determine the game guarantee for each specific event. Each team will start with pool play with the number of teams advancing to bracket play depending on the total number of teams in the tournament.

4-day weekend tournaments will have a 4-game guarantee, with the possibility of playing up to six (6) games in a weekend. Each team will start with pool play with the number of teams advancing to bracket play depending on the total number of teams in the tournament.

PROTEST AND APPEALS:

Every coach is responsible for providing and carrying documentation of birth for all players on their roster for the duration of the tournament. Acceptable forms of identification include:

- Birth Certificate
- Passport
- State ID
- Any other government issued document

Only coaches may lodge an age protest before or during a game. There is a protest fee of \$100 per protest. If your protest is upheld, your fee will be returned. Sports Force Parks tournament officials may request age documentation at any time. If a coach cannot provide necessary documentation, the player(s) in question will be ruled ineligible. Only challenges as to the legality or eligibility of players/teams and or coaches are permitted as outlined in above sections.

Protests regarding rules infractions, i.e. illegal bat must be made by coaches to the umpires before the next legal pitch is made. Protests and other complaints concerning the outcome of a game made directly to tournament staff by parents could result into a forfeit of that game. All judgement calls from the umpires are final. There will be no protests referring to an umpire judgment call.

WINNING %

If teams play an uneven number of games during pool play, winning percentage will be the first tie breaker used to determine the final seeds. Example: Team (A) goes 4-1 in pool play and finishes with a winning % of .800. Team (B) goes 3- 1 in pool play and finishes with a winning % of .750. Therefore, Team (A) will be seeded higher than Team (B) due to having a higher winning %.

BALKS:

We follow the NFHS rules pertaining to balks for all age groups. Once a balk is called, it is an immediate dead ball for all age groups. The fake to third, throw to first move is not allowed.

MOUND VISITS:

We follow Major League Baseball rules regarding mound visits. The pitcher must be removed on the second mound visit in an inning for all age groups.



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BAT RESTRICTIONS:

Coaches are responsible for checking all of their player's bats before playing in the tournament. Please make sure all bats meet the guidelines below. For age groups 9u – 13u: All bats must have either the BPF 1.15 or BBCOR designation displayed on the bat. No other weight or size restrictions for these age groups. Coach Pitch bats not permitted in any age group. For age groups 14u – 18u: BBCOR designated bats with a -3 differential (length to weight) only. *Official USA Bats, Wood bats and composite bats are permitted in all of our tournaments.

PITCHING RESTRICTIONS: There are no pitching restrictions at any Sports Force Parks Tournaments. Coaches/parents know the players better than we do and we ask that coaches use the MLB Pitch Smart recommendations to ensure player's safety.

The MLB Pitch Smart guidelines can be found here: <http://m.mlb.com/pitchsmart/>

COURTESY RUNNERS: Courtesy runners are not permitted at Sports Force Parks Tournaments

PENALTY FOR USE OF AN ILLEGAL BAT:

If the umpire discovers that a batter enters the batter's box with an illegal bat, the batter will be called out (even if a pitch has not been thrown). If the illegal bat is discovered after the ball is put into play (but before the next pitch is thrown to the next batter), the defensive team will have the choice of the result of play or the batter being called out and all runners returning to the base occupied before the pitch. An appeal on the legality of the bat must be made prior to the next pitch thrown to the next batter or the result of the previous at-bat will stand. If a team is found in violation of this rule a second time (either in the same game or in any other game throughout the tournament), in addition to the previous penalty, the manager will be immediately ejected and could face further suspension.

IN PLAY/OUT OF PLAY:

If a batted ball hits the netting in parts of the outfield above the fence cap, it will be considered a home run. If a batted ball hits the netting in foul territory, it will be considered a foul ball and cannot be played off of the netting.

ALTERED BATS:

Altered bats (shaved, rolled, or in any other way altered to increase performance) are not permitted in any way. Any player using an altered bat will be ejected from the game and their at bat will be recorded as an out. All runners will go back to the base they occupied when the batter puts the ball in play. The player with the altered bat may face further suspension.

SLUG BUNTING - FAKE BUNT/SWING PROHIBITED

A slug bunt is squaring to bunt and then pulling the bat back and swinging away. This puts players in danger and will not be permitted. Slug bunt attempts will result in the batter being out and all the base runners returning to the pre-pitch position on the field

EJECTION / SUSPENSION POLICY:

Managers or coaches (or scorekeepers or anyone else that is in the dugout or on the field during a game) that are ejected from a game (either by an umpire or by a tournament official) must leave the complex immediately and may be suspended for the next game. The Tournament Director may also lengthen the suspension with additional games or indefinitely if deemed necessary. If a manager or coach is ejected from a game twice during the same tournament, they will be suspended for the remainder of the tournament and future tournaments. If a player is ejected from a game they may be suspended for the next game. If a fan or parent is ejected from a game (either by an umpire or a tournament official), they must leave the facility immediately and may be suspended for the remainder of the event.



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CONFINEMENT TO THE BENCH:

Tournament officials, as well as the Umpires working a game, have the ability to confine a manager, coach, or player to the bench. If this step is taken, that individual will not be able to leave the bench/dugout for the remainder of the game. The only exception is for a manager/coach to attend to an injured player on the field. If an individual that is confined to the bench violates this stipulation, they will be ejected from that game and will face a suspension as determined by the tournament director.

BEHAVIOR:

Bad sportsmanship and poor behavior from players, coaches, parents and other visitors **will not be tolerated** at Sports Force Parks tournaments. All guests are expected to be respectful of each other, as well as the umpires/referees and tournament officials. Sports Force Parks has the right to remove visitors at anytime if they are deemed to be in violation.

RULES SUMMARY

Rule	9U-10U	11U-12U	13U	14U+
Base Distance	65'	70'	80'	90'
Pitching Distance	46'	50'	54'	60'6"
Game Length	6 Innings	6 Innings	7 Innings	7 Innings
Leads/Stealing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Balks	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bats	BPF 1.15	BPF 1.15	BPF 1.15	BBCOR
Cleats	Molded	Molded	Molded	Molded
Bunting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
No Contact	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lineup	9U-14U Anywhere from 9 to the whole roster – NO DH 15U+ Anywhere from 9 to the whole roster – Option of using 1 DH			
Rosters	Rosters are locked at the start of tournament. Only rostered players and coaches are allowed in the dugouts.			
Mound Visits	Pitcher must be removed after second visit in the same inning			
Sliding	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

TOURNAMENT GAME FORMAT AND MATCH SCHEDULES

	9U-12U	13U-18U
Game Length	6 Innings	7 Innings
Complete Game	4 Innings	5 Innings
Time Limit	2 Hours	2 Hours



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SPECIAL RULES FOR 8U PLAYER PITCH

Time Limit: 1:30 (1 Hour - 30 Minutes)

Play with 10 Players {4 Outfielders}
Outfielder MUST be in the Outfield

AH/EH Allowed
Roster Batting Allowed {9, 10 or ALL}

Starter Reentry Allowed

Umpire: 1

Pitching 43' – Bases 60'

Pitching: 3 innings per game (* Manager Discretion – please use good judgment here)

Dropped 3rd Strike -NO
Infield Fly Rule -NO
Lead-Offs – NO
Stealing - NO
Bunting – NO
Balks – NO

All Bats BPF 1.15
Big Barrel Bats: Allowed

Mercy Rule: 20 runs after 4 or 10 Runs after 5

There is a Limit of 7 Runs per Inning – Unlimited in the 6th Inning

Player may call time-out when Ball is Infield Area – Umpire Discretion

Runner may continue on to the next base before Time Is Called and “ Granted” by the Umpire.

Special Note: All to Be Reviewed at Home Plate – Ground Rules

For all other rules not covered here are in effect, please reference Sports Force Parks Baseball Tournament Rules