



## Official FVBL Playing Rules

### ALL LEAGUE RULES

#### 1. GENERAL GAME RULES:

- A. Games must start within 10 minutes of scheduled time except umpiring or field difficulties. Before the game, the umpire shall announce the start time in collaboration with the Managers.
- B. Umpires have complete control and authority of games. Prior to the game, the home team shall rule on field conditions and the umpire governs safe playing conditions.
- C. Umpires and coaches responsible for keeping bats and all unused equipment off the playing field during games.
- D. Only the designated Manager, or active players, can ask the umpire for a time out.
- E. Home Team uses 3rd base dugout. Visiting team uses 1st base dugout.
- F. Adults can coach on base paths and, for the purpose of instruction, may include a helmeted player in the coach's box.
- G. Home team responsibilities include lining the base paths and batters' box, placing bases, and providing 2 game balls prior to start of the game. Visiting team to assist when necessary.
- H. A minimum of eight (8) players must always be fielded during the game. Late arriving players added at the end of batting order.
- I. Only league registered players can participate in practices or games.
- J. Jewelry shall not be worn, except religious or medical medals. Items must be taped down and worn under uniform.
- K. A game is considered official after 3.5 innings if the home team is winning or 4 innings if the visiting team is winning for 6 inning games and 4.5 innings if the home team is winning or 5 innings if the visiting team is winning for 7 inning games.
- L. Time limits are determined by age divisions. A new inning begins when the third out, in the previous inning, is made. Games stopped prior to becoming official will resume at the exact point they left off. All players or adjustments to the original lineup must be discussed between coaches and umpire prior to resumption.
- M. If extra innings and no time limit restrictions, the teams proceed with "California Rules" (start with last out on second base, 1 out and a 1-1 starting count for each batter) for the remainder of the game.

#### 2. PITCHING RULES:



- A. Pitching Eligibility Rules vary by league. Age-based limitations based on the age on the registration form and not chronological age. Please see each league rule for specific age-based limitation and rules.
- B. Pitchers may not return to the mound after removed.
- C. Pitchers shall not wear non-prescription sunglasses, wrist bands, or light-colored shirts under uniform.
- D. The Pitcher must be removed after a second coach visit to the mound in the same inning.
- E. If a pitcher hits 2 batters in one inning or 3 batters in a game, that pitcher must be removed from the mound.
- F. Each team will be required to keep track of every pitcher's pitch count during their mound time (whether by coach or parent). Pitcher's will be limited to a certain number of pitches per game based on the following equation:  $\text{Players Age} \times 5 = \text{total pitches allowed per game}$  (i.e. an 11 year old pitcher is allowed to 55 pitches in any given game). Each Manager will have a Score Card which logs pitch count. Both coaches and umpire will sign it and an email will be sent to FVBL with a picture of the card for league records.
- G. Return to the mound will be based on a "clock" where every pitch thrown equals one hour of rest. (i.e. a pitchers throws 48 pitches, they are required to have 48 hours of rest before stepping on the mound again). Recovery clock begins at regularly scheduled or adjust umpire time limit for the given game. The next game the pitcher pitches must be the start time of the next game.
- H. Along with the pitch limitations, there are inning limitations for Minor, Major, Pony and Colt Leagues
  - a. Minor: 3 innings per game
  - b. Major: 4 innings per game
  - c. Pony: 5 innings per game
  - d. Colt: no restriction must follow pitch count limitation

### 3. HITTING RULES:

- A. All team members present will bat in continuous rotation.
- B. Continuous batting lineups are to be and submit prior to the start of the game. No designated hitter (DH) allowed. Late arrivals placed at the end of the order.
- C. Dropped third strike and bunting rules vary by league.
- D. Slashing is not allowed (show bunt then swing at same pitch). The batter will immediately be called out and the ball is dead.
- E. BAT RESTRICTIONS: Bats must be stamped BPF 1.15, USSSA or made of wood with a maximum diameter allowed is  $2 \frac{3}{4}$ . If a player uses an illegal bat, they will be called out and bat removed from the dugout.



#### 4. BASERUNNING RULES:

- A. Base path distance, stealing and leadoff rules vary by league.
- B. Players must avoid contact with players by sliding (except at first base). If a player does not slide when there is a “play” at a base, they will be called out and the play is dead.
- C. No headfirst sliding allowed (except returning to a base). If a runner slides headfirst, they will be called out and ball is dead.
- D. Catchers may have a courtesy runner if they are on base with 2 outs. The courtesy runner must be the player who was the most recent out.
- E. Any player who intentionally removes a safety helmet while in the field of play will be called out. The play treated as hit baserunner.

#### 5. DEFENSIVE RULES:

- A. All players present at a game will not sit out 2 consecutive innings. Nor will sit out a 2nd inning before all other players have sat out 1 inning.
- B. Except for an injury, no player will sit out more than 2 times during a 6-inning game and 3 times in a 7-inning game.
- C. Coaches are encouraged to utilize players in many different positions for instructional purposes. Care must be taken in assigning players, keeping in mind safety, skill, and ability.
- D. Injuries, illness, early leaving are exceptions to these rules.
- E. Colt league exempt for these defensive rules.

#### 6. CALL UP RULES:

- A. If a Manager determines the team will be short players, they may call-up players from lower league or as a last resort borrow players from another team at that same league level.
- B. Replacement players must be announced at the start of the game, bat last in the lineup, can only play outfield positions and will not play more defensive innings than a rostered player.
- C. Only league registered players can be considered for call up and replacement players cannot go over travel player limitations.

#### 7. PLAYOFFS:

- A. Playoff seedings will be determined at the beginning of the season and communicated to the applicable leagues.



- B. All playoff games must be complete games with no time limit.
- C. Call up player rules strictly enforced for playoffs.
- D. All other regular season and conduct rules apply.

#### 8. CONDUCT RULES:

- A. Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated. (unethical or dishonorable behavior: disrespectfully addressing an official, any flagrant behavior, intentional contact, taunting, criticizing, or using profanity directed toward others).
- B. No smoking, vaping or alcoholic beverages on or in the vicinity of the playing field, dugouts or stands.
- C. Managers, coaches, players, and fans may not argue or complain about an umpire's call. Any player or coach ejected from a game is not eligible to participate in the next game played. If a coach is ejected, his player also is removed from that game, but will be eligible to play the next game.
- D. Ejection and/or disciplinary actions are at the umpire's discretion.
- E. Managers are 100% responsible for the conduct of their coaches, parents, and players. Parents, coaches, and players are to be informed of the rules before the season begins.
- A. Protests will need to be announced to the umpire and opposing coach prior to the conclusion of the game. All protests will carry a fee of \$100. If the protest is overturned, the \$100 fee will be returned. Discretionary calls such as safe and out, balls and strikes or ejections are NOT subject to protest.
- F. Each team is responsible for the removal of all trash from their respective dugouts, spectator areas, and the field.



## Official FVBL Playing Rules

### MAJOR LEVEL

### AGES 11 and 12 (5th / 6th Grades)

**PURPOSE: This is a competitive league with emphasis on full skill development and good sportsmanship.**

#### 1. GENERAL GAME RULES:

- A. Umpires will have complete control and authority of all games. Prior to the game, the home team or host organization shall rule on field conditions. Once the game starts, the Umpire governs delays or whether the playing field is safe. Exception: at facilities equipped with lightning detection systems, the guidelines for the detection system must be followed.
- B. A minimum of eight (8) players and a maximum of nine (9) must be fielded at all times. A team can begin the game and play with eight (8) players.
- C. No player will sit out for two (2) consecutive innings nor will a player sit out a 2nd inning before all other players have sat out for one (1) inning.
- D. No player can play any position more than three (3) innings in a game. A catcher may no more than four (4) innings in a game. (see pitching)
- E. All players must play a minimum of one (1) inning in the outfield during the first five (5) innings.
- F. Metal spikes are not allowed. Plastic cleats, turf or gym shoes are allowed based on the playing surface.
- G. Unlimited defensive substitutions are allowed.
- H. Game times are to be respected, but traffic may cause game delays due to travel between towns. Forfeits for game delays are discouraged and are only approved by the league committee.
- I. Games will be seven (7) innings unless the time limit constraint comes into effect.
- J. Games are considered "official" if played for four (4) full innings (3.5 innings if home team is winning).
- K. No new inning will be started after the actual game time has reached the 2-hour time limit. The game will end once that inning has ended. A new inning begins when the third out, in the previous inning, is made.
- L. A twelve 12-run mercy rule is in affect after five (5) innings (four and a half (4.5) innings if the home team is winning) or ten (10) runs after six (6) innings (five and a half (5.5) innings if the home team is winning).
- M. The first 4 innings will have a 5 run max rule. \*The only exception to this rule is that the last play of the half inning shall be allowed to finish. If additional runs are scored on the final play, those runs shall count. Final play



MUST be initiated with ball in play via a “hit”. For example, if a team has scored four (4) runs and has the bases loaded and hits a three (3) run triple all three (3) runs shall count for that team which would make their inning count seven (7) runs. The spirit of this rule is to reward the hitter that put the ball in play. Any runs scored due to errant throws for dropped 3rd strike or pickoff throws would not be counted after 5 run max has been reached for the inning. Innings 5,6,7 will be unlimited and will revert to the Mercy Rule.

- N. Jewelry shall not be worn, except for religious or medical medals. A religious medal must be taped down and worn under the uniform. A medical alert must be taped down but may be visible.
- O. Games stopped prior to becoming official will be resumed at the exact point where the game was suspended. All players or adjustments to the original lineup must be discussed between coaches and umpire prior to resumption.
- P. Unsportsmanlike conduct is behavior that is unethical or dishonorable. It includes, but is not limited to, disrespectfully addressing an official, any flagrant behavior, intentional contact, taunting, criticizing, or using profanity directed toward any other individual. Ejections and/or disciplinary actions are at the umpire’s discretion.
- Q. Only adults are allowed to coach the bases and must begin the play in the coach’s area (the coach’s box or an area where one would normally be if unmarked) when on the field of play. Coaches are not allowed to touch a player or move into fair territory while a ball is in play.
- R. Protests will need to be announced to the umpire and opposing coach prior to the conclusion of the game. All protests will carry a fee of \$100. If the protest is overturned, the \$100 fee will be returned. Discretionary calls such as safe and out, balls and strikes or ejections are NOT subject to protest.
- S. Official League Standings will be maintained by FVBL and decided through (1) Winning Percentage (2) Head to Head (only if two teams) (3) Run differential (4) Runs allowed (5) Total Runs Scored.
- T. Playoff Specific Rules:
  - a. No time limit will be in effect for playoff games. Game will end at the conclusion of the 7th inning or umpire discretion on daylight and safety concerns.
  - b. If the game is tied at the end of the 7th inning, California Rules will be in effect for extra innings (Runner starts on 2nd base with a 1-1 count on the batter, last player to make an out the inning before will be the runner at 2nd base)
  - c. If the game is tied and stopped for any reason (after 4 innings and an official game), the score will revert back to the score at the last lead change.

## 2. PITCHING:

- A. Player may pitch no more than three (3) innings in a one game week with a maximum of six (6) innings in a multiple game week. For the purpose of counting games in a week, each week begins on Monday and ends the following Sunday at Midnight. For the purpose of this rule a single pitch thrown during an inning constitutes one (1) inning pitch in regard to this limitation. Only for the end-of-the-year Playoffs, the games per week limit will be eliminated, but the innings per game limit will remain intact.



- B. Pitching limitations for 2nd year players (Note: Option B below must be declared prior to starting the game otherwise Option A is in effect. You cannot switch during the game):
- a. Option A: A first year player, which is determined by age, must pitch two (2) innings within the first five (5) innings. Any appearance by a 2nd year pitcher counts as an inning towards this limitation. For example: If you remove a 1st year pitcher during an inning, you must replace the pitcher with a 1st year pitcher to not count towards this limitation. If you replace a 1st year pitcher with a 2nd year pitcher this will count against your three (3) innings for your 2nd year's pitching. Pitchers after the first five (5) innings may be 1<sup>st</sup> or 2nd year pitchers. Once pulled from the mound pitchers may not re-enter, or if they have used up their three (3) innings of eligibility for this game.
  - b. Option B: Teams may elect that if they are short on 1st year pitchers to declare the option of throwing a 1st year player one (1) inning during the first five (5) innings. They will then be limited to two (2) inning each of 2<sup>nd</sup> year players for the duration of the regulation game. In essence, no 2<sup>nd</sup> year player can pitch more than two (2) inning in that game unless the game goes into extra innings, then the limitation is lifted and a 2nd year pitcher could pitch into the extra innings.
- C. Pitchers will be allowed to pitch on back-to-back days, but not three (3) days in a row.
- D. The pitching rubber shall be dictated by the home team or field restrictions, either 48' or 50' from the furthest point of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber.
- E. A pitcher will receive one warning when a balk is committed. After subsequent infractions, all base runners will be awarded a base.
- F. A pitcher is limited up to six (6) warm-up pitches between innings and up to eight (8) warm-up pitches following a pitching change either during an inning or between innings. No breaking pitches. If a pitcher is removed as a result of an injury the relieving pitcher will be allowed an unlimited amount of warm-up pitches.
- G. Once a player has been removed from the pitcher position, that player may not pitch again for the remainder of the game.
- H. If a pitcher hits two (2) batters in an inning or three (3) in a game, that pitcher shall be removed from the pitching position for that game.
- I. A pitcher can pitch no more than four (4) innings per game, and no more than eight (8) innings per calendar week. A single pitch thrown counts as one (1) inning pitched regarding this limitation. Each week begins Monday and ends the following Sunday at midnight.

### 3. HITTING:

- A. All bats -5 or greater must be stamped "BPF 1.15 USSSA" or "USA Baseball". No restriction on weight or length as long as the bat has the "BPF 1.15" stamp. All -3 bats must be stamped "BBCOR". Wood bats allowed. The bat's barrel cannot exceed 2 3/4".



- B. Dropped third strike is in effect.
- C. Slashing is not allowed (show bunt then swing away on same pitch). The batter will be immediately called out and the ball is ruled dead.
- D. Bunting is allowed.
- E. Batting helmets must be worn at all times while the hitter or base runner is on the field of play.
- F. Continuous batting lineups shall be used and submitted prior to the game. No designated hitters are allowed. Late arrivals will be placed at the end of the batting order. Teams will not be penalized with an out if a player is removed from the lineup due to an injury or other circumstances. If player is ejected from the game, his at bat will be considered an out.

#### 4. BASE RUNNING:

- A. Base paths to be set at seventy feet (70') apart with chalked foul lines.
- B. No head first sliding (except when returning to a base): If a runner slides head first they will be called out as this is done for the safety of the players.
- C. If a play is made at a base, a player must attempt to avoid contact preferably by sliding on plays at any base (except first base). A player may not jump (leave the ground) over the catcher to avoid contact with the catcher. If it is determined by the umpire that the player jumped over a catcher to avoid contact that player will be called out and the ball is dead. If unintentional contact is made, the runner may be called out and the ball would be dead (umpire's discretion). If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected. The umpire's decision on the sliding rules is final and is not subject to protest.
- D. Catchers and pitchers may have an optional courtesy runner if they reach base with less than two outs. A courtesy runner is required with there are two outs for purposes of moving the game along. The courtesy runner must be the player who recorded the most recent out. If for some reason that player is unavailable or is a catcher or a pitcher, then the next player who recorded the next most recent out.
- E. No hidden ball tricks.
- F. Stealing and leadoffs are allowed.





## Official FVBL Playing Rules

### PONY LEAGUE

**AGES 12 &13: (Cut-off date is 4/30/22).**

**PURPOSE: This is a competitive league with the emphasis on more advanced skills, continuing with instruction and sportsmanship as our highest values.**

#### 1. GENERAL GAME RULES:

- A. Umpires will have complete control and authority of all games. Prior to the game, the home team or host organization shall rule on field conditions. Once the game starts, the umpire governs delays or whether the playing field is safe. Exception: at facilities equipped with lightening detection systems, the guidelines for the detection system must be followed.
- B. A minimum of eight (8) players and a maximum of nine (9) must be fielded at all times. A team can begin the game and play with eight (8) players.
- C. No player will sit out for two (2) consecutive innings nor will a player sit out a 2<sup>nd</sup> inning before all other players have sat out for one (1) inning.
- D. Games will be 7 Innings. An inning consists of 5 runs or 3 outs (whichever occurs first) in the first 4 innings.
- E. The 5th, 6th, 7th and extra innings have no run limits.
- F. No inning will start 2 hours after the start of the game. Attempts shall be made to play as many innings per game as possible.
- G. Game times are to be respected, but traffic may cause game delays due to travel between towns. Forfeits for game delays are discouraged and are only approved by the league committee.
- H. The pitching rubber shall be 54 feet from the furthest point of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber. Bases 80 feet apart (dictated by field used).
- I. Players are required to play at least 1 inning in the infield and 1 inning in the outfield within the first 5 innings.
- J. Players cannot play the same position more than 4 innings except during extra innings (Exception: Pitcher may pitch up to 5 innings per game but must then immediately follow prior rule).
- K. The "Infield-Fly" rule and "Dropped Third Strike" rules in effect.
- L. A Pitcher will receive one warning when a balk is committed. After subsequent infractions, all base runners will be awarded a base.
- M. Intentional walks allowed.



- N. Metal spikes allowed where field conditions permit.
- O. Leadoffs and base stealing of any base permitted.
- P. A 12-run mercy rule is after 5 innings (4.5 if home team is winning) or 10 runs after 6 innings (5.5 if home team is winning).

## 2. PITCHING LIMITATIONS:

- A. A pitcher can pitch no more than 5 innings per game, and no more than 10 innings per calendar week (or 11 innings in a 3-game week). A single pitch thrown counts as 1 inning pitched regarding this limitation. Each week begins Monday and ends the following Sunday at Midnight.
- B. Coaches to declare pitching Option A or B prior to the start of the game; otherwise, Option A is in effect. Cannot switch during the game.
  - a. OPTION A: Teams limited to 3 innings of 2nd year players during the first 5 innings. Any appearance by a 2nd year pitcher counts as an inning towards this limitation (A 1st year pitcher replaced by a 2nd year pitcher count towards your 3 innings of a 2nd year pitcher).
  - b. OPTION B: Teams may elect to pitch a 1st year player 1 inning during the first 4 innings. They will then be limited to 1 inning each of 2nd year players for the duration of the regulation game. Limitation lifted in extra innings.

\*\*Special Exception to All League Rule # E) – The only exception to this rule is when a 1st year player pitches the first 4 innings of a game. That player is exempt from playing the outfield during the first 4 innings but must play outfield the next inning after pitching.