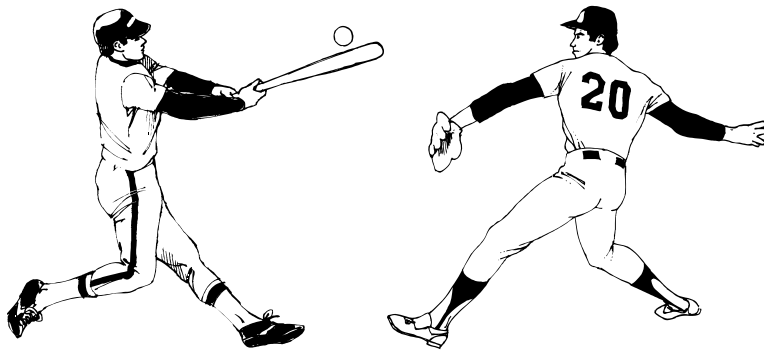


Spring Branch-Memorial Sports Association

Baseball Program



Official Rules and Regulations



Revised on February 28, 2025

Spring Branch-Memorial Sports Association Baseball Program

The Board of Directors of the Spring Branch-Memorial Sports Association (“SBMSA”) has empowered the Board of Baseball Commissioners (“Board”) to administer all phases of this program (that are not specifically reserved for the SBMSA Board of Directors) as outlined in these rules and that are not in direct violation of the SBMSA by-laws. Within these limits, the majority decisions of the Board will be official.

All participants in the SBMSA Baseball program are reminded that these games are between teams made up of players ages 14 and younger. It is important to remember that we are not playing Major League baseball, and nothing important is at stake. Conduct yourself in a manner that will make your child and your family proud of you.

All participants in the SBMSA Baseball program are also reminded that the people who administer, run, and coach in the program are volunteers with no stake in the outcome. We want to make the right rules decisions and have games decided by the players on the field and not by adults interpreting rules. In the event of a rules question, the rules set forth herein apply. If a rule is ambiguous, the Board may interpret the rule as it sees fit. The Board may look to the current Sporting News Official Rules of Baseball and any commentary thereto and the University Interscholastic League for guidance and/or prior interpretation of a rule.

Finally, managers and coaches are reminded to carry a Rule Book with them to all games. It is better to consult the rules in the Rule Book and hold up the game long enough to decide a knotty problem than to have a game protested. All managers, coaches, umpires, and league officials should make every effort to resolve issues at the field, rather than later during a protest.

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RECORD OF CHANGES

1.00 PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION

1.01 Baseball Leagues: The Baseball Program is made up of five (5) leagues: the Pony League, the Bronco League, the Pee Wee League, the Midget League and the Rookie League.

- (a) The Pony League is made up of players who are 13, 14, and 15 years of age.
- (b) The Bronco League is made up of players who are 11 and 12 years of age.
- (c) The Pee Wee League is made up of players who are 9 and 10 years of age.
- (d) The Midget League is made up of players who are 7 and 8 years of age.
- (e) The Rookie League is made up of players who are 5 and 6 years of age.
- (f) For all leagues, applicable age is age as of April 30 of the current year.

1.02 Baseball Board Composition: The Baseball Board ("Board") shall be comprised of no fewer than eleven (11) members, and the Board shall administer the program. The Board shall consist of: The Program Director, who shall be appointed by the President of the SBMSA and approved by the SBMSA Board of Directors; and the balance of the Board, who shall be selected by the Program Director subject to the approval of the SBMSA Board of Directors.

1.03 Meetings: The Board shall meet from time to time, as called by the Program Director. No meeting is official unless there are at least six (6) members of the Board present and one of those members present is the Program Director. The Board may meet by telephone. The Board may vote by telephone or by e-mail.

1.04 Board Organization: (Example - may vary by season)

Program Director											
Bronco League			Pee Wee League			Midget /Rookie League			Other		
Bronco Coordinator			Pee Wee Coordinator			Midget Coordinator					
Memorial Area Commissioner	Spring Branch Area Commissioner	Westchester Area Commissioner	Memorial Area Commissioner	Spring Branch Area Commissioner	Westchester Area Commissioner	Memorial Area Commissioner	Spring Branch Area Commissioner	Westchester Area Commissioner	Registration Coordinator	Tournament Team Coordinator	Field Coordinator

- 1.05 **Responsibilities of the Program Director:** Answers to the SBMSA Board of Directors; and administers all functions of the Board in managing, supervising, and delegating authority within the proper guidelines as directed by the SBMSA Board of Directors.
- 1.06 **Responsibilities of Coordinators:** The Pony, Bronco, Pee Wee, Midget and Rookie Coordinators answer to the Program Director, administer respective programs, and direct the operations of the Commissioners.
- 1.07 **Responsibilities of Area Commissioners:** Answer to the Coordinators; recruit Managers; direct the operations of their area; review all proposals and/or complaints from Managers and parents; instruct all Managers in the administration of those functions designated by the Board; and with the assistance of the Field Coordinator, assume responsibility for the playing fields.
- 1.08 **Responsibilities of Managers:** Responsible for the proper operation of the teams according to the Rules and Regulations as set forth by the Board and the SBMSA; answer directly to their Area Commissioner; assume the responsibility for appointing assistant coaches and submitting a list of these assistants to their Area Commissioner for approval prior to the first practice (but please note that the Board and/or the SBMSA reserves the right to approve or disapprove any appointments); responsible for promoting sportsmanship and is responsible for the behavior of assistant coaches, parents, and fans of their respective teams; assure players meet minimum playing requirements as set by the Board; and responsible for financing their team through fund raising, donations, or other means approved by the Program Director.
- 1.09 **Sportsmanship Committee:** SBMSA Board of Directors has created a formal Sportsmanship Committee to assist each sport Program Director/Board on serious or recurrent sportsmanship violations by any coach, parent, player or fan. The Sportsmanship Committee is charged to formalize and mandate, through consistent and reportable actions, that Sportsmanship is a core value of SBMSA. That includes better tracking of individuals who display repeated lapses of good sportsmanship and/or conduct across multiple SBMSA program venues. This committee will be led by the Sportsmanship Director and each sport will appoint a representative to serve on this committee. At his/her sole discretion, the Sportsmanship Director may appoint additional individuals to serve on this committee. This committee brings consistency and accountability to the coach selection process between the sport programs and provides a mechanism to permanently remove coaches for repeat lapses in sportsmanship and/or indifference in providing positive coaching and mentoring leadership to our youth athletes. This committee can also be engaged to address issues outside of actions by game officials where a coach, parent, athlete or fan merits disciplinary discussion for repetitive or very serious sportsmanship violations and/or has been previously suspended for conduct detrimental to league core values. Program Directors can request any serious sportsmanship violation by a coach, player, parent or fan be referred to the Sportsmanship Committee. Any

recommendations by the Sportsmanship Committee will be handed to the sports Program Director/Board for final action and is not subject to an appeal. Unless otherwise communicated by Program Director, any matter forwarded to the Sportsmanship Committee will be considered an immediate and indefinite suspension until Sportsmanship Committee hands final recommendation to sports Program Director/Board for final action.

2.00 PLAYER ELIGIBILITY, REGISTRATION AND TEAM FORMATION

2.01 Player Eligibility: Any child is eligible to play, subject to these rules:

- (a) Players participating in the program are required to pay the fee set by the SBMSA Board, unless the fee is waived by the Program Director.
- (b) Players participating in the program are required to submit any forms required by the SBMSA Board, including proper proof of age.
- (c) Players register to play prior to the registration deadline.

2.02 Registration: Registration will be held on dates specified by the Board.

- (a) Late registrants will be assigned to a team by the League Coordinator in his/her discretion only if there is a need for additional players and such addition will not be disruptive to the team formation process.

2.03 Playing Up or Down: Generally a player will play in the league determined by the player's age. However, in certain cases, a player *might* be able to play up or play down, subject to the following:

- (a) Upon written request of a parent or guardian, the Program Director *may* permit a player to play up one age level above the one determined by the player's age if (i) such request is made at registration and prior to the draft, (ii) in the judgment of the Director the player has acquired the abilities to compete at that level, and (iii) there is a Manager(s) willing to accept such a player.
- (b) Upon written request of a parent or guardian, the Program Director *may* permit a player to play down one level below the one determined by the player's official age if (i) such child is enrolled in a special education program because of a physical disability (as a result of placement by an ARD committee B NOTE: The student's IEP must indicate his/her disability or enrollment in an Adaptive Physical Education class, and a copy of the IEP must accompany the participant's registration), (ii) such request is made at registration and prior to the draft or team assignment, (iii) in the judgment of the Director the player does not have the ability to compete in his or her proper age group, and (iv) there is a Manager(s) in the lower level willing to accept such a player.

2.04 **Team Formation and Geographic Area:** Players in the Rookie and Midget Leagues will be assigned to teams based on their geographic area (see below) and school. Players in the Pee Wee, Bronco and Pony Leagues will be drafted onto teams based on their geographic area (which determines a player's draft pool), a skills evaluation and a draft.

- (a) Draft pools typically will be formed from three geographic areas: Memorial, Spring Branch, and Westchester. These boundaries are guidelines only, and the actual boundaries may vary from year-to-year depending on participation:
 - (i) **Memorial Area:** comprises an area encompassed by the following Spring Branch Independent School District ("SBISD") elementary schools: Hunter's Creek, Memorial Drive, Bunker Hill, and Frostwood.
 - (ii) **Spring Branch Area:** comprises an area encompassed by the following SBISD elementary schools: Cedarbrook, Edgewood, Hollibrook, Housman, Ridgcrest, Spring Branch, Valley Oaks, Pine Shadows, Sherwood, Shadow Oaks, Westwood, Woodview, Spring Shadows, and Terrace.
 - (iii) **Westchester Area:** comprises area encompassed by the following SBISD elementary schools: Rummel Creek, Wilchester, Meadow Wood, Nottingham, and Thornwood.
- (b) Players who reside within the boundaries of SBISD, but attend school outside of the district, will be placed in the area where they reside or will be placed in the area where they attend school.
- (c) Players who reside outside the boundaries of SBISD, but attend school in SBISD or a private school within SBISD's boundaries, will be placed in the area where they attend school.
- (d) Players who reside in one area within SBISD, but attend school in another area within SBISD, have the option of playing in either area.
- (e) Players who reside outside the boundaries of SBISD and attend school outside the boundaries of SBISD may participate.
- (f) Players may petition the Board to allow them to be placed in an area different from the one they are assigned to under these rules.

2.05 **Skills Evaluations:** There is a skills evaluation process for the Pee Wee, Bronco and Pony Leagues; there is no skills evaluation for the Rookie and Midget Leagues.

- (a) Skills evaluation sessions for the Pee Wee, Bronco and Pony Leagues shall be conducted in the presence of the league Managers, or designated representative, at which time every candidate should have an opportunity to run, throw, field, and bat.
- (b) As soon as practical, preferably before the beginning of the tryout session, the Area Commissioner shall have a list prepared of ballplayer candidates, , addresses, telephone numbers, and tryout numbers. These shall be distributed to the Managers and coaches to aid them in making decisions.

- 2.06 **Drafts:** The method of drafting and forming teams in the Pee Wee, Bronco and Pony age groups shall be determined each year by the Board. The draft will be held as soon as practical following the skills evaluations. Subject to the draft rules determined by the Board, the child or children of team Managers shall be automatically assigned to the Manager's team prior to the draft.
- 2.07 **Pee Wee League:** The Pee Wee League, which is made up of players who are 9 and 10 years of age, shall be divided into a Pee Wee National League ("NL") division and a Pee Wee American League ("AL") division. The Pee Wee NL division will play a brand of kid-pitch-cum-coach-relief-pitch baseball as further described in later sections of this Rule Book. The Pee Wee AL division will play a brand of open-base, 100% kid-pitch baseball that, like the Bronco and Pony League, is similar to the high school game played under the normal rules of baseball.
- 2.08 **Roster Limits:** Spring roster limits for each of the leagues is as follows. In special cases with the approval of the Program Director these could change:
- (a) Rookie League teams shall be comprised of 11-13 players.
 - (b) Midget League teams shall be comprised of 11-13 players.
 - (c) Pee Wee NL division teams shall be comprised of 10-13 players.
 - (d) Pee Wee AL division teams shall be comprised of 10 players.
 - (e) Bronco League teams shall be comprised of 10-13 players.
 - (f) Pony League teams shall be comprised of 10-13 players.
- 2.09 **Siblings:** Siblings will play on the same team in a given league unless their parents specifically request otherwise. In the Pee Wee League, if one sibling is an NL player and the other an AL player, this rule is applied at the discretion of the Pee Wee Coordinator.
- 2.10 **Illegal and Ineligible Players:** An illegal player is one who plays on a team for which he could not have become eligible within the current year under any circumstances. Use of an illegal player may result in a game forfeiture if a protest is filed and found valid by the Board. An ineligible player is one who fails to meet certain correctable criteria for participation in a specified league. Among the factors which may bar a player from participating are: failure to submit player registration or parent consent forms; failure to be properly listed on the team roster; failure to submit acceptable proof of age. Use of an ineligible player in a game before the disqualifying factor has been removed may result in forfeiture of the game if a protest is filed and found valid by the Board.
- (a) A protest regarding the eligibility of a player will be considered valid only if proper notification of such protest is made during the course of a subject game to the Umpire-In-Chief, the opposing Manager, and the Official Scorer, and if a full written protest is presented to the Program Director or

the appropriate age level Coordinator or Area Commissioner within 24 hours of the game completion. If a protested game is played on a Saturday, the time limit for presentation will be extended to 48 hours from game completion. A protest sent via e-mail satisfies the “written” requirement of a protest. A protest sent via e-mail is deemed made at the time it is sent. All other protests are deemed made at the time received by a Board member.
NOTE: This section of the rules applies only to protests regarding eligibility and does not apply to rules interpretations.

3.00 GAME-DAY PRELIMINARIES: PROCEDURES, PLAYERS, DEFENSIVE POSITIONING, FORFEITS AND EQUIPMENT

3.01 Game-Day Procedures: The League Coordinator and/or Area Commissioner will provide a set of game-day and field procedures that will govern:

- (a) Which team, home or visitor, sits in the first base dugout, and which team the third base dugout.
- (b) Which team, home or visitor, gets to use the field for warm-up first (and for how long), and which team second. Normally, the visiting team is first to warm-up on the field, and the home team second.
- (c) Which team, home or visitor, gets to use the batting cages for warm-up first (and for how long), and which team second. Normally, the home team is first to use the batting cages, and the visiting team second.
- (d) Which team, home or visitor, is responsible for preparing the field (e.g., raking, chalking) before the game. Normally, the visiting team is responsible.
- (e) Which team, home or visitor, is responsible for preparing and closing down the field (e.g., raking, watering, turning lights off) after the game. Normally, the home team is responsible.
- (f) Which team provides new game balls and how many. Typically, the home team will be responsible for providing two game balls. Alternatively, each team will be responsible for providing one game ball.

3.02 Making Playing Fields Available: Teams not scheduled to play must vacate the playing fields one hour before game time. SBMSA batting cages should be shared to the extent possible, as provided in the game-day and field procedures (see above).

3.03 Supplemental Players: If, after the season begins, the total number of available players (for a particular game) on a Pony, Bronco or Pee Wee team roster drops below nine (9) players, or on a Midget team roster drops below ten (10) players, the team Manager may temporarily obtain for that game the services of a lower-age league player by making a request to the Manager of such player’s lower-age league team. More specifically, a Pony League team may only draw a supplemental player from a Bronco League team, a Bronco League team may only draw a supplemental player from a Pee Wee League team, a Pee Wee AL team from a Pee Wee NL team, a Pee Wee NL team from a Midget League team, and a Midget League team from

a Rookie League team. Since there is no SBMSA league below the Rookie league, Rookie teams are not allowed to use supplemental players.

- (a) In the event of a conflict in schedule, the game of a potential supplemental player's regular team takes precedence.
- (b) Players brought up under this rule (i) must play at least two innings and (ii) may not pitch for the higher-age level team for which they are a supplemental player.
- (c) Players may not move up to play for a higher-age level team or teams more than four (4) times in a given season.
- (d) **RULE CLARIFICATION:** A supplemental player may be brought up under these rules only if he becomes (i) the ninth (or lesser) player on the Pony, Bronco or Pee Wee team in need or (ii) the tenth (or lesser) player on the Midget team in need.

3.04 **Exchange of Batting Orders:** Before the Umpire-In-Chief calls "Play", the Managers shall exchange batting orders and shall deliver a copy of their batting order to the Official Scorer. If the Umpire-In-Chief requests a copy of the batting orders, the Managers shall deliver a copy of their batting order to him as well. Managers should make every effort to ensure that the copies of the batting orders are identical. If there are any discrepancies in the copies of the batting orders, the copy given to the Official Scorer is controlling. A team shall not deviate from its batting order except as provided for by these rules.

3.05 **Umpires Enter Playing Field:** Unless the league shall have given previous notice that the game has been postponed or will be delayed in starting, the Umpire, or Umpires, shall enter the playing field five minutes before the hour set for the game to begin and proceed directly to home base where they shall be met by the Managers of the opposing teams. If the Managers have not previously done so, the batting order for the game shall be delivered to the opposing Manager at this time. Additionally, both Managers shall give a copy of their batting order to the Official Scorer. As soon as the Umpire-In-Chief meets with the Managers, the Umpires are in charge of the playing field, and from that moment they shall have sole authority to determine when a game shall be called, suspended, or resumed on account of weather or the condition of the playing field. Obvious errors in the batting order, which are noticed by the Umpire-In-Chief before he calls "Play" for the start of the game or are noticed by the opposing Manager before the Umpire calls "Play," should be called to the attention of the Manager or captain of the team in error, so the correction can be made before the game starts. Teams should not be "trapped" later by some mistake that obviously was inadvertent and which can be corrected before the game starts.

3.06 **Defensive Positioning:** Prior to the start of the game, the players of the home team shall take their defensive positions.

- (a) In the Rookie and Midget Leagues, ten (10) players play in the field, with four (4) in the outfield (two on each side of second base when viewed from home plate). In the Rookie and Midget Leagues, there is a limit to how far back the infielders can play and how far in the outfielders can play. There is a single 15-foot line—that is, a 15-foot line marked parallel from the baselines—that separates the infielders from the outfielders in their initial positioning. This 15-foot rule is more fully described in Rule 5.03.
- (b) When the ball is put in play at the start of, or during a game, all fielders other than the catcher shall be on fair territory. Except in the Rookie and Midget League (where the catcher may be positioned anywhere that is reasonable and safe for his experience level), the catcher shall station himself directly back of the plate. He may leave his position at any time to catch a pitch or make a play except that when the batter is being given an intentional base on balls, the catcher must stand with both feet within the lines of the catcher's box until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. In the Pony and Bronco Leagues and Pee Wee AL division, the penalty for a catcher's violation on an intentional walk is a balk. Except the batter, or a runner attempting to score, no offensive player shall cross the catcher's lines when the ball is in play.
- (c) The pitcher, while in the act of delivering the ball to the batter, shall take his legal position. This applies to pitchers in the Pony, Bronco and Pee Wee Leagues, as more fully described in Rule 8.11. The required positioning of the Rookie and Midget League defensive player / pitcher is described in Rule 5.02.
- (d) In the Pony, Bronco and Pee Wee Leagues, any fielder (other than the pitcher and catcher) may station himself anywhere in fair territory. In the Rookie and Midget Leagues, subject to the 15-foot restriction described in Rule 3.06(a) and also in Rule 5.03, any fielder (other than the pitcher and catcher) may station himself anywhere in fair territory.

3.07 Limit on Non-Players: Each team in the Midget, Pee Wee, Bronco and Pony Leagues is allowed up to four (4) non-players (*i.e.*, coaches, assistant coaches, scorekeeper, parents, team moms, or children who are not on the team) inside the fenced areas of play or dugouts during a game. Thus a Midget team could have 4 coaches inside the fence, but could not have 4 coaches plus a scorekeeper because that would be 5 non-players. Additional coaches and other non-players are free to support their team from outside the fenced area or from the stands.

- (a) Only coaches and players may give baseball signs to players on the team. The coaches must be inside the fence line and on the playing field to be eligible to give baseball signs. No baseball signs will be allowed from anyone outside the fence line.
- (b) In the Rookie League, each team is allowed up to five (5) non-players inside the fenced areas of play or dugouts during a game. When on defense, Rookie coaches are allowed to be on the field to coach the players.

- (c) Umpires are required to enforce this limit-on-non-players rule at the start of a game. Games will not start until both teams are in compliance. If, during the course of a game, a team is found to be in violation of this rule, the Umpire will issue a warning (one warning per team, not one warning for both teams) to the head coach of the offending team. Subsequent violations by that same team will result in the next batter on the offending team being called out.

3.08 **Base Coach Positioning:** The offensive team may station two base coaches on the field during its term at bat, one near first base and one near third base. Base coaches shall be limited to two in number and shall remain within the coach's box at all times. *PENALTY: After one warning, the offending base coach shall be removed from the game, and shall leave the playing field.* It has been common practice for many years for some coaches to put one foot outside the coach's box or stand astride or otherwise be slightly outside the coaching box lines. The coach shall not be considered out of the box unless the opposing Manager complains, and then the Umpire shall strictly enforce the rule and require all coaches (on both teams) to remain in the coach's box at all times. It is also common practice for a coach who has a play at his base to leave the coach's box to signal the player to slide, advance or return to a base. This is allowed if the coach does not interfere with the play in any manner.

3.09 **Eight-Player Minimum:** Each team should be able to place nine (9) players on the field at all times during a game, although Rookie and Midget League teams may field ten (10) players. However, a team may start a game with only eight (8) players and/or may continue a game in progress with only eight (8) players if it loses a player at some point during the game. Once a game has begun and while it is in progress, if a team is unable or refuses to place eight (8) players on the field, it will forfeit the game to the opposing team.

- (a) No matter how many defensive players a team fields—whether 10, 9 or 8 players—one player must be a pitcher, and one player must be a catcher.

3.10 **Forfeits:** A game is forfeited to the opposing team when a team fails to appear upon the field, or being upon the field, refuses to start play within five (5) minutes after the Umpire has called "Play" at the appointed hour for beginning the game, unless such delayed appearance is, in the Umpire's judgment, unavoidable; employs tactics clearly designed to delay or shorten the game; refuses to continue play during a game unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the Umpire; fails to resume play, after a suspension, within one minute after the Umpire has called "Play;" after warning by the Umpire, willfully and persistently violates any rules of the game; or fails to obey within a reasonable time the Umpire's order for removal of a player from the game.

- (a) A game shall be forfeited to the opposing team when a team is unable or refuses to place at least eight (8) players on the field.

- (b) The score of a forfeited game shall be 6-0 in the Rookie, Midget and Pee Wee Leagues, and 7-0 in the Bronco and Pony Leagues.
- 3.11 **Tobacco, Alcohol and Noisemaker Prohibitions:** The use of tobacco, e-cigarettes and alcohol by managers, coaches, umpires, and players is prohibited during SBMSA Baseball events. Artificial noisemakers (including, but not limited to, bells, cowbells, air horns, vuvuzelas, thunder sticks, sirens and musical instruments) are prohibited while games are in progress.
- 3.12 **Equipment:** There are certain requirements for players' uniforms and equipment that are worn or used during a game. The following rules detail these requirements for uniforms, bats, catcher's glove or mitt, pitcher's glove, first baseman's glove or mitt, gloves in general, helmets, and balls.
- 3.13 **Uniforms:** All players on a team shall wear uniforms substantially identical in color, trim and style, and all players' uniforms shall include numbers on their backs. Any part of an undershirt exposed to view shall be of a uniform solid color for all players on a team.
- (a) Any player other than the pitcher may have numbers, letters, insignia attached to the sleeve of the undershirt. The pitcher may not wear an undershirt with white sleeves.
 - (b) Sleeve lengths may vary for individual players, but the sleeves of each individual player shall be approximately the same length. No player shall wear ragged, frayed, or slit sleeves.
 - (c) No player shall attach to his uniform tape or other material of a different color from his uniform.
 - (d) No part of the uniform shall include a pattern that imitates or suggests the shape of a baseball, and that is placed in such a way as to confuse the other team.
 - (e) Glass buttons and polished metal shall not be used on a uniform.
 - (f) No player shall attach anything to the heel or toe of his shoe other than the ordinary shoe plate or toe plate. Shoes with metal spikes shall not be worn.
- 3.14 **Bats, Basic:** The bat shall be a smooth, round stick less than three (3) inches in diameter at the thickest part and not more than 34 inches in length.
- (a) An indentation in the end of the bat (called a "bat cupping") up to one inch in depth is permitted and may be no wider than two inches and no less than one inch in diameter. The indentation must be curved with no foreign substance added.
 - (b) The bat handle, for not more than 18 inches from its end, may be covered or treated with any material or substance to improve the grip. Any such material or substance, which extends past the 18-inch limitation, shall cause the bat to be removed from the game. *NOTE: If the Umpire discovers that the bat does not conform to this rule until a time during or after which the*

bat has been used in play, it shall not be grounds for declaring the batter out, or ejected from the game.

- 3.15 **Bats, Legal and Illegal:** Certain high-performance bats are not permitted in the Rookie, Midget, Pee Wee, Bronco and Pony leagues. Coaches and parents should make sure that no player steps into the batter's box with an illegal, high-performance bat. If a player steps into the batter's box with an illegal bat and is discovered doing so while at bat, he will be declared out. If a batter reaches base after having used an illegal bat in that at-bat, he will be declared out if, before the first pitch to the next batter, it is discovered that such bat was illegal. After the first pitch has been made to the next batter, the previous batter cannot be declared out for using an illegal bat.
- (a) **Legal Bats, '1.15 BPF' Certified:** Bat Performance Factor (BPF) measures the liveliness of a ball hitting a bat compared to throwing a ball against a solid wall (e.g., 15% faster rebound = BPF of 1.15). Bats with a BPF rating of 1.15 or less are approved for use in many youth baseball leagues across the nation, including in SBMSA's Rookie, Midget, Pee Wee, Bronco and Pony leagues. Bat manufacturers are now certifying bats that meet this performance standard. All new bats that meet this standard have a stamp that reads '1.15 BPF' on the barrel-to-handle transition area. Previous model year bats that meet this standard may have a '1.15 BPF' stamp anywhere on the bat.
 - (i) Any bat, new or old, with a '1.15 BPF' stamp affixed by the manufacturer on the bat is legal in the Rookie, Midget, Pee Wee, Bronco and Pony leagues.
 - (b) **Legal Bats, Wood Bats:** Wood bats are also legal in the Rookie, Midget, Pee Wee, Bronco and Pony leagues.
 - (c) **Legal Bats, 'USA Baseball' Certified:** Any bat, new or old, with a 'USA Baseball' stamp affixed by the manufacturer on the bat is legal in the Rookie, Midget, Pee Wee, Bronco and Pony leagues.
 - (d) **Legal Bats, 'BBCOR' Certified:** Any bat, new or old, with a 'BBCOR' stamp affixed by the manufacturer on the bat is legal in the Pony league.
 - (e) **Legal Bats, 'Tee Ball' Certified:** Any bat, new or old, with a 'Tee Ball' stamp affixed by the manufacturer on the bat is legal in the Rookie and Midget leagues.
 - (f) **Illegal Bats:** All other bats are illegal in the Rookie, Midget, Pee Wee, Bronco and Pony leagues. **NOTE:** During the course of the season certain bats may be re-tested by a certifying body and may fail a test and be disallowed. Should this occur the league will be notified and players who are found using those disallowed bats will be subject to the rules above for illegal bats.

- 3.16 **Catcher's Glove or Mitt:** The catcher may wear a leather mitt not more than 38 inches in circumference, nor more than 15½ inches from top to bottom. Such limits shall include all lacing and any leather band or facing attached to the outer edge of the mitt. The space between the thumb section and the finger section of the mitt shall not exceed six (6) inches at the top of the mitt and four (4) inches at the base of the thumb crotch. The web shall measure not more than seven (7) inches across the top or more than six (6) inches from its top to the base of the thumb crotch. The web may be either a lacing or lacing through leather tunnels, or a center piece of leather which may be an extension of the palm, connected to the mitt with lacing and constructed so that it will not exceed any of the above mentioned measurements.
- (a) Catchers are encouraged, but are not required, to wear a catcher's mitt.
- 3.17 **Pitcher's Glove:** The pitcher's glove may not be white or gray. No pitcher shall attach to his glove any foreign material of a color different from the glove. The pitcher is not permitted to use a first baseman's mitt or catcher's mitt.
- 3.18 **First Baseman's Glove or Mitt:** The first baseman may wear a leather glove or mitt not more than 12 inches long from top to bottom and not more than eight (8) inches wide across the palm, measured from the base of the thumb crotch to the outer edge of the mitt. The space between the thumb section and the finger section of the mitt shall not exceed four (4) inches at the top of the mitt and three and one half (3½) inches at the base of the thumb crotch. The mitt shall be constructed so that this space is permanently fixed and cannot be enlarged, extended, widened, or deepened by the use of any materials or process whatever. The web of the mitt shall measure not more than five (5) inches from its top to the base of the thumb crotch. The web may be either a lacing, lacing through leather tunnels, or a center piece of leather which may be an extension of the palm connected to the mitt with lacing and constructed so that it will not exceed the above mentioned measurements. The webbing shall not be constructed of wound or wrapped lacing or deepened to make a net type of trap. The glove may be of any weight.
- 3.19 **Gloves:** Each fielder, other than the first baseman or catcher, may use or wear a leather glove. The measurements covering size of glove shall be made by measuring front side or ball receiving side of glove. The tool or measuring tape shall be placed to contact the surface or feature of item being measured and follow all contours in the process. The glove shall not measure more than 12 inches from the tip of any one of the four fingers, through the ball pocket to the bottom edge or heel of glove. The glove shall not measure more than 7¾ inches wide, measured from the inside seam at base of first finger, along base of other fingers, to the outside edge of little finger edge of glove. The space or area between the thumb and first finger, called crotch, may be filled with leather webbing or back stop. The webbing may be constructed of two plies of standard leather to close the crotch area entirely, or it may be constructed of a series of tunnels made of leather, or a series of panels of leather, or of lacing leather thongs. The webbing may not be constructed of wound or wrapped lacing to make a net type of trap. When webbing is made to cover entire

crotch area, the webbing can be constructed so as to be flexible. When constructed of a series of sections, they must be joined together. These sections may not be so constructed to allow depression to be developed by curvatures in the section sides. The webbing shall be made to control the size of the crotch opening. The crotch opening shall measure not more than 4½ inches at the top, not more than 5¾ inches deep, and shall be 3½ inches wide at its bottom. The opening of crotch shall not be more than 4½ inches at any point below its top. The webbing shall be secured at each side, and at top and bottom of crotch. The attachment is to be made with leather laces and these connections are to be secured. If they stretch or become loose, they shall be adjusted to their proper condition. The glove can be of any weight. No Player other than the first baseman and catcher is permitted to use a first baseman's mitt or catcher's mitt.

3.20 **Helmets:** All players shall wear a double ear flap helmet while at bat.

- (a) All catchers shall wear a catcher's protective helmet and proper catcher's protective gear (including a protective cup in Pee Wee and Bronco Leagues), while fielding their position.
- (b) If the Umpire observes any violation of these rules, he shall direct the violation to be corrected. If the violation is not corrected within a reasonable time, in the Umpire's judgment, the Umpire shall eject the offender from the game, and disciplinary action, as appropriate, will be recommended.

3.21 **Game Ball:** The official game ball shall be a sphere formed by yarn wound around a small core of cork, rubber or similar material, covered with two stripes of white horsehide or cowhide, tightly stitched together. It shall weigh not less than five or more than 5¼ ounces avoirdupois and measure not less than nine or more than 9¼ inches in circumference.

3.22 **Metal Cleats:** Players in the Pony League are permitted to wear metal cleats in their games.

4.00 **THE GAME: STARTING, LENGTH, RUN LIMITS, ENDING, SCORING, PLAYOFFS**

4.01 **Objectives of the Game:** Baseball is a game between two teams of nine players each (ten players each in the Rookie and Midget Leagues), under direction of a Manager, played on an enclosed field in accordance with these rules, under jurisdiction of one or more Umpires.

- (a) The objective of each team is to win by scoring more runs than the opponent.
- (b) The winner of the game shall be that team which shall have scored, in accordance with these rules, the greater number of runs at the conclusion of a regulation game.

- (c) The winning Manager is responsible for reporting the score to the league.

4.02 Length of Games: The length of a regulation game is the first to occur of a specified time limit and a specified number of innings. For example, games in the Rookie League are limited to 1 hour, 15 minutes or six (6) innings, whichever occurs first.

- (a) Game lengths in the various leagues are as follows:

	Game Length—First to Occur of:	
	Time Limit	# of Innings
Rookie	1 hr, 15 min	6
Midget	1 hr, 30 min	6
Pee Wee	1 hr, 40 min	6
Bronco	1 hr, 40 min	6
Pony	1 hr, 50 min	7

- (b) A new inning may not start after the expiration of the time limit, but an inning in progress will be concluded.
- (c) For purposes of this rule, an inning starts when the third out is made in the previous inning or the run limit is reached in that inning.
- (d) The official time shall be stopped at or during the last five (5) minutes of the game whenever the Umpire grants a time out called by a Manager or coach. This is to prevent the “stalling” of a game when time is about to expire.
- (e) In the playoffs, the time limits of Rule 4.02 (a) and (b) apply to all playoff games except for the championship games. Championship games in the playoffs will be untimed. The run limit rules of Rule 4.03 still apply in the championship game so that a game could mathematically end before the last scheduled inning.

4.03 Run Limits: In all games in all leagues, a team is limited to five (5) runs per inning.

- (a) If, as a result of the run limit, a team is mathematically incapable of tying or beating the other team, the game will be “called” and the result is final. Teams may continue to play for practice if time permits.

4.04 Player Participation: It is the view and desire of SBMSA that all players participate as much as possible in the games. Teams shall bat the entire roster. There is no designated hitter in any league.

- (a) In the Rookie and Midget Leagues, a player must play at least every other inning in the field and may not sit in back-to-back innings, unless injury or illness prevents him from doing so.
- (b) In the Pee Wee, Bronco and Pony Leagues, a player must play a minimum of two full innings in the field, unless he leaves the game due to injury or illness or unless the game is “called” due to weather or field conditions or

forfeit. *NOTE: The fact that a game ended sooner than expected because of time limit or run differential is not an excuse for failure to play a player.*

- (c) As more fully described in Rule 6.02(d), these player participation rules are softened somewhat in certain cases involving an injured player.

4.05 **Player Discipline:** If a Manager wants to discipline a player by sitting him the entire game, he may do so only with the prior consent of the Area Commissioner. This must be communicated to the opposing team before the start of the game. *NOTE: In such a case the Manager should be prepared to justify the reason for the discipline, that the discipline rules were communicated to his team prior to the start of games, and that the discipline rules are applied to all team members.*

- (a) Managers should avoid disciplining a player during the game for such player's action during the game, instead saving the discipline for a later time or later game. However, if the Manager insists on disciplining a player during the game by not allowing him to play any more innings in the field, this must be communicated to the opposing team with adequate justification. If the Manager further insists on disciplining such player by not allowing him to bat any more during the game, the team shall be charged an out each time such player comes up in the batting order.

4.06 **Starting a Game:** Every reasonable effort shall be made to start games at the scheduled starting time, including taking shortened infield practice if necessary. The Umpire should aim to be calling "Play" at the time set for the beginning of the game.

- (a) After the players of the home team have taken their defensive positions, and the first batter of the visiting team has taken his position in the batter's box, the Umpire shall call "Play" and the game shall start.
- (b) After the Umpire calls "Play", the pitcher shall deliver the pitch to the batter who may elect to strike the ball, or who may not offer at it, as he chooses.
- (c) After the Umpire calls "Play" the ball is alive and in play and remains alive and in play until for legal cause, or at the Umpire's call of "Time" suspending play, the ball becomes dead.
- (d) After the ball is dead, play shall be resumed when the pitcher takes his place on the pitcher's plate with a new ball or the same ball in his possession and the plate Umpire calls "Play." The plate Umpire shall call "Play" as soon as the pitcher takes his place on his plate with the ball in his possession.

4.07 **Pace of Play:** Every effort shall be made to keep games moving to ensure the maximum number of innings is played. Attempts to delay or slow the game that are found to have been motivated by a desire to take advantage of the expiration of time limits are unsportsmanlike and will subject the Manager and/or team to penalty by the Umpires and/or disciplinary action. Teams should hustle on and off the field. With no coach present, no more than three players may "huddle" on the field at

once. (See also Rule 8.06 on “Warm-up Pitches” and Rule 8.07 on “Prompt Pitching”.)

- (a) Notwithstanding these “pace of play” rules, a coach is entitled to legitimate time-outs, including ones where he gathers some, or all, of his defensive players together on the field for a quick talk.

4.08 **Courtesy Runner:** With two outs, a courtesy runner must be used for the catcher of record the previous time on defense, except in the Rookie and Midget Leagues where these rules do not apply. The player who made the last out must be used as the courtesy runner. There is no courtesy runner for the catcher with less than two outs and, even with two outs, there is no courtesy runner for the catcher if his team will not be playing defense after his team finishes its half-inning on offense. In order to speed up play, the catcher for the next inning should have shin guards on unless he is on deck with no outs, is on deck with one out and nobody on base, or is on base.

- (a) No courtesy runner is to be used for the pitcher at any time.

4.09 **Scoring Runs:** The offensive team’s objective is to have its batter become a runner, its runners advance around the bases, and its runners score.

- (a) The defensive team’s objective is to prevent offensive players from becoming runners, to prevent their advance around the bases, and to prevent their scoring.
- (b) When three offensive players are legally put out, that team takes the field and the opposing team becomes the offensive team.
- (c) When a batter becomes a runner and touches all bases legally he shall score one run for his team. A run legally scored cannot be nullified by subsequent action of the runner, such as (but not limited to) an effort to return to third base in the belief that he had left the base before a caught fly ball.
- (d) One run shall be scored each time a runner legally advances to and touches first, second, third and home base before three men are put out to end the inning. The exception to this is that a run is *not* scored if the runner advances to home base during a play in which the third out is made:
 - (i) By the batter runner before he touches first base;
 - (ii) By any runner being forced out (see definition of FORCE PLAY in Rule 7.13); or
 - (iii) By a preceding runner who is declared out because he failed to touch one of the bases.

4.10 **Scoring Runs In Same Play Third Out Is Made:** Rule 4.09(d) described three general situations where a run does *not* score during a play in which the third out is made. The following provides several examples of this for clarification:

- (a) No run shall score during a play in which the third out is made by the batter runner before he touches first base. *EXAMPLE: One out, Jones on second, Smith on first. The batter, Brown, hits safely. Jones scores and Smith is out*

on the throw to the plate. Two outs. But Brown missed first base. The ball is thrown to first, an appeal is made, and Brown is out. Three outs. Since Jones crossed the plate during a play in which the third out was made by the batter runner before he touched first base, Jones' run does not count.

- (b) No run shall score during a play in which the third out is made by the batter runner before he touches first base. *EXAMPLE: Two out, bases full, batter hits home run over fence. Batter, on appeal, is declared out for missing first base. Three outs. No run counts.* Here is a general statement that covers missed bases: When a runner misses a base and a fielder holds the ball on a missed base, or on the base originally occupied by the runner if a fly ball is caught, and appeals for the Umpire's decision, the runner is out when the Umpire sustains the appeal. All runners may score if possible, except that with two outs the runner is out at the moment he misses the bag, if an appeal is sustained as applied to the following runners.
- (c) No run shall score during a play in which the third out is made on a force play. *EXAMPLE: Two outs, Jones on third, Smith on first, and Brown hits sharp grounder through infield to center fielder. The center fielder gathers up the ball and quickly throws it to the shortstop who is covering second base. The throw beats Smith to second base for the third out. Meanwhile, Jones crossed the plate before the outfield throw was caught at second base because he ran home immediately on contact. Jones' run does not count because the third out was a force out.*
- (d) A run shall score if a runner touches home base before the third out is made provided the third out was not a force out. *EXAMPLE: One out, Jones on third, Smith on first, and Brown flies out to right field. Two outs. Jones tags up and scores after the catch. Smith attempted to return to first but the right fielder's throw beat him to the base. Three outs. But Jones scored before the throw to catch Smith reached first base. So Jones' run counts because that third out was not a force play.*
- (e) Following runners are not affected by an act of a preceding runner unless two are out. *EXAMPLE: One out, Jones on second, Smith on first, and batter, Brown, hits home run inside the park. Jones fails to touch third on his way to the plate. Smith and Brown score. The defense holds the ball on third, appeals to Umpire, and Jones is out, for the second out of the inning. Smith's and Brown's runs count.*
- (f) Following runners are affected by an act of a preceding runner if two are out. *EXAMPLE: Two out, Jones on second, Smith on first and batter, Brown, hits home run inside the park. All three runs cross the plate. But Jones missed third base, and on appeal is declared out. Three outs. Smith's and Brown's runs are voided. No score on the play.*
- (g) Following runners are affected by an act of a preceding runner if two are out. *EXAMPLE: One out, Jones on third, Smith on second. Batter Brown flies out to center. Two out. Jones scores after catch and Smith scores on bad throw to plate. But Jones, on appeal, is adjudged to have left third before the catch and is out. Three outs. No runs.*

- 4.11 **Ending a Game and Final Score:** A regulation game consists of six (6) innings in Rookie, Midget, Pee Wee and Bronco Leagues and seven (7) innings in Pony League, unless shortened because the home team needs none (or only some) of its half of the last inning, the Umpire calls the game (due to mathematical elimination, for example), or the time limit for the game has been reached.
- (a) If the time limit for the game has been reached, the teams shall finish the current inning, but shall not start a new inning. For purposes of this rule, an inning starts when the third out of the previous inning is made or when the maximum number of runs is scored in the prior inning.
 - (b) The score of a regulation game is the total number of runs scored by each team at the moment the game ends. The game ends when the visiting team completes its half of the final inning if the home team is ahead. But if the visiting team is ahead, the game ends when the final inning is completed. If the home team scores the winning run in its half of the last inning, the game ends immediately when the winning run is scored.
 - (i) **APPROVED RULING:** The batter hits a home run out of the playing field to win the game in the last half of the final inning, but is called out for passing a preceding runner. The game ends immediately when the winning run is scored.
 - (c) When the winning run is scored in the last half inning of a regulation game, or in the last half of an extra inning, as the result of a base on balls, hit batter or any other play with the bases full which forces the runner on third to advance, the Umpire shall not declare the game ended until the runner forced to advance from third has touched home base and the batter runner has touched first base. *PENALTY: If the runner on third refuses to advance to and touch home base in a reasonable time, the Umpire shall disallow the run, call out the offending player and order the game resumed. If, with two out, the batter runner refuses to advance to and touch first base, the Umpire shall disallow the run, call out the offending player, and order the game resumed. If, before two are out, the batter runner refuses to advance to and touch first base, the run shall count, but the offending player shall be called out.*
 - (d) The final score of a game that ends because of mathematical elimination (see Rule 4.03(a) on Run Limits) is the score at the moment the game is called by the Umpire. The Umpire calls such a game at the moment the “mathematically-winning” run is scored. For example, the visiting team in a Midget League game is winning 15-0 after the third inning. In the fourth inning, the visiting team loads the bases and the next batter hits a home run. Since the 16th run is the “mathematically-winning” run, the game ends when the 16th run crosses home plate, and the final score is 16-0, not 19-0.
 - (e) If each team has the same number of runs when a regulation game ends, the Umpire shall declare it a “Tie Game.”
 - (f) In playoff games only, if the score is tied after all regular innings are completed, or at the expiration of the time limit, play shall continue until:

- (i) The visiting team has scored more total runs than the home team at the end of a completed inning; or
- (ii) The home team scores the winning run in an uncompleted inning.

4.12 **Ending or Suspending a Game Due to Bad Weather:** If a game is called on account of bad weather or the condition of the playing field, it is a regulation game if three (3) or more full innings have been completed in the Rookie and Midget Leagues, or four (4) or more full innings have been completed in the Pee Wee, Bronco and Pony Leagues. This rule applies to regular-season games only. In the playoffs, games are played to completion, as per Rule 4.02. In other words, in the event of bad weather, playoff games are always suspended and resumed at a later time.

- (a) If a regular-season game is called on account of weather or the condition of the playing field, it is a regulation game if the home team is ahead and at least two and one-half innings have been completed in the Rookie and Midget Leagues, or three and one-half innings have been completed in the Pee Wee, Bronco and Pony Leagues. A regular-season game in the Rookie and Midget Leagues is also a regulation game when called in the third inning if at least two and one-half innings have been completed and the visiting team has mathematically won a three-inning game. Likewise, a regular-season game in the Pee Wee, Bronco and Pony Leagues is also a regulation game when called in the fourth inning if at least three and one-half innings have been completed and the visiting team has mathematically won a four-inning game.
- (b) If a regular-season game is called on account of weather or the condition of the playing field after it has become a regulation game, the official scoring works as follows. If the game is called at the end of a completed inning, the score at the end of such last completed inning is the final score. If the game is called prior to the completion of an inning and the home team is ahead, the official score shall be the score at the time the game is called. If the game is called prior to the completion of an inning and the visiting team is ahead, the final score reverts to the score at the end of the last completed inning.
- (c) If a regular-season game is called on account of weather or the condition of the playing field before it has become a regulation game, the Umpire shall declare it suspended and it shall be resumed exactly where the game was suspended. For example, if a game is suspended in the bottom of the second inning with two runners on base, one out, and 1-2 count on the batter, the game will pick up exactly at that point when it is resumed.
- (d) If a playoff game is called on account of weather or the condition of the playing field, the Umpire shall declare it suspended and it shall be resumed exactly where the game was suspended. For example, if a game is suspended in the bottom of the fifth inning with two runners on base, one out, and 1-2 count on the batter, the game will pick up exactly at that point when it is resumed.

- (e) When a regular-season or playoff game is resumed, there is no automatic out for a player who was in the original lineup but who is absent for the resumed game. In such event, his spot in the original batting order is skipped with no penalty. If such absent player was a baserunner at the time the game was called, he is replaced as a baserunner with the player who made the last out. If such absent player was in the middle of an at-bat at the time the game was called, he is replaced as the batter with the next batter in the batting order, where such next batter assumes the count of the absent player. Rule 6.02 still applies in a resumed game so that if a team only has eight players in the resumed game, an out is recorded in the absent ninth player's spot at the bottom of the original batting order.
- (f) When a regular-season or playoff game is resumed, a player who was absent from the original lineup may play in the resumed game. Such player is added to the bottom of the original batting order.

4.13 **Dead Ball:** While the ball is dead no player may be put out, no bases may be run and no runs may be scored, except that runners may advance one or more bases as the result of acts which occurred while the ball was alive (such as, but not limited to a balk, interference, or a home run or other fair ball hit out of the playing field). Should a ball come partially apart in a game, it is in play until the play is completed.

The ball becomes dead and runners advance one base, or return to their bases, without liability to be put out, when:

- (a) A foul ball is not caught; runners return. Note that the Umpire shall not put the ball in play until all runners have retouched their bases.
- (b) A pitched ball touches a batter, or his clothing, while in his legal batting position; runners, if forced, advance.
- (c) The plate Umpire interferes with the catcher's throw; runners may not advance. Note that the interference shall be disregarded if the catcher's throw retires the runner.
- (d) A ball is illegally batted; runners return.
- (e) A balk is committed (in Pony and Bronco Leagues and Pee Wee AL division and NL division in certain circumstances, see section 7.15); runners advance.
- (f) Any legal pitch touches a runner trying to score; runners advance.
- (g) A fair ball touches a runner or an Umpire on fair territory before it touches or passes an infielder including the pitcher, or touches an Umpire before it has passed an infielder other than the pitcher. If a fair ball touches an Umpire working in the infield after it has bounded past, or over, the pitcher, it is a dead ball.
- (h) A pitched ball lodges in the Umpire's or catcher's mask or paraphernalia, and remains out of play, runners advance one base. If a foul tip hits the Umpire and is caught by a fielder on the rebound, the ball is dead, and the batsman cannot be called out. The same shall apply where such foul tip lodges in the Umpire's mask or other paraphernalia.

- (i) The Umpire calls “Time”.
- 4.14 **“Time” Called by Umpire:** when an Umpire calls “Time,” the ball becomes dead. The Umpire-In-Chief shall call “Time”:
- (a) When in his judgment weather, darkness or similar conditions make immediate further play impossible or dangerous.
 - (b) When light failure makes it difficult or impossible for the Umpires to follow the play.
 - (c) When an accident incapacitates a player or an Umpire. Note that if an accident to a runner prevents him from proceeding to a base to which he is entitled, as on a home run hit out of the playing field, or an award of one or more bases, a substitute runner shall be permitted to complete the play.
 - (d) When the Umpire wishes to examine the ball, to consult with either Manager, or for any similar cause.
 - (e) When an Umpire orders a player or any other person removed from the playing field.
 - (f) When a Manager requests “Time” for a substitution, or for a conference with one of his players.
 - (g) When a fielder, after catching a fly ball, falls into a bench or stand, or falls across ropes into a crowd when spectators are on the field. As pertains to runners, the provisions of Rule 7.15(c) shall prevail.
 - (h) Except in the cases stated in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this rule, no Umpire shall call “Time” while a play is in progress.
- 4.15 **Doubleheaders:** Doubleheaders shall not be scheduled, but a team may be allowed to play a doubleheader if (i) the Program Director, following consultation with members of the Board, determines that a doubleheader is the only way in which a game may be completed before the end of the regular season or the playoffs, and (ii) the Managers agree.
- 4.16 **Final Standings, Playoffs and Playoff Seedings:** Final standings for the regular season for each division in each league will be determined first by win percentage and then, in the event of a tie between two or more teams, by a set of tie-breaker rules, determined by the Program Director and the Board. All teams will make the playoffs or play a play-in game to formally make the playoffs.

5.00 SPECIAL RULES FOR THE ROOKIE AND MIDGET LEAGUES

5.01 Designated Pitcher: A designated pitcher, often called the “coach pitcher”, shall be used by the offensive team (the team at bat). The designated pitcher will be chosen by the offensive team Manager, and must be a coach or parent from the offensive team. He will be in addition to the regulation ten (10) defensive players.

- (a) In the Midget League, the designated pitcher must begin his pitching motion from the pitcher’s rubber and at the time the ball is released from his hand, one foot must still be engaged with the rubber. That said, it is acceptable for the pitcher’s foot to disengage from the rubber in the instant before the ball is released from his hand. The designated pitcher in Midgets can deliver the ball either overhand or underhand and must do so standing up, not from his knees. In the Rookie League, the designated pitcher must begin his pitching motion with at least one foot within the dirt circle. The designated pitcher in Rookies can deliver the ball either overhand, underhand or from his knees. A designated pitcher who improperly delivers a pitch is afforded one Umpire warning. After an Umpire warning, any improperly delivered pitch is counted as a strike.
- (b) If a ball batted in fair territory hits the designated pitcher, it shall be ruled a foul ball; there may be no advance by any runner.
- (c) The designated pitcher shall not interfere with the defensive player/pitcher while the defensive player/pitcher is attempting to field his position. It is strongly recommended that once the ball is placed in play by the batter, the designated pitcher should exit the playing field as soon as possible. If the designated pitcher interferes with a defensive player who has a reasonable chance of making a play for an out, the batter will be out if, in the Umpire’s judgment, the interference was either intentional and/or happened because the designated pitcher did not leave the field as soon as possible. But if the interference is judged to be unintentionally committed by a designated pitcher who is hustling off the field, the play shall be re-done. In that event, the batter will go back to bat with the same count he had immediately before the pitch / hit in question.
- (d) A team may use more than one coach pitcher during a game. However, the coach pitcher that starts an inning must pitch the entire inning. The coach pitcher can only be replaced during an inning due to injury.

5.02 Defensive Player/Pitcher: The defensive team shall place its defensive player/pitcher within the pitching circle and even or behind the pitcher’s plate (rubber). This defensive player/pitcher will remain in the circle until the ball has been delivered by the designated pitcher. The defensive player/pitcher shall not interfere with the designated pitcher during delivery of the baseball to the batter.

- (a) Defensive players/pitchers in the Midget League are required to wear head protection, which can be a helmet with face mask or a face mask by itself.

- (b) Defensive players/pitchers in the Rookie League may, but are not required to, wear head protection.

5.03 **Defensive Positioning:** In the Rookie and Midget Leagues, ten (10) players play in the field, with four (4) in the outfield (two on each side of second base when viewed from home plate). In the Rookie and Midget Leagues, there is a limit to how far back the infielders can play and how far in the outfielders can play. There is a single 15-foot line—that is, a 15-foot line marked parallel from the baselines—that separates the infielders from the outfielders. When playing back, the infielders may not cross over that 15-foot line. When playing in, the outfielders may not cross over that 15-foot line. Please note that this 15-foot line rule applies only to the initial positioning of defensive players: once the batter hits the ball, outfielders and infielders are free to cross the 15-foot line as they react to, and try to make a play on, the batted ball.

- (a) **APPROVED RULING:** If a Rookie or Midget team wanted to, it could play one, two, three or all four outfielders at shallow depth, but no further in than the 15-foot line. The Rookie or Midget team is free to place its outfielders as shallow or as deep as it wants, so long as all four outfielders are behind the 15-foot line.
- (b) **APPROVED RULING:** An infielder can make a fly ball catch beyond the 15-foot line so long as he was initially positioned within the 15-foot line. Likewise, an outfielder can make a fly ball catch inside the 15-foot line so long as he was initially positioned beyond the 15-foot line. An infielder can go beyond the 15-foot line to cut off a throw from an outfielder or to retrieve a ball so long as he was initially positioned within the 15-foot line.
- (c) As per Rule 3.09, a Midget or Rookie team could legally play with 8, 9 or 10 defensive players. No matter how many defensive players a team fields, one player must be a pitcher, and one player must be a catcher.

5.04 **Stopping Play:** There are two ways for the defensive team to stop play in the Rookie and Midget Leagues. The first way is for the defensive player/pitcher to “dead the ball”. The second way is for an infielder in possession of the ball to “freeze the lead runner”.

- (a) The defensive player/pitcher will “dead the ball” (stop play) when he has control of the baseball and is located within the pitching circle. There is no requirement that the pitcher throw his hands up in the circle to stop play; being in the circle while in control of the baseball is sufficient to stop play. The defensive player/pitcher is the only member of the defensive team who can “dead the ball” and stop play inside the circle. The role of the defensive player/pitcher is not limited to “deading the ball”. For example, the defensive player/pitcher may attempt to put out any base runner and, accordingly, the ball will remain in play. But if the defensive player/pitcher steps inside the circle to “dead the ball” he cannot also attempt a put out of

any base runner by electing to come back outside the circle after play has been stopped.

- (b) **RULE CLARIFICATION:** If the pitcher fields the batted ball inside the circle and immediately throws the ball outside the circle in an attempted play, the ball is live. If the pitcher fields a thrown ball inside the circle, the ball is dead and he cannot make it live by throwing it out of the circle. If the pitcher fields the batted ball immediately outside the circle and steps into the circle while making a throw, the ball is live. If the pitcher fields the batted ball or a thrown ball immediately outside the circle and steps into the circle while making a throw, the ball is live. However, in either instance, if the pitcher steps into the circle while not in the act of throwing the ball or of chasing down a player for an out (as per 5.04(c) below), the ball is dead.
- (c) **RULE CLARIFICATION:** If the defensive player/pitcher in possession of the baseball runs through the pitching circle in a clear attempt to make an out, the ball will remain in play. This is in recognition of the fact that in the Rookie League (and occasionally in the Midget League) outs are sometimes made by defensive players chasing down runners.
- (d) An alternative way to stop play is that an infielder in possession of the ball may “freeze the lead runner” at a base by approaching the runner and presenting the ball. The infielder must be in front of the runner and chase him to the other side of the hash mark. At this time the ball shall be declared dead in a loud voice by the Umpire.
- (e) **RULE CLARIFICATION:** In the case of a disputed double play in the Midget or Rookie League, wherein play is killed before the second out is ostensibly made on a baserunner who left his base early in a play where a fly ball or line drive is legally caught for the first out, that second potential out does not count as an out because play was killed after the first out. Because the fielder making the first out effectively chose to kill the play (e.g., by throwing the ball to the pitcher in the pitching circle) rather than attempting to make a second available out (e.g., by immediately tagging the errant runner or by throwing to the base he left early), the defensive team foregoes the opportunity to make a second out in the play even though a runner obviously left early. The errant runner must go back to the base he left early.

5.05 Awarding Next Base on Stopped Play: If a base runner (or base runners) is more than half way to the next base when play was stopped—because the defensive player/pitcher “deaded the ball” or an infielder “froze the lead runner”—such base runner will be awarded the next base. If a base runner is less than half way to the next base, he shall return to his last base.

- (a) **RULE CLARIFICATION:** Once a lead runner at third base is frozen, a trailing runner between first and second base would be awarded second base only if such trailing runner were more than half way to second base at the time the Umpire killed the play. Said differently, after play has been stopped by virtue of the lead runner being frozen at third base, the trailing runner who

is less than half way to second base does not get an opportunity to try to advance to second base.

- 5.06 **Six Pitches With Unlimited Foul Balls:** In the Midget League, a batter is out if after six pitches he has not hit the ball into fair territory or struck out (three strikes) before six pitches. However, if a batter fouls off or foul tips the sixth pitch, that player will remain at bat as long as he continues to foul off or foul tip pitches, until that player either puts the ball in play or strikes out.
- (a) In the Rookie League, a batter is out if after six pitches he has not hit the ball into fair territory. The batter is *not* out if he gets three strikes before six pitches. The batter can swing at all six pitches, but is out if he strikes (or does not swing) on the sixth pitch. However, if a batter fouls off or foul tips the sixth pitch, that player will remain at bat as long as he continues to foul off or foul tip pitches, until that player either puts the ball in play or strikes out.
 - (b) “Foul tip” is defined (see Definition 6.08(f)) as a batted ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher’s hands and is legally caught. Whereas a foul tip for strike three would count as an out in the Pee Wee and Bronco leagues, it does not count as an out in the Midget league.
- 5.07 **No Lead-Offs, Steals or Walks:** There are no lead-offs, steals or walks in the Rookie or Midget Leagues. Since there are no lead-offs, a Midget or Rookie runner may not leave the base until the ball is struck. *PENALTY: A runner who leaves the base before the ball is struck will be called out, but as to other runners play (including force plays) shall continue as if runner had not been called out for leading off.* The Umpire is required to issue a warning (one warning per team, not one warning for both teams) before calling any runner out.
- 5.08 **No Bunts:** There are no bunts in the Rookie or Midget Leagues. If the batter bunts or attempts to bunt, such bunt or bunt attempt will count as a strike. The Midget batter would be out if such bunt or bunt attempt is his third strike, and the Rookie batter would be out if such bunt or bunt attempt occurs on the sixth pitch.
- 5.09 **Time-Outs and Switching Defenses:** Each Rookie and Midget team is limited to one defensive time-out per inning. Switching defensive positions is limited to time-out periods only.
- 5.10 **Outfielder Restrictions:** Rookie and Midget outfielders cannot make a tag out or force out in the infield; outfielders have to throw the ball into the infield for such an out. Outfielders may not freeze the runner either. *EXAMPLE: Left center fielder cannot run to second base and tag the runner for an out; he has to throw the ball to an infielder to attempt to make an out.* In any confusion or dispute arising from the application of this rule—e.g., runner “abandons” the base path thinking an outfielder put him out in the infield—umpires will err on the side of declaring the runner not out.

- (a) APPROVED RULING: No outs, runner on second base. Batter hits pop-up to shallow outfielder who catches ball for first out. Runner at second base who left early tries to go back to second base to tag up but is beaten to base by shallow outfielder who runs into infield to touch second base. Umpire (mistakenly) calls runner out for apparent double play. After this apparent second out is made, outfielder hands ball to heads-up shortstop who tags runner as he leaves second base heading to dugout because he was (mistakenly) called out. *RULING: Runner is not out. Outfielder cannot make an out in the infield. Also, the runner is not out when tagged by the shortstop because a mistake by an umpire may not "imperil" a runner. It was the umpire's mistaken out call that led to the runner leaving second base and being tagged by the shortstop, and umpire mistakes are not allowed to "imperil" a player or players in subsequent action that is tied to the umpire mistake.*
- (b) APPROVED RULING: One out, runner on second base. Batter hits pop-up to shallow outfielder who catches ball for second out. Runner at second base who left early tries to go back to second base to tag up but is beaten to base by shallow outfielder who runs into infield to touch second base. Umpire, knowing that outfielders are not allowed to make an out in the infield, (correctly) does not call the runner out at second base. Despite that, the defense runs off the field thinking three outs have been made and then the runner at second base also runs to his dugout thinking he must have been the third out. After all the players have left the field, the heads-up coach of the offense protests to the umpire that that third out did not count because it was made in the infield by an outfielder. After reflection, defensive coach concedes this point but says it does not matter because a third out was made when the runner "abandoned" second base when he retired to his dugout. *RULING: Runner is not out. Outfielder cannot make an out in the infield. Also, the runner is not out for "abandonment" amid the confusion of all the players leaving the field because, as per the rule, in any confusion or dispute arising from the application of this rule, umpires will err on the side of declaring the runner not out.*

5.11 **One-Base Limit on Infield Hits in the Rookie League:** In the Rookie League there is a 15-foot line that separates infielders from outfielders. On balls hit into the infield (on or in front of the 15-foot line), baserunners and the batter-runner are limited to advancing one base from where they were at the time the ball was pitched. The purpose of this rule is to (i) prevent the Rookie game from turning into a track meet on routine infield hits just because offensive players are more capable than defensive players at this age, and (ii) encourage infielders to throw the ball to the correct base in an attempt to make an out without fear of making errant throws that lead to extra bases. On balls hit into the outfield (beyond the 15-foot line), there are no baserunning limits. Baserunners and the batter-runner are allowed to keep advancing until the defense is able to stop play by freezing the lead runner or by getting the ball to the pitcher in the pitching circle in accordance with Rule 5.04.

- (a) If a batted ball settles in the infield or is controlled by a player when the ball is on or in front of the 15-foot line, the ball is considered an infield hit for the purpose of this rule, and so all baserunners and the batter-runner are limited to one base. After a baserunner reaches the one base to which he is limited under this rule he is still liable to be put out for any baserunning error that he commits up to the point that the umpire declares the play dead. *EXAMPLE 1:* Runner on first base, batter hits ball to shortstop who bobbles the ball and then runs over to second base. The runner from first base reaches second safely but then over-slides the base and is tagged out by the shortstop. *RULING 1:* Runner is out. *EXAMPLE 2:* Runner on first base, batter hits ball to shortstop who holds the ball rather than making a throw to second or first base. The runner from first base reaches second safely but then tries to take third. The shortstop tags the runner out between second and third. *RULING 2:* Runner is out. *EXAMPLE 3:* Runner on first base, batter hits ball to shortstop who holds the ball rather than making a throw to second or first base. The runner from first base reaches second safely and then is somehow able to take third as well. Shortstop trails runner to third and then tags runner as runner is standing safely on third base. *RULING 3:* Runner is not out, but runner must return to second base because that is his one-base limit on the infield hit. *NOTE:* Over-running or over-sliding first base is a special situation which is governed by Rule 7.05.
- (b) If a batted ball makes it beyond the 15-foot line before being controlled by a fielder, the ball is considered an outfield hit for the purpose of this rule, and so there are no baserunning restrictions. *EXAMPLE:* Bases empty, batter hits rocket grounder that hits shortstop in the leg before bounding into the outfield where an outfielder finally picks up the ball. Batter-runner advances safely to third base. *RULING:* Batter-runner is entitled to third base because his batted ball was not controlled by the infielder whose leg it hit; it was controlled for the first time by the outfielder. Therefore, the hit is considered an outfield hit and so the batter-runner is not subject to a one-base limit.
- (c) If a fly ball or line drive is legally caught on or in front of the 15-foot line in fair territory, or on or in front of the 15-foot line extended in foul territory, any baserunner who tags up is subject to a one-base limit. If a fly ball or line drive is legally caught beyond the 15-foot line in fair territory, or beyond the 15-foot line extended in foul territory, any baserunner who tags up is free to advance as many bases as he can until the defense is able to stop play in accordance with Rule 5.04.
- (d) On infield hits, the one-base limit supersedes Rule 7.09 on wild throws. For example, if the shortstop fields a batted ball and makes a wild throw to the first baseman that goes over the fence, the batter-runner is limited to taking first base. He is not awarded second base as per Rule 7.09 on wild throws. On outfield hits, Rule 7.09 on wild throws is fully applicable.
- (e) **RULE CLARIFICATION:** On an infield hit, if a runner takes an extra base or bases and in doing so reaches home plate, once the runner touches home plate, the play is dead as to that runner and so he is no longer liable to be

put out. Once the play is declared dead as to all runners, the runner who touched home plate will be returned to the one base to which he is limited.

EXAMPLE 1: Runner on second base, infield hit, play is made to first base, runner on second runs through third and then home and then into his dugout. First baseman goes into dugout and tags runner. *RULING*

1: Runner is not out since play was dead as to him as soon as he touched home plate. The runner is returned to third base because that is his one-base limit on the infield hit. *EXAMPLE 2:* Runner on second base, infield hit,

play is made to first base, runner on second runs through third and then home with first baseman in pursuit. After touching home, runner realizes he should have stopped at third base and when he tries to run back to third, he is tagged by the first baseman between home and third. *RULING*

2: Runner is not out since play was dead as to him as soon as he touched home plate. The runner is returned to third base because that is his one-base limit on the infield hit.

- 5.12 **Coach Positioning on the Field in the Rookie League:** As per Rule 3.07(a), a team in the Rookie League is allowed to have coaches on the field to coach its defensive players. During play, all such coaches shall remain behind the white chalk line separating the infield from the outfield. Each team is allowed one warning per game (*i.e.*, one warning per team, not one warning for both teams) for any coach violating this rule. A subsequent violation will result in all coaches of the offending team being removed from the defensive field of play for the remainder of the game.
- 5.13 **Bat-Throwing in the Rookie League:** In the Rookie League, as with all leagues, the batter is encouraged to not throw his bat while at the plate. However in the Rookie League, unlike the other leagues, there is no penalty assessed (*i.e.*, no automatic out) when a batter does throw his bat. Rookie players will be warned each time they throw their bat.
- 5.14 **Plays at the Plate in the Rookie League:** In the Rookie League, as with all leagues, runners are encouraged to slide or seek to avoid contact with the fielder whenever a tag play is evident at the plate. However in the Rookie League, unlike the other leagues, there is no penalty assessed (*i.e.*, the runner is not called out) when a runner does not slide at home on close plays at the plate. Rookie players will be warned each time they fail to slide at the plate when a tag play was evident.
- (a) Rule 7.04(b), governing malicious contact at the plate, applies in the Rookie League just as it does in the other leagues. If there is malicious contact, the Rookie runner will be called out and may be ejected from the game. Rule 7.04(c), prohibiting head-first sliding at the plate, also applies in the Rookie League just as it does in the other leagues.
- 5.15 **No Courtesy Runners:** In the Rookie and Midget Leagues, there are no courtesy runners for the catcher at any time.

- 5.16 **No Infield Fly Rule:** The Infield Fly rule does not apply in the Rookie or Midget Leagues.

6.00 **BATTING ORDER, BATTER OUTS AND BAT-THROWING**

- 6.01 **Official Batting Order:** The batting order delivered to the Official Scorer (see Rule 3.04) shall be the official batting order for the game. Thereafter, no substitutions, additions, or deletions shall be made by either Manager, except as provided in the rules. Obvious errors in the batting order, which are noticed by the Umpire-In-Chief before he calls "Play" for the start of the game or are noticed by the opposing Manager before the Umpire calls "Play", should be called to the attention of the Manager or captain of the team in error, so the correction can be made before the game starts. Teams should not be "trapped" later by some mistake that obviously was inadvertent and which can be corrected before the game starts.

- (a) The batting order shall be followed throughout the game unless substitution, addition, or deletion is permitted under these rules.

- 6.02 **Absent Ninth Player:** As per Rule 3.09, each team should be able to place nine (9) players on the field at all times during a game (10 players in the Rookie and Midget Leagues), but a team may start, and continue, a game with only eight (8) players. In the event a team starts a game with only eight (8) players, the non-existent ninth player will be placed in the ninth spot in the batting order. If a team starts the game with more than eight players but a player is ejected from the game or must permanently withdraw from the game due to injury, illness, etc., which results in his team dropping to eight players, the player's spot in the batting order which resulted in the team only having eight player remaining will be skipped over for the remainder of the game. In either event, the absent ninth player's spot in the batting order will result in an out being recorded each time it comes up in the regular course of the game. However, in the event that spot comes up with two outs in any inning other than the last inning of the game and there is a runner or runners on base, the spot in the order will be skipped for that inning and the next inning will begin with one out and the team therefore will only receive two outs in that particular inning.

- (a) If a team starts the game with more than nine (9) players but a player is ejected from the game or must permanently withdraw from the game due to injury, illness, etc., the player's spot in the batting order will be skipped over for the remainder of the game, but without penalty, so long as there are at least nine players.
- (b) In the event a team expects to have a player arriving late for the game, such late-arriving player will be able to play and bat without penalty provided the team starts the game with nine (9) or more players and provided the name of the late-arriving player is placed at the bottom of the original batting order. Until the late-arriving player arrives, his spot in the batting order will be skipped without penalty. Once the late-arriving player arrives, he will commence batting when his name comes up in the batting order.

- (c) A player is permitted to leave the game (due to injury, school event, etc.) and then return. The temporarily-absent player's spot in the batting order will be skipped over without penalty while he is absent, so long as there are at least nine players. Once the player returns to the game, he will commence batting when his name comes up in the batting order.
- (d) Continuing on in the spirit of "letting the kids play," if a player has a bona fide injury and/or a doctor's order that would limit the player to playing defense but not offense, or vice versa, such player is permitted to do so without penalty. So in the case of an injured player who can hit but not field, such player's inability to play in the field will not be a violation of Rule 4.04 regarding player participation. Or in the case of an injured player who can play in the field but not hit, such player's inability to hit will not result in an automatic out so long as there are at least nine other players in the batting order. The Manager of the team who plans to play an injured player in a game under this Rule 6.02(d) must inform the Manager of the opposing team of such injured player's special status before the game starts.

6.03 **Bat Entire Roster:** Teams shall bat the entire roster.

6.04 **Batting in Order:** Each player of the offensive team shall bat in the order that his name appears in his team's batting order.

- (a) The first batter in each inning after the first inning shall be the player whose name follows that of the last player who legally completed his time at bat in the preceding inning.
- (b) A batter has legally completed his time at bat when he is put out or becomes a runner.

6.05 **Batting Out of Turn:** A batter shall be called out, on appeal, when he fails to bat in his proper turn, and another batter completes a time at bat in his place. The proper batter may take his place in the batter's box at any time before the improper batter becomes a runner or is put out, and any balls and strikes shall be counted in the proper batter's time at bat.

- (a) When an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out, and the defensive team appeals to the Umpire before the first pitch to the next batter of either team, or before any play or attempted play, the Umpire shall:
 - (i) declare the proper batter out; and
 - (ii) nullify any advance or score made because of a ball batted by the improper batter or because of the improper batter's advance to first base on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batter or otherwise.
NOTE: If a runner advances, while the improper batter is at bat, on a stolen base, balk, wild pitch or passed ball, such advance is legal.
- (b) When the proper batter is called out because he has failed to bat in turn, the next batter shall be the batter whose name follows that of the proper batter thus called out.

- (c) When an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out, and a pitch is made to the next batter of either team before an appeal is made, the improper batter thereby becomes the proper batter, and the results of his time at bat become legal.
- (d) When an improper batter becomes a proper batter because no appeal is made before the next pitch, the next batter shall be the batter whose name follows that of such legalized improper batter. The instant an improper batter's actions are legalized, the batting order picks up with the name following that of the legalized improper batter. The Umpire shall not direct the attention of any person to the presence in the batter's box of an improper batter. *NOTE: This rule is designed to require constant vigilance by the players and Managers of both teams. There are two fundamentals to keep in mind: When a player bats out of turn, the proper batter is the player called out. If an improper batter bats and reaches base or is out and no appeal is made before a pitch to the next batter, or before any play or attempted play, that improper batter is considered to have batted in proper turn and establishes the order that is to follow.*
- (e) **APPROVED RULING:** To illustrate various situations arising from batting out of turn, assume a first inning batting order as follows: Abel Baker Charles Daniel Edward Frank George Hooker Irwin. *PLAY 1: Baker bats. With the count 2 balls and 1 strike, (a) the offensive team discovers the error or (b) the defensive team appeals. RULING 1: In either case, Abel replaces Baker, with the count on him 2 balls and 1 strike. PLAY 2: Baker bats and doubles. The defensive team appeals (a) immediately or (b) after a pitch to Charles. RULING 2: (a) Abel is called out and Baker is the proper batter; (b) Baker stays on second and Charles is the proper batter. PLAY 3: Abel walks. Baker walks. Charles forces Baker. Edward bats in Daniel's turn. While Edward is at bat, Abel scores and Charles goes to second on a wild pitch. Edward grounds out, sending Charles to third. The defensive team appeals (a) immediately or (b) after a pitch to Daniel. RULING 3: (a) Abel's run counts and Charles is entitled to second base since these advances were not made because of the improper batter batting a ball or advancing to first base. Charles must return to second base because his advance to third resulted from the improper batter batting a ball. Daniel is called out, and Edward is the proper batter; (b) Abel's run counts and Charles stays on third. The proper batter is Frank. PLAY 4: With the bases full and two out. Hooker bats in Frank's turn, and triples, scoring three runs. The defensive team appeals (a) immediately, or (b) after a pitch to George. RULING 4: (a) Frank is called out and no runs score. George is the proper batter to lead off the second inning; (b) Hooker stays on third and three runs score. Irwin is the proper batter. PLAY 5: After Play 4 (b) above, George continues at bat. (a) Hooker is picked off third base for the third out, or (b) George flies out, and no appeal is made. Who is the proper leadoff batter in the second inning? RULING 5: (a) Irwin. He became the proper batter as soon as the first pitch to George legalized Hooker's triple; (b) Hooker. When no appeal was made, the first pitch to the leadoff batter of the opposing team*

legalized George's time at bat. PLAY 6: Daniel walks and Abel comes to bat. Daniel was an improper batter, and if an appeal is made before the first pitch to Abel, Abel is out, Daniel is removed from base, and Baker is the proper batter. There is no appeal, and a pitch is made to Abel. Daniel's walk is now legalized, and Edward thereby becomes the proper batter. Edward can replace Abel at any time before Abel is put out or becomes a runner. He does not do so. Abel flies out, and Baker comes to bat. Abel was an improper batter, and if an appeal is made before the first pitch to Baker, Edward is out, and the proper batter is Frank. There is no appeal, and a pitch is made to Baker. Abel's out is now legalized, and the proper batter is Baker. Baker walks. Charles is the proper batter. Charles flies out. Now Daniel is the proper batter, but he is on second base. Who is the proper batter? RULING 6: The proper batter is Edward. When the proper batter is on base, he is passed over, and the following batter becomes the proper batter.

6.06 Batter's Legal Position in Batter's Box: The batter shall take his position in the batter's box promptly when it is his time at bat.

- (a) The batter's legal position shall be with both feet within the batter's box. The lines defining the box are within the batter's box.
- (b) The batter shall not leave his position in the batter's box after the pitcher comes to the Set Position, or starts his Windup. *PENALTY: If the pitcher pitches, the Umpire shall call "Ball" or "Strike," as the case may be.* The batter leaves the batter's box at the risk of having a strike delivered and called, unless he requests the Umpire to call "Time." The batter is not at liberty to step in and out of the batter's box at will. Once a batter has taken his position in the batter's box, he shall not be permitted to step out of the batter's box in order to use the resin or the pine tar rag, unless there is a delay in the game action or, in the judgment of the Umpires, weather conditions warrant an exception. Umpires will not call "Time" at the request of the batter or any member of his team once the pitcher has started his windup or has come to a set position even though the batter claims "dust in his eyes", "steamed glasses", "did not get the sign", or for any other cause. Umpires may grant a hitter's request for "Time" once he is in the batter's box, but the Umpire should eliminate hitters walking out of the batter's box without reason. If Umpires are not lenient, batters will understand that they are in the batter's box and they must remain there until the ball is pitched. If the pitcher delays once the batter is in his box and the Umpire feels that the delay is not justified, he may allow the batter to step out of the box momentarily. If, after the pitcher starts his windup or comes to a set position with a runner on, he does not go through with his pitch because the batter has stepped out of the box, it shall not be called a balk. Both the pitcher and batter have violated a rule, and the Umpire shall call time and both the batter and pitcher start over from "scratch."

- (c) If the batter refuses to take his position in the batter's box during his time at bat, the Umpire shall order the pitcher to pitch, and shall call "Strike" on each such pitch. The batter may take his proper position after any such pitch, and the regular ball and strike count shall continue, but if he does not take his proper position before three strikes are called, he shall be declared out. This rule applies in all situations (e.g., injury, crying, fear) where a batter is unable or unwilling to complete his at-bat. Thus a batter who refuses to complete his at-bat because he was just hit by a pitch thrown by his designated pitching coach would be declared out under this rule.

6.07 **Batter Makes an Out:** A batter is out when: (See definition of all capitalized terms herein in Rule 6.08.)

- (a) His FAIR BALL or FOUL FLY BALL, but not a FOUL TIP with less than two strikes, is legally caught (CATCH is defined below) by a fielder.
- (b) With two strikes, he FOUL TIPS a ball in the Pee Wee and Bronco Leagues. As more fully described in Definition 6.08(f), a FOUL TIP is a batted ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher's hands and is legally caught.
- (c) A third STRIKE is called by the Umpire in the Pee Wee NL division. In this league, the batter cannot advance to first base on a third strike that is not caught by the catcher.
- (d) A third strike is LEGALLY CAUGHT BY THE CATCHER in the Bronco and Pony Leagues and Pee Wee AL division. In the Bronco and Pony Leagues and Pee Wee AL division, if the third strike is not legally caught by the catcher for an out, the batter may attempt to advance to first base on the third strike.
- (e) A third strike is not caught by the catcher when first base is occupied before two are out.
- (f) After a third strike or after he hits a fair ball, he or first base is TAGGED before he touches first base.
- (g) He attempts to hit a third strike and the ball touches him.
- (h) He BUNTS foul on third strike.
- (i) An INFIELD FLY is declared, in the Pony League, Bronco League and Pee Wee AL division.
- (j) His fair ball touches him before touching a fielder.
- (k) After hitting or bunting a fair ball, his bat hits the ball a second time in fair territory. The ball is dead and no runners may advance. If the batter runner drops his bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory and, in the Umpire's judgment, there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball, the ball is alive and in play. If a bat breaks and part of it is in fair territory and is hit by a batted ball or part of it hits a runner or fielder, play shall continue and no interference called. If a batted ball hits part of a broken bat in foul territory, it is a foul ball. If a whole bat is thrown into fair territory and interferes with a defensive player attempting to make a play, interference shall be called, whether intentional or not. In cases where

the batting helmet is accidentally hit with a batted or thrown ball, the ball remains in play the same as if it has not hit the helmet. If a batted ball strikes a batting helmet or any other object foreign to the natural ground while on foul territory, it is a foul ball and the ball is dead. If, in the Umpire's judgment, there is intent on the part of a runner to interfere with a batted or thrown ball by dropping the helmet or throwing it at the ball, then the runner would be out, the ball dead, and runners would return to the last base legally touched.

- (l) After hitting or bunting a foul ball, he intentionally deflects the course of the ball in any manner while running to first base. The ball is dead and no runners may advance.
- (m) In running the last half of the distance from home base to first base, while the ball is being fielded to first base, he runs outside (to the right of) the three-foot line, or inside (to the left of) the foul line, and in the Umpire's judgment in so doing interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base; except that he may run outside (to the right of) the three foot line or inside (to the left of) the foul line to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.
- (n) In the Pony League, Bronco League and Pee Wee AL division, an infielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball or line drive, with first, first and second, first and third, or first, second, and third base occupied before two are out. The ball is dead and the runner or runners shall return to their original base or bases. *APPROVED RULING: In this situation, the batter is not out if the infielder permits the ball to drop untouched to the ground, except when the Infield Fly rule applies.*
- (o) A preceding runner shall, in the Umpire's judgment, intentionally interfere with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball or to throw a ball in an attempt to complete any play. The objective of this rule is to penalize the offensive team for deliberate, unwarranted, unsportsmanlike action by the runner in leaving the baseline for the obvious purpose of crashing the pivot man on a double play, rather than trying to reach the base. Obviously this is an Umpire's judgment call.

6.08 Certain definitions for Rule 6.07:

- (a) A **BUNT** is a batted ball not swung at, but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly within the infield.
- (b) A **CATCH** is the act of a fielder in getting secure possession in his hand or glove of a ball in flight and firmly holding it; providing he does not use his cap, protector, pocket or any other part of his uniform in getting possession. It is not a catch, however, if simultaneously or immediately following his contact with the ball, he collides with a player, or with a wall, or if he falls down, and as a result of such collision or falling, drops the ball. It is not a catch if a fielder touches a fly ball which then hits a member of the offensive team or an Umpire and then is caught by another defensive player. If the fielder has made the catch and drops the ball while in the act of making a

throw following the catch, the ball shall be adjudged to have been caught. In establishing the validity of the catch, the fielder shall hold the ball long enough to prove that he has complete control of the ball and that his release of the ball is voluntary and intentional. A catch is legal if the ball is finally held by any fielder, even though juggled, or held by another fielder before it touches the ground. Runners may leave their bases the instant the first fielder touches the ball. A fielder may reach over a fence, railing, rope or other line of demarcation to make a catch. He may jump on top of a railing, or canvas that may be in foul ground. No interference should be allowed when a fielder reaches over a fence, railing, rope or into a stand to catch a ball. He does so at his own risk. If a fielder, attempting a catch at the edge of the dugout, is "held up" and kept from an apparent fall by a player or players of either team and the catch is made, it shall be allowed.

- (c) A **FAIR BALL** is a batted ball that settles on fair ground between home and first base, or between home and third base, or that is on or over fair territory when bounding to the outfield past first or third base, or that touches first, second or third base, or that first falls on fair territory on or beyond first base or third base, or that, while on or over fair territory touches the person of an Umpire or player, or that, while over fair territory, passes out of the playing field in flight. A fair fly shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time he touches the ball. If a fly ball lands in the infield between home and first base, or home and third base, and then bounces to foul territory without touching a player or Umpire and before passing first or third base, it is a foul ball; or if the ball settles on foul territory or is touched by a player on foul territory, it is a foul ball. If a fly ball lands on or beyond first or third base and then bounces to foul territory, it is a fair hit. A batted ball that settles on home plate is a fair ball. **FAIR TERRITORY** is that part of the playing field within, and including the first base and third base lines, from home base to the bottom of the playing field fence and perpendicularly upwards. All foul lines are in fair territory.
- (d) A **FLY BALL** is a batted ball that goes high in the air in flight.
- (e) A **FOUL BALL** is a batted ball that settles on foul territory between home and first base, or between home and third base, or that bounds past first or third base on or over foul territory, or that first falls on foul territory beyond first or third base, or that, while on or over foul territory, touches the person of an Umpire or player, or any object foreign to the natural ground. A foul fly ball shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the infielder is on foul or fair territory at the time he touches the ball. A batted ball not touched by a fielder, which hits the pitcher's rubber and rebounds into foul territory, between home and first, or between home and third base is a foul ball. **FOUL TERRITORY** is that part of the playing field outside the first and third base lines extended to the fence and perpendicularly upwards.

- (f) A **FOUL TIP** is a batted ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher's hands and is legally caught. It is not a foul tip unless caught and any foul tip that is caught is a strike, and the ball is in play. It is not a catch if it is a rebound, unless the ball has first touched the catcher's glove or hand. Just like with a normal strike, a runner may steal on a foul tip (in the Pee Wee, Bronco and Pony Leagues). Runners need not "tag up" on a foul tip.
- (g) **INFIELD FLY** is a fair fly ball (not including a line drive nor an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, when first and second, or first, second and third bases are occupied, before two are out. The pitcher, catcher, and any outfielder who stations himself in the infield on the play shall be considered infielders for the purpose of this rule. When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an Infield Fly, the Umpire shall immediately declare "Infield Fly" for the benefit of the runners. If the ball is near the baselines, the Umpire shall declare "Infield Fly, if Fair." The ball is alive and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or retouch and advance after the ball is touched, the same as on any fly ball. If the hit becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul. If a declared Infield Fly is allowed to fall untouched to the ground, and bounces foul before passing first or third base, it is a foul ball. If a declared Infield Fly falls untouched to the ground outside the baseline, and bounces fair before passing first or third base, it is an Infield Fly. On the Infield Fly rule, the Umpire is to rule whether the ball could ordinarily have been handled by an infielder not by some arbitrary limitation such as the grass, or the base lines. The Umpire must rule also that a ball is an Infield Fly, even if handled by an outfielder, if, in the Umpire's judgment, the ball could have been as easily handled by an infielder. The Infield Fly is in no sense to be considered an appeal play. The Umpire's judgment must govern, and the decision should be made immediately. When an Infield Fly rule is called, runners may advance at their own risk. If on an Infield Fly rule, the infielder intentionally drops a fair ball, the ball remains in play despite the provisions of Rule 6.07(m). The Infield Fly rule takes precedence. The Infield Fly rule applies in the Pony League, Bronco League and Pee Wee AL division, but not in the Pee Wee NL division, Midget League or Rookie League.
- (h) **LEGALLY CAUGHT BY CATCHER** means in the catcher's glove before the ball touches the ground. It is not legal if the ball lodges in his clothing or paraphernalia; or if it touches the Umpire and is caught by the catcher on the rebound. If a foul tip first strikes the catcher's glove and then goes on through and is caught by both hands against his body or protector, before the ball touches the ground, it is a strike, and if third strike, batter is out. If smothered against his body or protector, it is a catch provided the ball struck the catcher's glove or hand first.

- (i) A **STRIKE** is a legal pitch when so called by the Umpire, which:
 - (i) Is struck at by the batter and is missed;
 - (ii) Is not struck at, if any part of the ball passes through any part of the strike zone;
 - (iii) Is fouled by the batter when he has less than two strikes;
 - (iv) Is bunted foul;
 - (v) Touches the batter as he strikes at it;
 - (vi) Touches the batter in flight in the strike zone; or
 - (vii) Becomes a foul tip.
- (j) The **STRIKE ZONE** is that area over home plate the upper limit of which is a horizontal line at the midpoint between the top of the shoulders and the top of the uniform pants, and the lower level is a line at the hollow beneath the knee cap. The Strike Zone shall be determined from the batter's stance as the batter is prepared to swing at a pitched ball.
- (k) A **TAG** is the action of a fielder in touching a base with his body while holding the ball securely and firmly in his hand or glove; or touching a runner with the ball, or with his hand or glove holding the ball, while holding the ball securely and firmly in his hand or glove.

6.09 **Bat-Throwing:** In all leagues except for the Rookie League, each team is allowed one warning per game (*i.e.*, one warning per team, not one warning for both teams) for throwing the bat while at the plate. Subsequent violations will result in the batter being called out. When a batter is called out for throwing the bat, any hit ball is "dead" and the runners must return to the base they occupied prior to the pitch.

- (a) In the Rookie League, in accordance with Rule 5.13, batters are not assessed an out for throwing the bat while at the plate. Play continues as normal on a hit ball, and the batter is warned about bat-throwing at the end of the play.

6.10 **Batter Out for Illegal Action:** A batter is out for illegal action when:

- (a) He hits a ball with one or both feet on the ground entirely outside the batter's box. If a batter hits a ball fair or foul while out of the batter's box, he shall be called out. Umpires should pay particular attention to the position of the batter's feet if he attempts to hit the ball while he is being intentionally passed. A batter cannot jump or step out of the batter's box and hit the ball.
- (b) He steps from one batter's box to the other while the pitcher is in position ready to pitch.
- (c) He interferes with the catcher's fielding or throwing by stepping out of the batter's box or making any other movement that hinders the catcher's play at home base. *EXCEPTION: Batter is not out if any runner attempting to advance is put out, or if runner trying to score is called out for batter's interference.* If the batter interferes with the catcher, the plate Umpire shall call "interference." The batter is out and the ball dead. No player may advance on such interference (offensive interference) and all runners must return to the last base that was, in the judgment of the Umpire, legally

touched at the time of the interference. If, however, the catcher makes a play and the runner attempting to advance is put out, it is to be assumed there was no actual interference and that the runner is out, not the batter. Any other runners on the base at the time may advance as the ruling is that there is no actual interference if a runner is retired. In that case play proceeds just as if no violation had been called. If a batter strikes at a ball and misses and swings so hard he carries the bat all the way around and, in the Umpire's judgment, unintentionally hits the catcher or the ball in back of him on the backswing before the catcher has securely held the ball, it shall be called a strike only (not interference). The ball will be dead, however, and no runner shall advance on the play.

- (d) He uses or attempts to use a bat that, in the Umpire's judgment, has been altered or tampered with in such a way to improve the distance factor or cause an unusual reaction on the baseball. A batter is also out if he uses or attempts to use an illegal, high-performance bat as per Rule 3.15.

6.11 Batter Entitled to First Base: The batter becomes a runner and is entitled to first base without liability to be put out (provided he advances to and touches first base) when:

- (a) Four (4) BALLS have been called by the Umpire. A batter who is entitled to first base because of a base on balls must go to first base and touch the base before other base runners are forced to advance. This applies when bases are full and applies when a substitute runner is put into the game. If, in advancing, the base runner thinks there is a play and he slides past the base before or after touching it he may be put out by the fielder tagging him. If he fails to touch the base to which he is entitled and attempts to advance beyond that base he may be put out by tagging him or the base he missed. In the Pony League, Bronco League and Pee Wee AL division, the team in the field may verbally inform the Umpire that it (the defense) intends to walk the batter. Upon such notification, the Umpire shall direct the batter to take first base without the necessity of any pitches. There are no intentional walks in Pee Wee NL, Midgets or Rookies.
- (b) He is touched by a pitched ball which he is not attempting to hit unless:
 - (j) The ball is in the strike zone when it touches the batter; or
 - (ii) The batter makes no attempt to avoid being touched by the ball. If the ball is in the strike zone when it touches the batter, it shall be called a strike, whether or not the batter tries to avoid the ball. If the ball is outside the strike zone when it touches the batter, it shall be called a ball if he makes no attempt to avoid being touched.
APPROVED RULING: When the batter is touched by a pitched ball which does not entitle him to first base, the ball is dead and no runner may advance.

- (c) The catcher or any fielder interferes with him. If a play follows the interference, the Manager of the offense may advise the plate Umpire that he elects to decline the interference penalty and accept the play. Such election shall be made immediately at the end of the play. However, if the batter reaches first base on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batsman, or otherwise, and all other runners advance at least one base, the play proceeds without reference to the interference. If catcher's interference is called with a play in progress the Umpire will allow the play to continue because the Manager may elect to take the play. If the batter runner missed first base, or a runner misses his next base, he shall be considered as having reached the base, as stated in Note of Rule 7.15(d). *EXAMPLES: The Manager might elect to take: 1. Runner on third, one out, batter hits fly ball to the outfield on which the runner scores but catcher's interference was called. The offensive Manager may elect to take the run and have batter called out or have runner remain at third and batter awarded first base. 2. Runner on second base. Catcher interferes with batter as he bunts ball fairly sending runner to third base. The Manager may rather have runner on third base with an out on the play than have runners on second and first. In situations where the Manager wants the "interference" penalty to apply, the following interpretation shall be made of 6.11(c): If the catcher (or any fielder) interferes with the batter, the batter is awarded first base. If, on such interference a runner is trying to score by a steal or squeeze from third base, the ball is dead and the runner on third scores and batter is awarded first base. If the catcher interferes with the batter with no runners trying to score from third on a squeeze or steal, then the ball is dead, batter is awarded first base and runners who are forced to advance, do advance. Runners not attempting to steal or not forced to advance remain on the base they occupied at the time of the interference. If the catcher interferes with the batter before the pitcher delivers the ball, it shall not be considered interference on the batter under this rule. In such cases, the Umpire shall call "Time" and the pitcher and batter start over from "scratch."*
- (d) A fair ball touches an Umpire or a runner on fair territory before touching or passing a fielder.

6.12 Certain definition for Rule 6.11:

- (a) A **BALL** is a pitch which does not enter the strike zone in flight and is not struck at by the batter. If the pitch touches the ground and bounces through the strike zone it is a "ball". If such a pitch touches the batter, he shall be awarded first base. If the batter swings at such a pitch after two strikes, the ball cannot be caught, for the purposes of Rule 6.07(d) and 6.13(h). If the batter hits such a pitch, the ensuing action shall be the same as if he hit the ball in flight.

6.13 Batter Becomes Runner: The batter becomes a runner when:

- (a) He hits a fair ball.
- (b) A fair ball, after having passed a fielder other than the pitcher, or after having been touched by a fielder, including the pitcher, shall touch an Umpire or runner on fair territory. (The batter becomes a runner and the ball is in play.)
- (c) A fair ball passes over the outfield fence between the foul lines. Such hit entitles the batter to a home run when he shall have touched all bases legally. **APPROVED RULING:** A fair ball must leave the playing field to be a home run. A ball that hits the top of the fence, or the coping on top of the fence, and then falls into the playing field is not a home run. The exception to this rule is a ball which hits a foul pole in the air: it is a home run even if it bounces into the playing field.
- (d) A fair ball, after touching the ground, bounds into the stands, or passes through, over or under a fence, or through or under a scoreboard, or through or under shrubbery, or vines on the fence, in which case the batter and the runners shall be entitled to advance two bases.
- (e) Any fair ball which, either before or after touching the ground, passes through or under a fence, or through or under a scoreboard, or through any opening in the fence or scoreboard, or through or under shrubbery, or vines on the fence, or which sticks in a fence or scoreboard, in which case the batter and the runners shall be entitled to two bases.
- (f) Any bounding fair ball is deflected by the fielder into the stands, or over or under a fence on fair or foul territory, in which case the batter and all runners shall be entitled to advance two bases.
- (g) Any fair fly ball is deflected by the fielder into the stands, or over the fence into foul territory, in which case the batter shall be entitled to advance to second base; but if deflected into the stands or over the fence in fair territory, the batter shall be entitled to a home run.
- (h) Only in the Pony League, Bronco League and Pee Wee AL division, the third strike called by the Umpire is not caught, provided:
 - (i) First base is unoccupied, or
 - (ii) First base is occupied with two out, when a batter becomes a base runner on a third strike not caught by the catcher and starts for the dugout, or his position, and then realizes his situation and attempts then to reach first base, he is not out unless he or first base is tagged before he reaches first base. If, however, he actually reaches the dugout or dugout steps, he may not then attempt to go to first base and shall be out.

7.00 BASERUNNING, BASERUNNING OUTS, AUTOMATIC ADVANCES, OBSTRUCTION AND INTERFERENCE

7.01 Lead-Offs and Steals: There are no lead-offs in the Rookie League and Midget League; in the Pony League, Bronco League and Pee Wee AL/NL divisions, runners may lead-off. For each of the leagues, specific rules and associated penalties for lead-offs, leaving the base early, and steals follow:

- (a) In the Rookie and Midget Leagues, there are no lead-offs and a runner may not leave the base until the ball is struck. *PENALTY: A runner who leaves the base before the ball is struck will be called out, but as to other runners play (including force plays) shall continue as if runner had not been called out for leading off.* The Umpire is required to issue a warning (one warning per team, not one warning for both teams) before calling any runner out. Runners in the Rookie and Midget Leagues may not steal a base and cannot advance on a wild pitch or passed ball. *APPROVED RULING: If a ball is pitched before a runner has sufficient time to reach the base to which he is advancing or returning, the runner shall not be held in violation.*
- (b) Batters in the Pee Wee NL division may not advance to first base on a dropped strike three.
- (c) In the Pony League, Bronco League and Pee Wee division, runners may lead-off, steal a base, and advance on a wild pitch or passed ball at will. However, straight stealing of home and suicide squeeze plays are prohibited. This is for the safety of the players. This rule does not preclude a runner from advancing to home on a passed ball, wild pitch, delayed steal or safety squeeze play. Batters in the Pony League, Bronco League and Pee Wee AL division may advance to first base on a dropped strike three, consistent with the other rules herein.
- (d) Delayed steals are allowed in the Pee Wee, Bronco and Pony Leagues. A delayed steal is a play in which a runner waits for the catcher to throw the ball back to the pitcher or to another infielder before taking off to the next base in an attempt to steal. Delayed steals are allowed for steals of second base, third base and home.

7.02 Three-Foot Rule: Any runner is out when he runs more than three (3) feet away from his base path to avoid being tagged unless his action is to avoid interference with a fielder fielding a batted ball. The base path is not the direct line between two bases; rather it is the unique base path established by the runner himself.

- (a) NOTE: A runner is not always out for running more than three feet outside of his base path. Because it is the runner's responsibility to avoid contact (see Rule 7.03 below), a runner would *not* be out for violating the three-foot rule if his action is to avoid contact with a fielder who does not have the ball. In fact, it is the runner's responsibility to run around such a fielder in order to avoid contact.

7.03 **Runner's Responsibility to Avoid Contact:** In all leagues, the runner bears the responsibility to avoid contact with a player attempting to tag him. The malicious contact rule will be enforced. Any violators of this rule will be called out, ejected from the game, and subject to suspension consistent with SBMSA policy. Inadvertent contact (sliding or attempting to avoid a tag) will not result in an out or ejection. All calls in regard to this rule are at the sole discretion of the umpiring crew and are final and may not be appealed.

- (a) NOTE: It is the runner's responsibility to avoid contact with the fielder. If the fielder does not have the ball, the runner should attempt to run around the fielder. This rule does not preclude the Umpire from ruling that obstruction has occurred. If the fielder has the ball, the runner should avoid contact by sliding into the base or running around the tag. However, the runner can and will be called out if he violates the three-foot rule (Rule 7.02).

7.04 **Plays at the Plate:** All leagues have the following rules governing plays at home base:

- (a) Whenever a tag play is evident at the plate, runners must slide or seek to avoid contact with the fielder by avoiding the tag or returning to third base. In all leagues other than the Rookie League, the penalty for violation is that the runner shall be called out. In the Rookie League, as more fully described in Rule 5.14, there are only warnings, not called-out penalties, for such violations. When a runner is called out for not sliding or not seeking to avoid contact, the ball is still in play.
 - (i) There is no requirement to slide at home plate *every time*. Rather, the requirement is to slide or avoid contact when a "tag play is evident" (i.e., when there is a close play at the plate). Whether "a tag play is evident" at home plate is a judgment call by the Umpires, and their judgment is final.
 - (ii) Depending on where the tag play is at home, the runner must "slide" or "seek to avoid contact". On tag plays right at home plate, the runner must slide or be called out. On tag plays at home where the runner is too far away to slide and reach home plate, he must seek to avoid contact with the fielder. For instance, in the situation where a catcher has caught the ball 10 feet in front of home plate and is waiting to tag the runner, the runner cannot realistically be expected to slide because he is too far from the plate. However, the runner must "seek to avoid contact" with the catcher. Thus the runner must try to run around the tag or run back to third base. In no event should the runner ever try to run over the fielder. Since Rule 7.02 still applies in tag plays near home, the runner can and will be called out if he runs more than three feet away from his base path in his effort to run around the tag.
 - (iii) On close force plays right at home plate, the runner must slide or be called out. On a force play at home, the defensive player can attempt

to either tag the runner or touch home plate for the out. Because player safety is of primary concern and because a tag play is evidently one of the possibilities to get the out in this situation, a runner who does not slide on a close force play at the plate will be called out.

- (b) Malicious contact at the plate suspends all obstruction penalties. If there is malicious contact, the runner may be ejected from the game. These are judgment calls by the Umpires, and their judgment is final.
- (c) Under no circumstances will head-first sliding be allowed at home base in the Rookie or Midget leagues. If a runner slides head first at home base, he shall be called out. This rule does not apply in Pee Wee, Bronco, Bronco Tournament, or Pony.

7.05 Over-Running or Over-Sliding First Base: The question of whether the over-running or over-sliding runner is out, when tagged after touching first base, depends on the runner's intent. The runner is out if, after touching first base, he makes a turn toward second base with the intent to proceed to second base and is tagged. By contrast, the runner is not out if, after touching first base, the runner turns back toward first base without the intent to proceed to second base, regardless of whether the runner turned to the left or right to return to first base.

- (a) To avoid being called out (if tagged after touching first base) because of a perceived intent to proceed to second base, the over-running or over-sliding batter runner should immediately return to first base.

7.06 Runner Touched by Batted Ball: Any runner is out (for interference) when he is touched by a fair ball in fair territory *before* the ball has touched or passed an infielder. The ball is dead and no runner may score, nor runners advance, except runners forced to advance. As for the batter in a situation where a runner is out for having been touched by a fair ball in fair territory *before* the ball has touched or passed an infielder, pursuant to Rule 6.11(d) the batter is entitled to first base without liability to be put out.

- (a) If a fair ball goes through, or by, an infielder, and touches a runner immediately back of him, or touches the runner after having been deflected by a fielder, the Umpire shall not declare the runner out for being touched by a batted ball. In making such decision, the Umpire must be convinced that the ball passed through, or by, the fielder, and that no other infielder had the chance to make a play on the ball. As for the batter in a situation where a runner is not declared out for having been touched by a fair ball in fair territory *after* the ball has passed a fielder other than the pitcher, or *after* having been touched by a fielder, including the pitcher, pursuant to Rule 6.13 (b) the batter becomes a runner. The ball remains in play.
- (b) If, in the judgment of the Umpire, the runner deliberately and intentionally kicks such a batted ball on which the infielder has missed a play, then the runner shall be called out for interference.

- (c) If a batted ball is deflected by a fielder in fair territory and hits a runner while still in flight and is then caught by an infielder, it shall not be a catch, but the ball shall remain in play.
- (d) Being on base does not provide a refuge of safety when hit by a batted ball. Said differently, whether a runner hit by a batted ball is out or not has nothing to do with whether that runner was on base when hit by the batted ball.

7.07 Field Umpire Touched by Batted Ball: If a fair ball touches an Umpire on fair territory *before* it touches an infielder including the pitcher, or touches an Umpire *before* it has passed an infielder other than the pitcher, the batter is entitled to first base without liability to be put out. (See also Rule 6.11(d).) The ball is dead and no runner may score, nor runners advance, except runners forced to advance.

- (a) If a fair ball touches an Umpire on fair territory *after* having passed a fielder other than the pitcher, or after having been touched by a fielder, including the pitcher, the batter becomes a runner. The ball remains in play. (See also Rule 6.13(b).)
- (b) If a batted ball is deflected by a fielder in fair territory and hits an Umpire while still in flight and is then caught by an infielder, it shall not be a catch, but the ball shall remain in play.
- (c) If a pitched or thrown ball accidentally touches an Umpire (Plate Umpire or Field Umpire), the ball is alive and in play.

7.08 Plate Umpire Touched by Ball: If a pitched ball lodges in the Umpire's or catcher's mask or paraphernalia, and remains out of play, on the third strike or fourth ball, then the ball is dead, the batter is entitled to first base and all runners advance one base. If the count on the batter is less than three balls, runners advance one base. This only applies in the Pee Wee, Bronco and Pony Leagues.

- (a) If a foul tip hits the Umpire and is caught by a fielder on the rebound, the ball is dead and the batsman cannot be called out. The same shall apply where such foul tip lodges in the Umpire's mask or other paraphernalia.
- (b) If a third strike (not a foul tip) passes the catcher and hits an Umpire, the ball is in play. If such ball rebounds and is caught by a fielder before it touches the ground, the batsman is not out on such a catch, but the ball remains in play and the batsman may be retired at first base, or touched with the ball for the out. This only applies in the Pony and Bronco League and Pee Wee AL division.
- (c) If a pitched or thrown ball accidentally touches an Umpire (Plate Umpire or Field Umpire), the ball is alive and in play.

7.09 Automatic Advance on Wild Throws: Each runner, including the batter runner may, without liability to be put out, advance two bases when, with no spectators on the playing field, a wildly thrown ball goes into the stands, or into a bench (whether or not the ball rebounds into the field), or over or under or through a field fence, or

on a slanting part of the screen above the backstop, or remains in the meshes of a wire screen protecting spectators. The ball is dead. When such wild throw is the first play by an infielder, the Umpire, in awarding such bases, shall be governed by the position of the runners at the time the ball was pitched. In all other cases, the Umpire shall be governed by the position of the runners at the time “the wild throw was made”.

- (a) APPROVED RULING 1: Since no runner, when the ball is dead, may advance beyond the base to which he is entitled, the runner originally on first base goes to third base and the batter is held at second base. The term “when the wild throw was made” means when the throw actually left the player’s hand and not when the thrown ball hit the ground, passes a receiving fielder or goes out of play into the stands. The position of the batter runner at the time the wild throw left the thrower’s hand is the key in deciding the award of bases. If the batter runner has not reached first base, the award is two bases at the time the pitch was made for all runners. The decision as to whether the batter runner has reached first base before the throw is a judgment call. If an unusual play arises where a first throw by an infielder goes into the stands or dugout but the batter did not become a runner (such as catcher throwing ball into stands in attempt to get runner from third trying to score on passed ball or wild pitch), the award of two bases shall be from the position of the runners at the time of the throw. (For the purpose of Rule 7.09, a catcher is considered an infielder.) *PLAY: Runner on first base, batter hits a ball to the shortstop, who throws to second base too late to get runner at second, and second baseman throws wildly toward first base after batter has crossed first base. Ruling: runner at second scores. (On this play, only if batter runner is past first base when wild throw is made is he awarded third base.)* *PLAY 2: One base, if a ball, pitched to the batter, or thrown by the pitcher from his position on the pitcher’s plate to a base to catch a runner, goes into a stand or a bench, or over or through a field fence or backstop. The ball is dead.*
- (b) APPROVED RULING 2: If all runners, including the batter runner, have advanced at least one base when an infielder makes a wild throw on the first play after the pitch, the award shall be governed by the position of the runners when the wild throw was made. In certain circumstances it is impossible to award a runner two bases. *EXAMPLE: Runner on first. Batter hits fly to short right. Runner holds up between first and second and batter comes around first and pulls up behind him. Ball falls safely. Outfielder, in throwing to first, throws ball into stand.*
- (c) APPROVED RULING 3: When a wild pitch or passed ball goes through or by the catcher, or deflects off the catcher, and goes directly into the dugout, stands, above the break, or any area where the ball is dead, the awarding of bases shall be one base. One base shall also be awarded if the pitcher while in contact with the rubber, throws to a base, and the throw goes directly into the stands or into any area where the ball is dead. If, however, the pitched or thrown ball goes through or by the catcher or through the fielder, and

remains on the playing field, and is subsequently kicked or deflected into the dugout, stands or other area where the ball is dead, the awarding of bases shall be two bases from position of runners at the time of the pitch or throw. One base shall be awarded if the batter becomes a runner on ball four or strike three, when the pitch passes the catcher and lodges in the Umpire's mask or paraphernalia. If the batter becomes a runner on a wild pitch which entitles the runners to advance one base, the batter runner shall be entitled to first base only. The fact that a runner is awarded a base or bases without liability to be put out does not relieve him of the responsibility to touch the base he is awarded and all intervening bases. *EXAMPLE: Batter hits a ground ball which an infielder throws into the stands but the batter runner missed first base. He may be called out on appeal for missing first base after the ball is put in play even though he was "awarded" second base.* If a runner is forced to return to a base after a catch, he must retouch his original base even though, because of some ground rule or other rule, he is awarded additional bases. He may retouch while the ball is dead and the award is then made from his original base.

7.10 Base Coach Interference: It is (offensive) interference by the base coach if, in the judgment of the Umpire, the base coach at third base or first base, by touching or holding the runner, physically assists him in returning to or leaving the base.

- (a) It is also base coach interference when, with a runner on third base, the base coach leaves his box and acts in any manner to draw a throw by a fielder. It is also offensive interference when the Manager, coach, or any member of an offensive team fails to vacate the space (including both dugouts) needed by a fielder who is attempting to field a batted or thrown ball. In all these cases of base coach interference, the penalty is that interference shall be called, and the runner or batter in question shall be declared out.
- (b) If a thrown ball accidentally touches a base coach, there is no interference and the ball is alive and in play.

7.11 Basic Baserunning: A runner acquires the right to an unoccupied base when he touches it before he is out. He is then entitled to it until he is put out, or forced to vacate it for another runner legally entitled to that base. If a runner legally acquires title to a base, and the pitcher assumes his pitching position, the runner may not return to a previously occupied base.

- (a) In advancing, a runner shall touch first, second, third, and home base in order. If forced to return, he shall retouch all bases in reverse order, unless the ball is dead under any provision of Rule 4.13. In such cases, the runner may go directly to his original base.
- (b) Two runners may not occupy a base, but if, while the ball is alive, two runners are touching a base, the following runner shall be out when tagged. The preceding runner is entitled to the base.

- (c) A runner may not pass a preceding runner. If he does pass a preceding runner before such preceding runner is out, the (passing) runner is out.
- (d) Unless two are out, the status of a following runner is not affected by a preceding runner's failure to touch or retouch a base. If, upon appeal, the preceding runner is the third out, no runners following him shall score. If such third out is the result of a force play, neither preceding nor following runners shall score. (See also Rule 4.09(d).)
- (e) If a runner becomes ill or is injured while running the bases, the player on his team who made the last out may be used to finish the injured or ill runners turn on the bases.

7.12 Runner Makes an Out: Any runner is out when:

- (a) He is tagged, when the ball is alive, while off his base. *EXCEPTION: A batter runner cannot be tagged out after over-running or over-sliding first base if he returns immediately to the base. (See also Rule 7.05.) APPROVED RULING: (i) If the impact of a runner breaks a base loose from its position, no play can be made on that runner at that base if he had reached the base safely. (ii) If a base is dislodged from its position during a play, any following runner on the same play shall be considered as touching or occupying the base if, in the Umpire's judgment, he touches or occupies the point marked by the dislodged bag.*
- (b) He fails to return at once to first base after over-running or over-sliding that base. If he attempts to run to second, he is out when tagged. (See also Rule 7.05.) If, after over-running or over-sliding first base he starts toward the dugout, or toward his position, and fails to return to first base at once, he is out, on appeal, when he or the base is tagged. A runner who touches first base safely (as declared by the Umpire) and then over-runs or over-slides the base has, within the intent of Rule 4.09(d), "reached first base"; and any run which scores on such a play counts, even though the runner subsequently becomes the third out for failure to return "at once," as covered in this rule.
- (c) After touching first base, he leaves the baseline, obviously abandoning his effort to touch the next base. Any runner after reaching first base who leaves the baseline heading for his dugout or his position believing that there is no further play, may be declared out if the Umpire judges the act of the runner to be considered abandoning his efforts to run the bases. Even though an out is called, the ball remains in play in regard to any other runner. This rule also covers the following and similar plays. *PLAY: Less than two out, score tied last half of final inning, runner on first, batter hits a ball out of park for winning run, the runner on first passes second and thinking the home run automatically wins the game, cuts across diamond toward his bench as batter runner circles bases. In this case, the base runner would be called out "for abandoning his effort to touch the next base" and batter runner permitted to continue around bases to make his home run valid. If there are two out, home run would not count (see Rule 7.11(d)).* This is not

an appeal play. *PLAY: Runner believing he is called out on a tag at first or third base starts for the dugout and progresses a reasonable distance still indicating by his actions that he is out, shall be declared out for abandoning the bases.* In the above two plays the runners are considered actually abandoning their base paths and are treated differently than the batter who struck out as described. *APPROVED RULING: When a Pony League, Bronco League or Pee Wee AL division batter becomes a runner on third strike not caught, and starts for his bench or position, he may advance to first base at any time before he enters the bench. To put him out, the defense must tag him or first base before he touches first base.*

- (d) In a FORCE PLAY, he fails to reach the next base before a fielder tags him or the base, after he has been forced to advance by reason of the batter becoming a runner. However, if a following runner is put out on a force play, the force is removed and the runner must be tagged to be put out. The force is removed as soon as the runner touches the base to which he is forced to advance, and if he over-slides or over-runs the base, the runner must be tagged to be put out. However, if the forced runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason towards the base he had last occupied, the force play is reinstated, and he can again be put out if the defense tags the base to which he is forced. *PLAY: Runner on first and three balls on batter. Runner steals on the next pitch, which is fourth ball, but after having touched second he over-slides or over-runs that base. Catcher's throw catches him before he can return. Ruling is that runner is out. (Force out is removed).* Over-sliding and over-running situations arise at bases other than first base. *EXAMPLE: Before two are out, and runners on first and second, or first, second and third, the ball is hit to an infielder who tries for the double play. The runner on first beats the throw to second base but over-slides the base. The relay is made to first base and the batter runner is out. The first baseman, seeing the runner at second base off the bag, makes the return throw to second and the runner is tagged off the base. Meanwhile runners have crossed the plate. The question is: Is this a force play? Was the force removed when the batter runner was out at first base? Do the runs that crossed the plate during this play, and before the third out was made when the runner was tagged at second, count? Answer: The runs score. It is not a force play. It is a tag play.*
- (e) He fails to retouch his base after a fair or foul ball is legally caught before he, or his base, is tagged by a fielder. He shall not be called out for failure to retouch his base after the first following pitch, or any play or attempted play. This is an appeal play. Runners need not "tag up" on a foul tip. They may steal on a foul tip. If a so called tip is not caught, it becomes an ordinary foul. Runners then return to their bases.
- (f) Any runner is out when he runs more than three (3) feet away from his base path to avoid being tagged unless his action is to avoid interference with a fielder fielding a batted ball (See also Rule 7.02).
- (g) He is touched by a fair ball in fair territory before the ball has touched or passed an infielder. The ball is dead and no runner may score, nor runners

advance, except runners forced to advance (See also Rule 7.06). *EXCEPTION: If a runner is touching his base when touched by an Infield Fly, he is not out, although the batter is out. If two runners are touched by the same fair ball, only the first one is out because the ball is instantly dead. If runner is touched by an Infield Fly when he is not touching his base, both runner and batter are out.*

- (h) He intentionally interferes with a thrown ball; or hinders a fielder attempting to make a play on a batted ball. A runner who is adjudged to have hindered a fielder who is attempting to make a play on a batted ball is out whether it was intentional or not. If, however, the runner has contact with a legally occupied base when he hinders the fielder, he shall not be called out unless, in the Umpire's judgment, such hindrance, whether it occurs on fair or foul territory, is intentional. If the Umpire declares the hindrance intentional, the following penalty shall apply: With less than two out, the Umpire shall declare both the runner and batter out. With two out, the Umpire shall declare the batter out. If, in a run down between third base and home plate, the succeeding runner has advanced and is standing on third base when the runner in a run-down is called out for offensive interference, the Umpire shall send the runner standing on third base back to second base. This same principle applies if there is a run-down between second and third base and succeeding runner has reached second (the reasoning is that no runner shall advance on an interference play and a runner is considered to occupy a base until he legally has reached the next succeeding base).
- (i) In running or sliding for home base, he fails to touch home base and makes no attempt to return to the base, when a fielder holds the ball in his hand, while touching home base, and appeals to the Umpire for the decision. This rule applies only where the runner is on his way to the bench and the catcher would be required to chase him. It does not apply to the ordinary play where the runner misses the plate and then immediately makes an effort to touch the plate before being tagged. In that case, the runner must be tagged.
- (j) He passes a preceding runner before such runner is out.
- (k) He attempts to score on a play in which the batter interferes with the play at home base before two are out. With two out, the interference puts the batter out and no score counts.
- (l) After he has acquired legal possession of a base, he runs the bases in reverse order for the purpose of confusing the defense or making a travesty of the game. The Umpire shall immediately call "Time" and declare the runner out. If a runner touches an unoccupied base and then thinks the ball was caught or is decoyed into returning to the base he last touched, he may be put out running back to that base, but if he reaches the previously occupied base safely he cannot be put out while in contact with that base.

7.13 Certain definition for Rule 7.12:

- (a) A **FORCE PLAY** is a play in which a runner legally loses his right to occupy a base by reason of the batter becoming a runner. Confusion

regarding this play is removed by remembering that frequently the “force” situation is removed during the play. *EXAMPLE: Man on first, one out, ball hit sharply to first baseman who touches the bag and batter runner is out. The force is removed at that moment and runner advancing to second must be tagged. If there had been a runner on third or second, and either of these runners scored before the tag out at second, the run counts. Had the first baseman thrown to second and the ball then had been returned to first, the play at second was a force out, making two outs, and the return throw to first ahead of the runner would have made three outs. In that case, no run would score. ANOTHER EXAMPLE: Not a force out. One out. Runner on first and third. Batter flies out. Two outs. Runner on third tags up and scores. Runner on first tries to retouch before throw from fielder reaches first baseman, but does not get back in time and is out. Three outs. If, in Umpire’s judgment, the runner from third touched home before the ball was held at first base, the run counts.*

7.14 Runner Out on Appeal: Any runner shall be called out, on appeal, when:

- (a) After a fly ball is caught, he fails to retouch his original base before he or his original base is tagged. “Retouch,” in this rule, means to tag up and start from a contact with the base after the ball is caught. A runner is not permitted to take a flying start from a position in back of his base.
- (b) With the ball in play, while advancing or returning to a base, he fails to touch each base in order before he, or a missed base, is tagged. *APPROVED RULING: No runner may return to touch a missed base after a following runner has scored. When the ball is dead, no runner may return to touch a missed base or one he has left after he has advanced to and touched a base beyond the missed base. PLAY: Batter hits ball out of park or ground rule double and misses first base (ball is dead). He may return to first base to correct his mistake before he touches second, but if he touches second he may not return to first; and if defensive team appeals he is declared out at first. ANOTHER PLAY: Batter hits ball to shortstop who throws wildly into stand (ball is dead). Batter runner misses first base but is awarded second base on the overthrow. Even though the Umpire has awarded the runner second base on the overthrow, the runner must touch first base before he proceeds to second base. These are appeal plays.*
- (c) He over-runs or over-slides first base and fails to return to the base immediately, and he or the base is tagged.
- (d) He fails to touch home base and makes no attempt to return to that base, and home base is tagged. Any appeal under this rule must be made before the next pitch, or any play or attempted play. If the violation occurs during a play which ends a half inning, the appeal must be made before the defensive team leaves the field. An appeal is not to be interpreted as a play or an attempted play. Successive appeals may not be made on a runner at the same base. If the defensive team on its first appeal errs, a request for a second appeal on the same runner at the same base shall not be allowed by the

Umpire. (Intended meaning of the word “err” is that the defensive team in making an appeal threw the ball out of play. For example, if the pitcher threw to first base to appeal and threw the ball into the stands, no second appeal would be allowed.) Appeal plays may require an Umpire to recognize an apparent “fourth out.” If the third out is made during a play in which an appeal play is sustained on another runner, the appeal play decision takes precedence in determining the out. If there is more than one appeal during a play that ends a half inning, the defense may elect to take the out that gives it the advantage. For the purpose of this rule, the defensive team has “left the field” when the pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory on their way to the bench or clubhouse. If two runners arrive at home base about the same time and the first runner misses home plate but a second runner legally touches the plate, the runner is tagged out on his attempt to come back and touch the base or is called out, on appeal, then he shall be considered as having been put out before the second runner scored and being the third out. Second runner’s run shall not count, as provided in Rule 7.11(d). If a pitcher balks when making an appeal, such act shall be a play. An appeal should be clearly intended as an appeal, either by a verbal request by the player or an act that unmistakably indicates an appeal to the Umpire. A player, inadvertently stepping on the base with a ball in his hand, would not constitute an appeal. Time is not out when an appeal is being made.

7.15 Automatic Advances, Runner(s) Only: Each runner, other than the batter, may without liability to be put out, advance one base when:

- (a) There is a balk (only in Pony League, Bronco Leagues and Pee Wee AL division). *In the Pee Wee NL division, runners will not advance on a balk and umpires will not call a balk during a play; however, in the instance an umpire deems a balk to have occurred and the runner is tagged out as a result of the balk, the runner will return to his base without being called out and the play will be reset.*
- (b) The batter’s advance without liability to be put out forces the runner to vacate his base, or when the batter hits a fair ball that touches another runner or the Umpire before such ball has been touched by, or has passed, a fielder if the runner is forced to advance. A runner forced to advance without liability to be put out may advance past the base to which he is entitled only at his peril. If such a runner, forced to advance, is put out for the third out before a preceding runner, also forced to advance, touches home plate, the run shall score. *PLAY: Two out, bases full, batter walks but runner from second is overzealous and runs past third base toward home and is tagged out on a throw by the catcher. Even though two are out, the run would score on the theory that the run was forced home by the base on balls and that all the runners needed to do was proceed and touch the next base.*
- (c) A fielder, after catching a fly ball, falls into a bench or stand, or falls across ropes into a crowd when spectators are on the field. A fielder or catcher

may reach or step into, or go into the dugout with one or both feet to make a catch, and if he holds the ball, the catch shall be allowed. Ball is in play. If the fielder or catcher, after having made a legal catch, should fall into a stand or among spectators or into the dugout after making a legal catch, or fall while in the dugout after making a legal catch, the ball is dead and runners advance one base without liability to be put out.

- (d) While he is attempting to steal a base, the batter is interfered with by the catcher or any other fielder. *NOTE: When a runner is entitled to a base without liability to be put out, while the ball is in play, or under any rule in which the ball is in play after the runner reaches the base to which he is entitled, and the runner fails to touch the base to which he is entitled before attempting to advance to the next base, the runner shall forfeit his exemption from liability to be put out, and he may be put out by tagging the base or by tagging the runner before he returns to the missed base.*

7.16 Automatic Advances on Equipment Thrown at Ball: Each runner, including the batter runner may, without liability to be put out, advance:

- (a) To home base, scoring a run, if a fair ball goes out of the playing field in flight and he touched all bases legally; or if a fair ball which, in the Umpire's judgment, would have gone out of the playing field in flight, is deflected by the act of a fielder in throwing his glove, cap, or any article of his apparel.
- (b) Three bases, if a fielder deliberately touches a fair ball with his cap, mask, or any part of his uniform detached from its proper place on his person. The ball is in play and the batter may advance to home base at his peril.
- (c) Three bases, if a fielder deliberately throws his glove at and touches a fair ball. The ball is in play and the batter may advance to home base at his peril.
- (d) Two bases, if a fielder deliberately touches a thrown ball with his cap, mask, or any part of his uniform detached from its proper place on his person. The ball is in play.
- (e) Two bases, if a fielder deliberately throws his glove at and touches a thrown ball. The ball is in play. In applying subsections (b)-(e), the Umpire must rule that the thrown glove or detached cap or mask has touched the ball. There is no penalty if the ball is not touched. Under subsections (c) and (e), this penalty shall not be invoked against a fielder whose glove is carried off his hand by the force of a batted or thrown ball, or when his glove flies off his hand as he makes an obvious effort to make a legitimate catch.

- 7.17 **Obstruction:** OBSTRUCTION is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding the ball, impedes the progress of any runner. If a fielder is about to receive a thrown ball and if the ball is in flight directly toward and near enough to the fielder so he must occupy his position to receive the ball he may be considered “in the act of fielding a ball.” It is entirely up to the judgment of the Umpire as to whether a fielder is in the act of fielding a ball. After a fielder has made an attempt to field a ball and missed, he can no longer be in the “act of fielding” the ball. For example: an infielder dives at a ground ball and the ball passes him and he continues to lie on the ground and delays the progress of the runner, he very likely has obstructed the runner.

When obstruction occurs, the Umpire shall call or signal “Obstruction”:

- (a) If a play is being made on the obstructed runner, or if the batter runner is obstructed before he touches first base, the ball is dead and all runners shall advance, without liability to be put out, to the bases they would have reached, in the Umpire’s judgment, if there had been no obstruction. The obstructed runner shall be awarded at least one base beyond the base he had last legally touched before the obstruction. Any preceding runners, forced to advance by the award of bases as the penalty for obstruction, shall advance without liability to be put out. When a play is being made on an obstructed runner, the Umpire shall signal obstruction in the same manner that he calls “Time,” with both hands overhead. The ball is immediately dead when this signal is given; however, should a thrown ball be in flight before the obstruction is called by the Umpire, the runners are to be awarded such bases on wild throws as they would have been awarded had obstruction not occurred. On a play where a runner was trapped between second and third and obstructed by the third baseman going into third base while the throw is in flight from the shortstop, if such throw goes into the dugout the obstructed runner is to be awarded home base. Any other runners on base in this situation would also be awarded two bases from the base they last legally touched before obstruction was called.
- (b) If no play is being made on the obstructed runner, the play shall proceed until no further action is possible. The Umpire shall then call “Time” and impose such penalties, if any, as in his judgment will nullify the act of obstruction. Under this rule, when the ball is not dead on obstruction and an obstructed runner advances beyond the base which, in the Umpire’s judgment, he would have been awarded because of being obstructed, he does so at his own peril and may be tagged out. This is a judgment call.
NOTE: The catcher, without the ball in his possession, has no right to block the pathway of the runner attempting to score. The base line belongs to the runner, and the catcher should be there only when he is fielding a ball or when he already has the ball in his hand.
- (c) If, with a runner on third base and trying to score by means of a safety squeeze play or a delayed steal, the catcher or any other fielder steps on, or in front of home base without possession of the ball, or touches the batter

or his bat, the pitcher shall be charged with a balk, the batter shall be awarded first base on the interference and the ball is dead. This only applies in the Pony and Bronco League and Pee Wee AL division.

- 7.18 **Interference:** (i) Offensive interference is an act by the team at bat which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders, or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play. If the Umpire declares the batter, batter runner, or a runner out for interference, all other runners shall return to the last base that was in the judgment of the Umpire, legally touched at the time of the interference, unless otherwise provided by these rules. In the event the batter runner has not reached first base, all runners shall return to the base last occupied at the time of the pitch. (ii) Defensive interference is an act by a fielder which hinders or prevents a batter from hitting a pitch. (iii) Umpire's interference occurs when an Umpire hinders, impedes, or prevents a catcher's throw attempting to prevent a stolen base; or when a fair ball touches an Umpire on fair territory before passing a fielder. (iv) Spectator interference occurs when a spectator reaches out of the stands, or goes on the playing field, and touches a live ball. On any interference, the ball is dead.

It is (offensive) interference by a batter or a runner when:

- (a) After a third strike, he hinders the catcher in his attempt to field the ball.
- (b) After hitting or bunting a fair ball, his bat hits the ball a second time in fair territory. The ball is dead and no runners may advance. If the batter runner drops his bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory and, in the Umpire's judgment, there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball, the ball is alive and in play.
- (c) He intentionally deflects the course of a foul ball in any manner.
- (d) Before two are out and a runner on third base, the batter hinders a fielder in making a play at home base; the runner is out.
- (e) Any member or members of the offensive team stand or gather around any base to which a runner is advancing, to confuse, hinder, or add to the difficulty of the fielders. Such runner shall be declared out for the interference of his teammate or teammates.
- (f) Any batter or runner who has just been put out hinders or impedes any following play being made on a runner. Such runner shall be declared out for the interference of his teammate. If the batter or a runner continues to advance after he has been put out, he shall not by that act alone be considered as confusing, hindering or impeding the fielders.
- (g) If, in the judgment of the Umpire, a base runner willfully and deliberately interferes with a batted ball or a fielder in the act of fielding a batted ball with the obvious intent to break up a double play, the ball is dead. The Umpire shall call the runner out for interference and also call out the batter runner because of the action of his teammate. In no event may bases be run or runs scored because of such action by a runner.
- (h) If, in the judgment of the Umpire, a batter runner willfully and deliberately interferes with a batted ball or a fielder in the act of fielding a batted ball,

with the obvious intent to break up a double play, the ball is dead; the Umpire shall call the batter runner out for interference and shall also call out the runner who had advanced closest to the home plate regardless where the double play might have been possible. In no event shall bases be run because of such interference.

- (i) In running the last half of the distance from home base to first base while the ball is being fielded to first base, he runs outside (to the right of) the three foot line, or inside (to the left of) the foul line and, in the Umpire's judgment, interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base, or attempting to field a batted ball. The lines marking the three foot lane are a part of that "lane" but the interpretation to be made is that a runner is required to have both feet within the three foot "lane" or on the lines marking the "lane."
- (j) He fails to avoid a fielder who is attempting to field a batted ball, or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball, provided that if two or more fielders attempt to field a batted ball, and the runner comes in contact with one or more of them, the Umpire shall determine which fielder is entitled to the benefit of this rule, and shall not declare the runner out for coming in contact with a fielder other than the one the Umpire determines to be entitled to field such a ball. When a catcher and batter runner going to first base have contact when the catcher is fielding the ball, there is generally no violation and nothing should be called. "Obstruction" by a fielder attempting to field a ball should be called only in very flagrant and violent cases because the rules give him the right of way, but of course such "right of way" is not a license to, for example, intentionally trip a runner even though fielding the ball. If the catcher is fielding the ball and the first baseman or pitcher obstructs a runner going to first base, "obstruction" shall be called and the base runner awarded first base.
- (k) A fair ball touches him on fair territory before touching or passing a fielder. If a fair ball goes through, or by, an infielder, and touches a runner immediately back of him, or touches the runner after having been deflected by a fielder, the Umpire shall not declare the runner out for being touched by a batted ball. In making such decision the Umpire must be convinced that the ball passed through, or by, the fielder, and that no other infielder had the chance to make a play on the ball. If, in the judgment of the Umpire, the runner deliberately and intentionally kicks such a batted ball on which the infielder has missed a play, then the runner shall be called out for interference. The penalty for interference is that the runner is out and the ball is dead. (See also Rule 7.06.)

8.00 PITCHING IN THE PEE WEE, BRONCO AND PONY LEAGUES

- 8.01 **Pitching Limits:** Pitchers in the various kid-pitch leagues must adhere to the rest requirements as per the table below. As an example of how to read the table, if a Pony player pitches 51 to 65 pitches in a day, three (3) calendar days of rest must be observed before he can pitch again.

Pitching Limit (# of pitches)		
Pony and Bronco	Pee Wee AL & Pee Wee NL	Required Rest (days)
66 or more	66 or more	4
51 – 65	51 – 65	3
36 - 50	36 - 50	2
21 - 35	21 - 35	1
20 or less	20 or less	0

- (a) The maximum number of pitches a player may pitch in a day is shown in the table below. When a pitcher reaches the relevant pitch limit for his league while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until any one of the following conditions occurs: (i) that batter reaches base, (ii) that batter is put out, or (iii) the third out is made to complete the half-inning. As an example, a Pee Wee AL makes his 75th pitch to a batter, which leaves the batter with a count of 0-2 after such pitch. Although the pitcher has reached his maximum pitch limit, the pitcher may continue to pitch to the batter. After the batter takes three balls, fouls off a ball, and then swings and misses, he is out. With the batter out on the 80th pitch, the pitcher must be removed from the position of pitcher.

Maximum Pitch Limit (# of pitches)	
Pony and Bronco	Pee Wee AL & Pee Wee NL
85	75

- (b) When a player is removed from the pitching position, such player can remain in the game at another position. **Pitcher-to-Catcher rule:** A Pee Wee pitcher who delivers 61 or more pitches in a game cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of that day. A Bronco or Pony pitcher who delivers 71 or more pitches in a game cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of that day.
- (c) The home team must designate the scorekeeper or another game official as the official pitch count recorder for both teams. The pitch count recorder must provide the current pitch count for any pitcher when requested by either manager or any umpire. However, the manager is responsible for knowing when his pitcher must be removed.

- (d) The official pitch count recorder should inform the Umpire-In-Chief when a pitcher has delivered his maximum number of allowed pitches for the game. However, failure by the pitch count recorder to notify the Umpire-In-Chief, and/or the failure of the Umpire-In-Chief to notify the manager, does not relieve the manager of his responsibility to remove a pitcher when that pitcher is no longer eligible.
- (e) The withdrawal of an ineligible pitcher after that pitcher has been announced or after a warm-up pitch has been delivered, but before that player has pitched a ball to a batter, shall not be considered a violation.

8.02 Pitching Limits in Suspended Games: Pitches delivered in any game suspended for weather or for any other reason shall be charged against that pitcher's daily pitch count and, as such, that pitcher will be subject to the rest requirements of Rule 8.01. In suspended games resumed on a later day, the pitchers of record at the time the game was suspended may continue to pitch to the extent of their eligibility on that later day, provided those pitchers have observed the required days of rest before the later, resumed game day.

- (a) **EXAMPLE 1:** A Bronco pitcher delivers 70 pitches in a game on any day and that game is suspended for any reason. The game resumes 3 days later. The pitcher is not eligible to pitch in the resumption of the game because he has not observed the 4 required days of rest.
- (b) **EXAMPLE 2:** A Pee Wee NL pitcher delivers 70 pitches in a game on any day and that game is suspended for any reason. The game resumes 5 days later. The pitcher is eligible to pitch in the resumption of the game assuming he has observed the 4 required days of rest.
- (c) **EXAMPLE 3:** A Pony pitcher delivers 51 pitches in a game on any day and that game is suspended for any reason. The game resumes 14 days later. The pitcher is eligible to pitch up to 85 more pitches in the resumption of the game, provided he is eligible based on his pitching record during the previous four (4) days.

8.03 Pitching Limit Violations: These pitching limits are to protect young arms. As such, the following rules apply:

- (a) Upon any violation of the rules regarding pitching limitations, the pitcher shall be removed from the game immediately even during a current at bat and must adhere to the required days of rest before being allowed to pitch again. Any such violation will be reviewed by the Program Director and Sportsmanship board and may result in a forfeiture of the game in which the infraction occurred if the violation is deemed intentional. There are no appeals of this rule.
- (b) Upon any violation of the pitcher-to-catcher rule, such violation will be reviewed by the Program Director and Sportsmanship board and may result in a forfeiture of the game in which the infraction occurred. In the special case of an ambidextrous pitcher who, as an example, pitches left-handed

and can play the catcher position right-handed, such ambidextrous pitcher is permitted to play catcher after having crossed the pitcher-to-catcher threshold so long as every throw at catcher is done right-handed. If, in our example, one throw at catcher is done left-handed, the game will immediately be ruled a forfeit.

- (c) Upon any violation of the rules regarding pitching and pitching-to-catcher limitations, the head coach of the offending team will receive an automatic warning for the first offense of the year. For a second violation the coach will immediately be ejected from the current game and also suspended from the team's next game. A third violation will again result in suspension from the current game and next game and additional punishment up to and including being removed as the coach will be voted on by the Board.
- (d) Recognizing that the purpose of these pitching limits are to protect young arms, the Board suggests that Managers review their score book before each game to determine which players are eligible to pitch. Additionally, in the spirit of sportsmanship and recognizing that the purpose of these pitching limits are to protect young arms, the Board hopes that opposing Managers and Board members attending any games will warn a Manager of a potential violation of these rules, but such a warning is not required and the failure to receive a warning will not be an excuse for violating these rules, nor negate any penalties.

8.04 No Pitcher Can Return in Same Game: A pitcher who is withdrawn from the mound, even if he remains in the defensive lineup at another position, shall not be permitted to return to the mound as a pitcher in the same game.

- (a) However, in a suspended game resumed on a later day, pitchers who had been withdrawn from the mound at the time the game was suspended may pitch on that later day, provided those pitchers have observed the required days of rest before the later, resumed game day.

8.05 Special Pitching Rules for Pee Wee NL Division: In Pee Wee NL division games only, the defensive player/pitcher will pitch to the batter until a legal walk has occurred (*i.e.*, four balls have been called by the Umpire). A designated pitching coach shall then be used by the offensive team (the team at bat).

- (a) Since the ball is still alive and in play after ball four is thrown by the pitcher, a runner or runners may attempt to steal after ball four. The designated pitching coach cannot enter the field of play until the ball has been declared dead by the Umpire. If the designated pitching coach enters the field of play before the ball has been declared dead in the case of an attempted steal after ball four, the defensive team has the option of sending all runners back to their original position on the bases or accepting the result of the steal attempt.
- (b) The designated pitching coach will be chosen by the team Manager. The designated pitching coach that starts an inning must pitch the entire inning.

The designated pitching coach can only be replaced during an inning due to injury.

- (c) The designated pitching coach must deliver the ball overhand and is encouraged to begin his delivery from the pitcher's plate (rubber). However, if the pitching coach is having trouble throwing strikes from the rubber, he may move in front of the rubber so long as he begins his pitching motion with both feet within the dirt circle. The defensive team's catcher must stay in a catcher's crouch behind the plate when the designated pitching coach delivers the ball.
- (d) The batter's strike count continues after the legal walk has occurred. Thus, if the batter had two strikes when the legal walk occurred, the designated pitching coach only throws one pitch. If the batter had one strike when the legal walk occurred, the coach can throw a maximum of two pitches. If the batter had no strikes when the legal walk occurred, the coach can throw a maximum of three pitches. There are no bunts when being pitched to by a team's own designated pitching coach. The player batting has to take a full swing at the ball. If the batter bunts or attempts to bunt, he will be called out. The ball is dead and runners may not advance.
- (e) Subject to the rules below, failure to place the ball in play within the allotted number of pitches shall result in the batter being called out.
- (f) A pitch that hits the batter is still a pitch and counts toward the allotted pitches.
- (g) A fouled ball counts as one of the pitches. A foul on the final pitch will entitle the batter to one more pitch to attempt to put the ball in play. There is no limit on the number of final pitches that can be fouled.
- (h) When a batter with two strikes FOUL TIPS a ball pitched by a designated pitching coach, that FOUL TIP is strike three and so the batter is out. As more fully described in Definition 6.08(f), a FOUL TIP is a batted ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher's hands and is legally caught.
- (i) If a batted ball hits the designated pitching coach, the batter will not be declared out. A foul ball will be called and the pitch will be counted as one of the allotted pitches. If it is the final pitch upon which this incident occurs, the batter will receive one additional pitch.
- (j) Bases are closed at all times a designated pitching coach is on the field after ball 4 has been called. Base stealing is not allowed when the designated pitching coach is pitching. Likewise, a base runner may not advance on a wild pitch or passed ball when the designated pitching coach is pitching.
- (k) The designated pitching coach must exit the playing field, without interfering with the defensive team, as soon as the ball is put in play. If the designated pitching coach interferes with a defensive player who has a reasonable chance of making a play for an out, the batter will be out if, in the Umpire's judgment, the interference was either intentional and/or happened because the designated pitcher did not leave the field as soon as possible. But if the interference is judged to be unintentionally committed by a designated pitching coach who is hustling off the field, the play shall

be re-done. In that event, the batter will go back to bat with the same count he had immediately before the pitch / hit in question.

- (l) The defensive player/pitcher shall not interfere with the designated pitching coach during delivery of the baseball to the batter. The defensive player/pitcher shall position himself on a line parallel to the pitcher's plate, no farther than a distance of six feet from the pitcher's plate, on either the first base side or third base side of the pitcher's mound. The defensive player/pitcher will remain in this position until the ball has been delivered to the batter by the designated pitching coach.
- 8.06 **Warm-up Pitches:** When a pitcher takes his position at the beginning of each inning, or when he relieves another pitcher, he shall be permitted to pitch no more than eight (8) preparatory pitches to his catcher during which play shall be suspended. Such preparatory pitches shall not consume more than one minute of time and do not count towards the pitcher's pitch count for the game. If a sudden emergency causes a pitcher to be summoned into the game without any opportunity to warm up, the Umpire-In-Chief shall allow him as many pitches as the Umpire deems necessary.
- 8.07 **Prompt Pitching:** When the bases are unoccupied, the pitcher shall deliver the ball to the batter within 20 seconds after he receives the ball. Each time the pitcher delays the game by violating this rule, the Umpire shall call "Ball." The intent of this rule is to avoid unnecessary delays. The Umpire shall insist that the catcher return the ball promptly to the pitcher, and that the pitcher take his position on the rubber promptly. Obvious delay by the pitcher should instantly be penalized by the Umpire.
- 8.08 **Trips to the Mound:** There is a limit on the number of trips a Manager or coach may make to any one pitcher in any one inning. One trip to the mound is permitted without penalty.
- (a) A second trip to the same pitcher in the same inning will cause that pitcher's automatic removal. The pitcher may be moved to another defensive position.
 - (b) The typical mound visit occurs when a coach calls time-out during an inning, goes onto the playing field, and confers with a struggling pitcher. But there are other situations that count as an official mound visit. For example, if a coach goes to the mound to watch his pitcher warm up between innings, he has made an official mound visit. A mound visit would also be charged to a coach who, during the warm up between innings, crosses the third base or first base chalk line (going onto the playing field) to confer with his pitcher. But not all communications between coach and pitcher count as a trip to the mound. For example, during the warm-up period, a coach could stand off the field at the edge of the base line, and give instruction to the pitcher without being charged a mound visit.

- (c) A Manager or coach is considered to have concluded his visit to the mound when he leaves the 18-foot circle surrounding the pitcher's rubber. If the Manager or coach goes to the catcher or infielder and that player then goes to the mound or the pitcher comes to him at his position before there is an intervening play (a pitch or other play), that will be the same as the Manager or coach going to the mound. Any attempt to evade or circumvent this rule by the Manager or coach going to the catcher or an infielder and then that player going to the mound to confer with the pitcher shall constitute a trip to the mound. If the coach goes to the mound and removes a pitcher and then the Manager goes to the mound to talk with the new pitcher, that will constitute one trip to that new pitcher that inning. In a case where a Manager has made his first trip to the mound and then returns the second time to the mound in the same inning with the same pitcher in the game and the same batter at bat, after being warned by the Umpire that he cannot return to the mound, the Manager shall be removed from the game and the pitcher required to pitch to the batter until he is retired or gets on base. After the batter is retired, or becomes a base runner, then this pitcher must be removed from the game. The Manager should be notified that his pitcher will be removed from the game after he pitches to one hitter, so he can have a substitute pitcher warmed up. The substitute pitcher will be allowed eight (8) preparatory pitches or more if in the Umpire's judgment circumstances justify more.

8.09 Pitcher Prohibitions: The pitcher shall not:

- (a) Bring his pitching hand in contact with his mouth or lips while in the 18-foot circle surrounding the pitching rubber. *EXCEPTION: Provided it is agreed to by both Managers prior to the start of a game played in cold weather, the Umpire may permit the pitcher to blow on his hand. PENALTY: For violation of this part of this rule, the Umpires shall immediately call a ball.* However, if the pitch is made and a batter reaches first base on a hit, an error, a hit batsman or otherwise, and no other runner is put out before advancing at least one base, the play shall proceed without reference to the violation.
- (b) Apply a foreign substance of any kind to the ball; expectorate on the ball, either hand, or his glove; rub the ball on his glove, person, or clothing; deface the ball in any manner; or deliver what is called the "shine" ball, "spit" ball, "mud" ball, or "emery" ball. The pitcher, of course, is allowed to rub the ball between his bare hands. *PENALTY: For violation of any part of this rule, the Umpire shall: (i) Call the pitch a ball, warn the pitcher and have announced on the public address system the reason for the action. (ii) In the case of a second offense by the same pitcher in the same game, the pitcher shall be disqualified from the game. (iii) If a play follows the violation called by the Umpire, the Manager of the offense may advise the plate Umpire that he elects to accept the play. Such election shall be made immediately at the end of the play. However, if the batter reaches first base*

on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batsman, or otherwise, and no other runner is put out before advancing at least one base, the play shall proceed without reference to the violation. (iv) Even though the offense elects to take the play, the violation shall be recognized and the penalties in (i) and (ii) will still be in effect. (v) The Umpire shall be sole judge on whether any portion of this rule has been violated. A pitcher may use a rosin bag for the purpose of applying rosin to his bare hand or hands. Neither the pitcher nor any other player shall dust the ball with the rosin bag; neither shall the pitcher nor any other player be permitted to apply rosin from the bag to his glove or dust any part of his uniform with the rosin bag.

- (c) Have on his person, or in his possession, any foreign substance. For such infraction, the penalty shall be immediate ejection from the game.
- (d) Intentionally delay the game by throwing the ball to players other than the catcher, when the batter is in position, except in an attempt to retire a runner. *PENALTY: If, after warning by the Umpire, such delaying action is repeated, the pitcher shall be removed from the game.*
- (e) Intentionally pitch at the batter. If, in the Umpire's judgment, such a violation occurs, the Umpire may elect either to: (i) expel the pitcher, or the Manager and the pitcher, from the game, or (ii) may warn the pitcher and the Manager of both teams that another such pitch will result in the immediate expulsion of that pitcher (or a replacement) and the Manager. If, in the Umpire's judgment, circumstances warrant that both teams should be officially warned prior to the game or at any time during the game, the Umpire may do so. To pitch at a batter's head is unsportsmanlike and highly dangerous. It is condemned by everybody. Umpires should act without hesitation to enforce this rule.

- 8.10 **Balks:** A BALK is an illegal act by the pitcher with a runner or runners on base, entitling all runners to advance one base. The "balk" rules set forth in the rest of this section apply only in the Pony and Bronco Leagues and Pee Wee AL and NL (under previously described circumstances) divisions. In the Pony and Bronco Leagues and Pee Wee AL division games, each pitcher shall be given one warning prior to the Umpire calling a balk. *PENALTY: If a balk is called, the ball is dead, and each runner shall advance one base without liability to be put out, unless the batter reaches first on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batter, or otherwise, and all other runners advance at least one base, in which case the play proceeds without reference to the balk.*

In the Pony and Bronco Leagues and Pee Wee AL division, if there is a runner, or runners, it is a balk when:

- (a) The pitcher, while touching his plate, makes any motion naturally associated with his pitch and fails to make such delivery. If a left-handed or right-handed pitcher swings his free foot past the back edge of the pitcher's rubber, he is required to pitch to the batter except to throw to second base on a pick off play.

- (b) The pitcher, while touching his plate, fails to step directly toward a base before throwing to that base. Throwing legally to a base without balking requires the pitcher, while touching his plate, to step directly toward a base before throwing to that base. If a pitcher turns or spins off of his free foot without actually stepping or if he turns his body and throws before stepping, it is a balk. A pitcher is to step directly toward a base before throwing to that base and is required to throw (except to second base) because he steps. It is a balk if, with runners on first and third, the pitcher steps toward third and does not throw, merely to bluff the runner back to third; then seeing the runner on first start for second, turn and step toward and throw to first base. It is legal for a pitcher to feint a throw to second base. Of course, if the pitcher steps off the rubber and then makes a third-to-first move, it is not a balk.
- (c) The pitcher, while touching his plate, throws, or feints a throw to an unoccupied base, except for the purpose of making a play.
- (d) The pitcher makes an illegal pitch. For example, a quick pitch is an illegal pitch. Umpires will judge a quick pitch as one delivered before the batter is reasonably set in the batter's box. With runners on base, the penalty is a balk; with no runners on base, it is a ball. The quick pitch is dangerous and thus is not permitted.
- (e) The pitcher delivers the ball to the batter while he is not facing the batter.
- (f) The pitcher makes any motion naturally associated with his pitch while he is not touching the pitcher's plate.
- (g) The pitcher unnecessarily delays the game.
- (h) The pitcher, without having the ball, stands on or astride the pitcher's plate or while off the plate, feints a pitch.
- (i) The pitcher, after coming to a legal pitching position, removes one hand from the ball other than in an actual pitch, or in throwing to a base.
- (j) The pitcher, while touching his plate, accidentally or intentionally drops the ball.
- (k) The pitcher, while giving an intentional base on balls, pitches when the catcher is not in the catcher's box.
- (l) The pitcher delivers the pitch from the Set Position without coming to a stop.
- (m) **APPROVED RULING:** In cases where a pitcher balks and throws wildly, either to a base or to home plate, a runner or runners may advance beyond the base to which he is entitled at his own risk.
- (n) **APPROVED RULING:** A runner who misses the first base to which he is advancing and who is called out on appeal shall be considered as having advanced one base for the purpose of this rule. Umpires should bear in mind that the purpose of the balk rule is to prevent the pitcher from deliberately deceiving the base runner. If there is doubt in the Umpire's mind, the "intent" of the pitcher should govern. However, certain specifics should be borne in mind: (i) Straddling the pitcher's rubber without the ball is to be interpreted as intent to deceive and ruled a balk. (ii) With a runner on first base the pitcher may make a complete turn, without hesitating toward first,

and throw to second. This is not to be interpreted as throwing to an unoccupied base.

8.11 **Legal Pitching Positions:** In the Pony, Bronco and Pee Wee Leagues, there are two legal pitching positions, the Windup Position and the Set Position, and either position may be used at any time. Pitchers shall take signs from the catcher while standing on the rubber. Pitchers may disengage the rubber after taking their signs but may not step quickly onto the rubber and pitch. This may be judged a quick pitch by the Umpire. When the pitcher disengages the rubber, he must drop his hands to his sides. Pitchers will not be allowed to disengage the rubber after taking each sign.

- (a) **The Windup Position.** The pitcher shall stand facing the batter, his entire pivot foot on, or in front of and touching and not off the end of the pitcher's plate, and the other foot free. From this position any natural movement associated with his delivery of the ball to the batter commits him to the pitch without interruption or alteration. He shall not raise either foot from the ground, except that in his actual delivery of the ball to the batter, he may take one step backward, and one step forward with his free foot. When a pitcher holds the ball with both hands in front of his body, with his entire pivot foot on, or in front of and touching but not off the end of the pitcher's plate, and his other foot free, he will be considered in the Windup Position. The pitcher may have one foot, not the pivot foot, off the rubber and any distance he may desire back of a line which is an extension to the back edge of the pitcher's plate, but not at either side of the pitcher's plate. With his "free" foot the pitcher may take one step backward and one step forward, but under no circumstances, to either side, that is to either the first base or third base side of the pitcher's rubber. If a pitcher holds the ball with both hands in front of his body, with his entire pivot foot on or in front of and touching but not off the end of the pitcher's plate, and his other foot free, he will be considered in a Windup Position. From this position he may: (i) deliver the ball to the batter, or (ii) step and throw to a base in an attempt to pick off a runner, or (iii) disengage the rubber (if he does he must drop his hand to his sides). In disengaging the rubber the pitcher must step off with his pivot foot and not his free foot first. He may not go into a stretch or Set Position; if he does, it is a balk.

- (b) **The Set Position.** The Set Position shall be indicated by the pitcher when he stands facing the batter with his entire pivot foot on, or in front of, and in contact with, and not off the end of the pitcher's plate, and his other foot in front of the pitcher's plate, holding the ball in both hands in front of his body and coming to a complete stop. From such Set Position he may deliver the ball to the batter, throw to a base, or step backward off the pitcher's plate with his pivot foot. Before assuming the Set Position, the pitcher may elect to make any natural preliminary motion such as that known as "the stretch." But if he so elects, he shall come to the Set Position before delivering the ball to the batter. After assuming the Set Position, any natural motion associated with his delivery of the ball to the batter commits him to the pitch without alteration or interruption. Preparatory to coming to a Set Position, the pitcher shall have one hand on his side; from this position he shall go to his Set Position as defined herein without interruption and in one continuous motion. The whole width of the foot in contact with the rubber must be on the rubber. A pitcher cannot pitch from off the end of the rubber with just the side of his foot touching the rubber. The pitcher, following his stretch, must (i) hold the ball in both hands in front of his body, and (ii) come to a complete stop. This must be enforced. Umpires should watch this closely. Pitchers are constantly attempting to "beat the rule" in their efforts to hold runners on bases, and in cases where the pitcher fails to make a complete "stop" called for in the rules, the Umpire should immediately call a balk (in Pony and Bronco Leagues and Pee Wee AL division only).
- (c) At any time during the pitcher's preliminary movements and until his natural pitching motion commits him to the pitch, he may throw to any base provided he steps directly toward such base before making the throw. The pitcher shall step "ahead of the throw." A snap throw followed by the step directly toward the base is a balk.
- (d) If the pitcher makes an illegal pitch with the bases unoccupied, it shall be called a ball unless the batter reaches first base on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batter or otherwise. A ball which slips out of a pitcher's hand and crosses the foul line shall be called a ball; otherwise it will be called no pitch. In the Pony and Bronco Leagues and Pee Wee AL division, this would be a balk with men on base.
- (e) If the pitcher removes his pivot foot from contact with the pitcher's plate by stepping backward with that foot, he thereby becomes an infielder and if he makes a wild throw from that position, it shall be considered the same as a wild throw by any other infielder. The pitcher, while off the rubber, may throw to any base. If he makes a wild throw, such throw is the throw of an infielder and what follows is governed by the rules covering a ball thrown by a fielder.

9.00 UMPIRES, UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT AND PROTESTING GAMES

9.01 **Authority of the Umpire:** The league shall assign one or more Umpires to officiate at each league game. If there is only one Umpire, he shall have complete jurisdiction in administering the rules. He may take any position on the playing field which will enable him to discharge his duties (usually behind the catcher, but sometimes behind the pitcher if there are runners). If there are two or more Umpires, one shall be designated Umpire-In-Chief and the other (or others) Field Umpire(s).

- (a) The Umpires shall be responsible for the conduct of the game in accordance with these official rules and for maintaining discipline and order on the playing field during the game.
- (b) Each Umpire has authority to rule on any point not specifically covered in these rules.
- (c) Each Umpire is the representative of the league and is authorized and required to enforce all of these rules. Each Umpire has authority to order a player, coach, Manager, or team representative to do or refrain from doing anything which affects the administering of these rules, and to enforce the prescribed penalties.
- (d) Each Umpire has authority to disqualify any player, coach, Manager, or team representative for objecting to decisions or for unsportsmanlike conduct or language, and to eject such disqualified person from the playing field. If an Umpire disqualifies a player while a play is in progress, the disqualification shall not take effect until no further action is possible in that play.
- (e) Each Umpire has authority at his discretion to eject from the playing field any spectator or other person not authorized to be on the playing field.

9.02 **Duties of the Umpire-In-Chief:** The Umpire-In-Chief, who is normally referred to as the Plate Umpire, shall stand behind the catcher. His duties shall be to:

- (a) Take full charge of, and be responsible for, the proper conduct of the game;
- (b) Call and count balls and strikes;
- (c) Call and declare fair balls and fouls except those commonly called by Field Umpires;
- (d) Make all decisions on the batter;
- (e) Make all decisions except those commonly reserved for the Field Umpires;
- (f) Decide when a game shall be forfeited;
- (g) If a time limit has been set, announce the fact and the time set before the game starts;
- (h) On request, inform the Official Scorer of the official batting order, and any changes in the lineups and batting order;
- (i) Announce any special ground rules, at his discretion;
- (j) Order the playing field lights turned on whenever, in his opinion, darkness makes further play in daylight hazardous;

- (k) If different decisions should be made on one play by different Umpires, the Umpire-In-Chief shall call all the Umpires into consultation, with no Manager or player present. After consultation, the Umpire-In-Chief shall determine which decision shall prevail, based on which Umpire was in the best position and which decision was most likely correct. Play shall proceed as if only the final decision had been made.

9.03 Duties of the Field Umpire(s): A Field Umpire may take any position on the playing field he thinks best suited to make impending decisions on the bases. His duties shall be to:

- (a) Make all decisions on the bases except those specifically reserved to the Umpire-In-Chief;
- (b) Take concurrent jurisdiction with the Umpire-In-Chief in calling "Time," balks, illegal pitches, or defacement or discoloration of the ball by any player;
- (c) Aid the Umpire-In-Chief in every manner in enforcing the rules, and excepting the power to forfeit the game, shall have equal authority with the Umpire-In-Chief in administering and enforcing the rules and maintaining discipline.

9.04 Appealing an Umpire's Decision: Any Umpire's decision which involves judgment, such as, but not limited to, whether a batted ball is fair or foul, whether a pitch is a strike or a ball, or whether a runner is safe or out, is final. No player, Manager, coach, or team representative shall object to any such judgment decisions. Appeals are not permitted in such situations.

- (a) If there is reasonable doubt that any Umpire's decision may be in conflict with the rules, the Manager may appeal the decision and ask that a correct ruling be made. Such appeal shall be made only to the Umpire who made the decision in question.
- (b) If a decision is appealed, the Umpire making the decision may ask another Umpire for information before making a final decision. No Umpire shall criticize, seek to reverse or interfere with another Umpire's decision unless asked to do so by the Umpire making it.
- (c) The Manager or the catcher may request the plate Umpire to ask his partner for help on a half swing when the plate Umpire calls the pitch a ball, but not when the pitch is called a strike. The Manager may not complain that the Umpire made an improper call, but only that he did not ask his partner for help. Field Umpires must be alerted to the request from the plate Umpire and quickly respond. Managers may not protest the call of a ball or strike on the pretense they are asking for information about a half swing. Appeals on a half swing may be made only on the call of ball and when asked to appeal, the home plate Umpire must refer to a base Umpire for his judgment on the half swing. Should the base Umpire call the pitch a strike, the strike call shall prevail. Runners must be alert to the possibility that the base Umpire on appeal from the plate Umpire may reverse the call of a ball to

the call of a strike, in which event the runner is in jeopardy of being out by the catcher's throw. Also, a catcher must be alert in a base stealing situation if a ball call is reversed to a strike by the base Umpire upon appeal from the plate Umpire. The ball is in play on appeal on a half swing. On a half swing, if the Manager comes out to argue with the first or third base Umpire, and if after being warned, he persists in arguing, he can be ejected as he is now arguing over a called ball or strike.

9.05 Unsportsmanlike Conduct: One of the primary goals of SBMSA is to teach good sportsmanship to our area youth. Displays of poor sportsmanship by players, coaches, and / or fans will not be tolerated. As per Rule 9.01, the Umpire has the authority to disqualify any player, coach, Manager, or team representative for unsportsmanlike conduct or language or for objecting to decisions, and to eject such disqualified person from the playing field. When a Manager, player, coach or trainer is ejected from a game, he shall leave the field immediately and take no further part in that game.

- (a) When the occupants of a player's bench show violent disapproval of an Umpire's decision, the Umpire shall first give warning that such disapproval shall cease. If such action continues, the Umpire shall order the offenders from the bench. If he is unable to detect the offender, or offenders, he may clear the bench of all substitute players.
- (b) No Manager, player, substitute, coach, or batboy shall at any time, whether from the bench, the coach's box or on the playing field, or elsewhere:
 - (i) Incite, or try to incite, by word or sign a demonstration by spectators;
 - (ii) Use language which will in any manner refer to or reflect upon opposing players, an Umpire, or any spectator;
 - (iii) Call "Time," or employ any other word or phrase or commit any act while the ball is alive and in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit a balk; or
 - (iv) Make intentional contact with the Umpire in any manner.
 - (v) The penalty for any of these offenses is that the offender shall be removed from the game and shall leave the playing field, and, if a balk is made, it shall be nullified.
- (c) No fielder shall take a position in the batter's line of vision, and with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, act in a manner to distract the batter.
 - (i) The penalty for this offense is that the offender shall be removed from the game and shall leave the playing field.

- 9.06 **Reporting of Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** The Umpire shall report to the league within 24 hours after the end of a game all violations of rules and other incidents worthy of comment, including the disqualification of any fan, Manager, coach, or player, and the nature of the offense.
- (a) When any fan, Manager, coach, or player is disqualified for a flagrant offense such as the use of obscene or indecent language, or an assault upon an Umpire, fan, Manager, coach or player, the Umpire shall forward full particulars to the league as soon as practical.
 - (b) After receiving the Umpire's report that a fan, Manager, coach or player has been disqualified, the league shall impose such penalty as is warranted by these rules, and shall notify the person penalized and the Manager of the club of which the penalized person is a member.
- 9.07 **Protesting Games:** No protest shall ever be permitted on judgment decisions by the Umpire. If a team desires to protest a decision regarding interpretation or enforcement of a rule, a protest will be considered valid only if proper notification of such protest is made during the course of a subject game to the Umpire-In-Chief, the opposing Manager, and the Official Scorer, and if a full written protest is presented to the Program Director or the appropriate age level coordinator or area commissioner within 24 hours of the game completion. If a protested game is played on a Saturday, the time limit for presentation will be extended to 48 hours from game completion. A protest sent via e-mail satisfies the "written" requirement of a protest. A protest sent via e-mail is deemed made at the time it is sent. All other protests are deemed made at the time received by a Board member. Notwithstanding the above, the Board may hear a protest regarding violation of the player participation rules at any reasonable time, regardless of whether the other team or the Umpire was notified of the violation and regardless of whether the Board received the protest with 24 hours.
- (a) If a timely protest is presented and it does not involve a judgment decision by the Umpire, the Board will hear and resolve the protest by majority vote and issue whatever rulings are necessary. Generally, if the protest is upheld, it will result in the game being resumed from the point that the protest was made.
 - (b) A formal game protest filed after the game should be a last resort. Coaches should use their best efforts to resolve a rules dispute on the field immediately after the play in question. Rule 9.04 discusses the proper procedure for a coach to appeal an umpire's decision that involves a disputed rule.

I. SBMSA EJECTION POLICY

One of the primary goals of SBMSA is to teach good sportsmanship to our area youth. Displays of poor sportsmanship by players, coaches, and / or fans will not be tolerated. As a discouragement of such displays, the SBMSA Executive Board mandates a one game suspension for any player or coach ejected from a game by a game official based on poor sportsmanship. This suspension shall be administered by the Program Director and the respective Board of the sport involved. While the one game suspension is mandated, the Program Director and Board may for particularly outrageous behavior or recurring incidents, levy suspensions of additional games up to and including the remainder of a season or future seasons.

Additionally, the SBMSA Executive Board recommends a one game suspension for any player or coach ejected from a game by reason of a rule. This suspension is to be administered by the Program Director and Board from the sport involved. While the one game suspension is recommended, the Program Director and his/her Board may reduce or increase the length of suspension *depending on the circumstances of the ejection*.

All player suspensions must be served in the dugout for the *next* scheduled game or games, depending upon the length of the suspension.

II. SBMSA TROPHY POLICY

Trophies will be awarded in both Girls and Boys Leagues, throughout all age levels, for all sports, as follows:

REGULAR SEASON

- Leagues/Divisions with 1-6 Teams: First Place Trophy.
- Leagues/Divisions with 7-11 Teams: First and Second Place Trophies.
- Leagues/Divisions with 12 or More Teams: First, Second and Third Place Trophies.

PLAYOFFS

- All Leagues/Divisions holding a Playoff Tournament: First and Second Place Trophies.

The Program Director has the authority to order extra trophies (including reordering and/or replacing trophies, if necessary) in the event of ties.

In addition, it is recommended that for Regular Season Trophies (which must be ordered prior to knowing the final outcome of the standings) that we settle on a trophy style that states all the relevant facts (e.g., year, place, team name, league, division) on an inscribed plate that can easily be removed and re-done in case of required last minute adjustments for ties.

III. SBMSA SPONSORSHIP-MONEY POLICY

Attention Coaches

New Procedures – Directions for Handling Sponsor Money

If sponsor wants to take a tax deduction for money donated to a non-profit organization:

1. Coaches should provide each sponsor with the sponsorship form on the following page.
2. The information in the block must be properly filled out before the form is given to the sponsor.
3. As noted on the form, checks should be made out to the S.B.M.S.A.
4. Coaches should then collect these sponsor checks, either in person or by mail. This service is provided as a method to have the checks made out to a non-profit organization and then return an Association check to a coach or a vendor. **It is not designed to set up a separate bookkeeping account for each team to draw out funds during the season.**
5. Therefore, each coach is to keep his sponsor check(s) until he has spent all the money he wants to spend, and then he should submit to: S.B.M.S.A., P. O. Box 800211, Zip 77280 all the sponsor check(s) along with receipts, invoices and/or a letter noting a list of uniforms, equipment, etc. he has purchased including costs incurred. (A tax-exempt certificate is available from the Sports Association – we will not re-imburse for sales taxes.) Multiple checks to vendors or coaches can be made. Some businesses will allow you to pay for uniforms and equipment with cash, credit card or check and not pay tax. Others will require a Sports Association check to pay for non-taxable items.
6. If coaches do not send receipts or a list of items purchased equal to the amount of the check(s), the excess funds will be deposited as fund raising money for the program.
7. When a sponsor check is received in the office a receipt will be issued to that individual or business at the address listed on the check.

Note: If a sponsor is not interested in a tax deduction, the Sports Association does not need to be involved in the transaction. In such a case, the check can be made out directly to the coach or to the vendor.

8. If more information is desired, please contact Jenni Bredthauer at:
jbredthauer@comcast.net.

IV. SBMSA THREATENING WEATHER POLICY

1. At the **first** sound of nearby thunder or any sighting of visible lightning, the coaches and/or umpires shall determine the “flash-to-bang” count (the seconds between the flash of lightning and the bang of thunder). When the “flash-to-bang” count is 30 seconds or less, the game or practice **must be stopped immediately**:
 - If **prior to the beginning of a game**, the opposing head coaches will make the decision whether to begin play after the storm has ended.
 - **After a game starts**, the umpire-in-charge will in his/her discretion determine when/whether to suspend play and when/whether to resume play after the storm has ended. If the threatening condition(s) do not clear within a reasonable period of time, the game should be called/suspended and completed at a later date, if possible.
 - If **during a practice**, the head coach will make the decision whether to resume practice after the storm has ended.
 - **In all cases** where the game/practice has been stopped due to the “flash-to-bang” count, there shall be a delay of the game/practice of **not less than thirty (30) minutes** after the last visual sighting of lightning or hearing thunder.
2. Seek shelter in a non-metal building or a fully enclosed vehicle with the windows completely shut and wait for a decision on whether to continue the game or practice.
3. Stay away from metal objects such as fencing and metal bats. Avoid high ground and open spaces. Avoid the dugouts - they are not safe from lightning. Avoid going underneath trees since trees "attract" lightning.
4. If no shelter is available and lightning is striking nearby, you should:
 - Avoid direct contact with other people.
 - Remove all metal objects from your person.
5. If a nearby person is injured from lightning, give first aid procedures if you are qualified to do so. An injured person does not carry an electrical charge and can be handled safely. Send for help immediately.

V. PLAYING FIELD DISTANCES

The following table sets forth the pitching and base-path distances (in feet) used by SBMSA for each league / age group. Pitching distance, or the rubber-to-plate distance, is measured from the rear of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber. Base-path distance is measured from the back corner of home plate to the back corner of first base or third base. For the sake of comparison, the table also shows the field distances used by Nations Baseball and USSSA, the two main youth tournament-baseball organizations here in Houston.

	SBMSA Distances (feet)			Nations and USSSA Distances (feet)	
	Pitching	Base Path		Pitching	Base Path
Rookie	38	55			
Midget	38	55	7U/8U	40	60
Pee Wee	46	65	9U/10U	46	65
Bronco	50	70	11U/12U	50	70
Pony	54	80	13U	54	80
			High School, College, Pro	60.5	90

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RECORD OF CHANGES FOR 2020 SEASON

DATE	DESCRIPTION
3/2/20	3.14 – longer bats allowed; now 34 inches, was 31 inches
3/2/20	5.01(a) – clarify coach pitcher's delivery in Midget league vis-à-vis the rubber
3/2/20	8.05(c) – allow NL dad coach pitchers to pitch from the front of the pitching circle rather than the rubber if they are having trouble throwing strikes