

North Garland Sports Association

2018 Official Baseball Rules

*NGSA Supplemental Rules combined with the Official USSSA 2018 Baseball Rules
Revised 8/17/2017*

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For any item not specifically covered within these rules, please refer to the Official USSSA Baseball Rules and the Official MLB Rulebook.

MISSION STATEMENT:

North Garland Sports Association (NGSA herein) will provide a safe, fun, and competitive learning environment in order to model and instill the values of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage and respect in the families of the community.

RULE 1 – RULES OF PLAY

1.1 Playing Field, Equipment & Safety

1.1A The playing fields shall be laid out according to the dimensions set forth in these rules.

1.1B Field Preparation/Care: The home team shall lay the bases and chalk the field before the first played game of the day, and remove the bases and rake the dirt after the last played game of the day.

1.1C Legal Bats: All bats for age divisions 14U and younger must be permanently stamped with the USSSA 1.15 BPF mark, or BBCOR.50 certified mark, or made of wood and manufactured by a licensed USSSA bat manufacturer. All bats for the 16U division shall also have a length to weight ratio no greater than negative three (-3) ounces. **Effective Jan 1, 2018** all 14U players must use a maximum drop 5 (-5) bat with the official USSSA 1.15 BPF mark permanently stamped

DIVISION OF PLAY	BASE PATHS	PITCHING DISTANCE
4U	55'	N/A
6U	55'	N/A
8U	60'	40'
10U	65'	46'
12U	70'	50'
14U	90'	60' 6"
16U	90'	60' 6"

1.1C Penalty First Offense: If an illegal bat is discovered before it has been used in play, it shall not be grounds for declaring the batter out and/or ejection. If it is discovered that an illegal bat has been used to put a ball in play, and before the next legal pitch, the defensive team shall have the choice of the result of the play or the batter being called out and all runners returning to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. **Second Offense:** the manager shall be ejected in addition to the first offense penalty.

1.1D Cleats: In age divisions 4U – 12U, non-metal cleats shall be worn. In age divisions 14U and older, traditional metal baseball spikes shall be permitted; except when playing on a field that is using a portable mound.

1.1E Catcher's Gear: The catcher shall wear all appropriate protective gear including a catcher's helmet with facemask and either a built in extended throat guard or a separately attached throat guard, chest protector, shin guards and a protective cup. In **divisions 4U – 12U** the catcher's helmet shall fully cover both ears

1.1F Batting Helmets: All offensive players shall use a double ear-flap batting helmet whenever at bat, on deck, on base or any other time outside of the dugout and the ball is live and in play.

1.1F Comment This rule shall also apply to any non-player under the age of eighteen (18) that is within the confines of the playing field during a game and is not in the dugout; but rather performing duties on the field of play.

1.1G Slashing: The act of showing bunt only to pull back and swing is **prohibited in the 8U through 12U divisions**. A batter that shows bunt must attempt a bunt or take the pitch. Slashing shall result in the batter being called out and all runners returning to the previously occupied base.

1.1H Collisions At Home Plate

1.1H.1 The Runner: A runner may not deviate from their direct path to the plate in order to initiate contact with the catcher or player covering home plate. If, in the umpire's judgment, a runner deviates from the base path in order to initiate contact with the player covering home plate, the runner shall be called out, the ball is dead and all other base runners shall return to the base last touched at the time of the collision.

1.1H.1 Ruling If a runner slides into the plate in an appropriate manner, and the runner's buttocks and legs, or body, touches the ground before contact with the player, he/she shall never be adjudged to have violated the collision rule. Attempting to jump or dive over the player covering home plate is prohibited and the runner shall be called out.

1.1H.2 The Catcher: Without possession of the ball, the catcher, or player covering home plate, cannot block the pathway of the runner. If, in the umpire's judgment, the player, without possession of the ball, blocks the pathway of the runner, the umpire shall call the runner safe. If the pathway of the runner was blocked, the umpire shall never find that the runner initiated an avoidable collision.

1.1H.2 Ruling It shall not be a violation of this rule if the catcher blocks the pathway of the runner in a legitimate attempt to field a throw in reaction to the direction, trajectory or the hop of the incoming throw, or in reaction to a throw that originates from the pitcher or a drawn-in infielder. Also, a catcher without possession of the ball shall not be in violation of this rule if the runner could have avoided the collision by sliding.

1.1H Comment Accidental contact between the runner and catcher, or player covering home plate, can happen without causing a rule infraction. However, if the umpire determines there was malicious contact, an automatic safe or out call may be enforced, and a player can be ejected from the game at the discretion of the umpire.

1.2 Game Preliminaries

1.2A Line-up/Affidavit: Teams shall turn in an official line-up and a current pitching affidavit to the scorekeeper no later than ten (10) minutes before each game. A copy of the line-up shall also be given to a coach of the opposing team. In the event a team does not have their current pitching affidavit the following shall apply;

1.2A Penalty First Offense: the scorekeeper shall locate the team's pitcher availability from the previous game and create, and sign, a new affidavit with the updated pitching information. **Second Offense:** a new affidavit will be created and the head coach shall be suspended for that game.

1.2B Home & Visitors: The schedule shall determine the home team for each game, and teams shall always occupy the proper dugout per the season schedule. In the event a team plays consecutive games on the same field, they shall not have to move dugouts between games.

1.2C Minimum Play Requirement (MPR): Each player on the roster that is in uniform and present at the start of the game shall play at least six (6) defensive outs and complete at least one (1) at bat. In the event a late player is added to a line-up, the following shall apply;

- 1.2C Ruling** MPR for any player that arrives late to a game, but BEFORE his/her team has completed one full cycle through the line-up, shall be reduced to three (3) defensive outs and one (1) at-bat. MPR is not required for any player that arrives late to a game and his/her team has already completed one full cycle through the line-up.
- 1.2C Penalty** If an eligible player does not receive his/her MPR during a game, that player must start and play the entire game that he/she is next present for. If an eligible player does not receive MPR for two (2) games in a row, the head coach shall be suspended from the teams next played game and is subject to further discipline.
- 1.2D Minimum Line-up Requirement:** A team may start and play a full game with a minimum of eight (8) players. Penalties, or the absence of a penalty, for empty spots in the batting order are described in rule 1.2E Approved Line-ups or in the division specific rules. Late arriving players may be added to the bottom of the batting order or added to the roster as a substitute, when applicable. Any team that starts a game with, or accumulates, nine (9) or more players is subject to all rules specific to the line-up they are using for that game.
- 1.2E Approved Line-ups:** Teams may bat a **nine (9) player line-up**, a **ten (10) player line-up using an extra hitter (EH)** or a **continuous line-up** of all present, eligible and uniformed players. Such line-up must be declared to the umpire and scorekeeper prior to the start of the game and used the entire game. Divisions 4U through 10U shall only be permitted to use the Continuous Line-up.
- 1.2E.1 Nine (9) Player Line-up:** All players not in the starting line-up are substitute players. Any starting player may be removed from and re-enter the game once, but must re-enter in their original spot in the batting order. Substitute players are not allowed to re-enter a game and changes to the batting order must be announced to the scorekeeper.
- 1.2E.2 Ten (10) Player Line-up:** The team shall bat a ten (10) player line-up that contains an extra hitter (EH). The player in the (EH) spot in the order has free defensive substitution, but shall remain in the same spot in the batting order for the entire game, and cannot be replaced. Any eleventh (11th) player, or more, on the roster for that game are substitute players, and are bound by the substitution player rules per 1.2E.1.
- 1.2E.3 Continuous Line-up:** All players other than those in the starting nine (9) defensive positions are extra hitters and may move freely in and out of defensive positions. Any player that misses an at-bat shall be called out, is no longer in the game and their spot in the batting order becomes an automatic out each time it comes up.
- 1.2E.3 Ruling** In the **4U & 6U Divisions** the missed spot will just be skipped and the player shall be allowed to return to the game defensively when available, but shall not bat again until their spot in the order comes back up. In the **8U Division** the batter shall be called out but shall be allowed to return to the game when their spot in the order comes back up. He/She shall not play in the game defensively until their next at-bat is completed.
- 1.2F Starting and Ending a Game:** The Umpire-in-Chief shall announce the official start time, and when a game's time limit has expired, for each game. The time kept by the umpire's record shall supersede any possible time discrepancy with the scorekeeper.
- 1.2G Mercy Rule:** A mercy rule shall be used to end a game when a team's margin of lead is greater than or equal to the following; **6 Inning Game:** fifteen (15) run lead after three (3) innings or ten (10) run lead after four innings; **7 Inning Game:** fifteen (15) run lead after three (3) innings, twelve (12) run lead after four (4) innings or eight (8) run lead after five (5) innings. In enforcing the mercy rules, the home team shall not bat if they are winning and the mercy rule requirement is met prior to the start of the bottom half of that inning.
- 1.2H Time Limits:** Once a game's time limit is reached the current inning will be allowed to be completed, and no new inning shall start; with the exception of 4U where the game is over once the time limit is reached. **4U: 45 min - 6U: 45 min - 8U: 1 hr 20 min - 10U: 1 hr 30 min - 12U: 1 hr 40 min - 14U: 1 hr 40 min - 16U: 1 hr 50 min**
- 1.2I Regulation Games & Game Suspensions:** A regulation game consists of six (6) innings for the 4U – 12U divisions and seven (7) innings for divisions 14U and older, unless a game ends earlier due to a mercy rule, imposed time limit or suspension. If a game is called due to weather, light failure or other acts of nature and cannot be resumed, it is a regulation game if;
- 1.2I.1 For a six (6) inning game**, if three (3) innings have been played, or the home team is ahead after two and one half (2 1/2) innings, it shall be declared a complete game. If the game is tied after four (4) or more innings, the score will revert back to the previous completed inning. If the game is still tied, it will be declared a suspended game.
- 1.2I.2 For a seven (7) inning game**, if four (4) innings have been played, or the home team is ahead after three and one half (3 1/2) innings, the game shall be declared a complete game. If the game is tied after five (5) or more innings, the score will revert back to the previous completed inning. If the game is still tied, it will be declared a suspended game.
- 1.2I Ruling** Any game that cannot be declared a regulation game shall be a suspended game. A suspended game, when resumed, shall resume from the exact point of the suspension.
- 1.2J Missed At-bats:** An at-bat is missed when an improper batter completes an at-bat out of turn. At any point before an improper at-bat is completed, the offensive team shall be allowed to correct the mistake by putting in the proper batter, whom shall begin their at-bat with the same count the batter had when the correction was made. Any actions on the field of play that occurred during the improper at-bat shall stand after the correction is made. When an improper at-bat is completed, the defensive team shall have the option of accepting the result of the improper at-bat or, before one (1) pitch is thrown to the next batter, appealing the infraction and enforcing the penalty.
- 1.2J.1** When the result of an improper at-bat is accepted, the next batter shall be the player in the official batting order that is scheduled to bat after the improper batter, and the game continues. The batter that was skipped shall not bat again until his/her spot in the batting order comes up again.

1.2J.2 When the penalty is enforced, the skipped batter shall be called out, any runners shall go back to the base occupied prior to the infraction, the improper batter is now the proper batter and shall start the at-bat over and the following applies; **Nine (9) Player Line-up:** the skipped batter is out of the game. If there are no players available to legally occupy the empty spot in the batting order, it is an out each time it comes up. **Ten (10) Player Line-up:** the Nine (9) Player Line-up rule applies to the nine (9) defensive positions in the batting order. If the (EH) spot is skipped, that player is out of the game and their spot in the batting order is an out each time it comes up. **Continuous Line-up:** the skipped batter is out of the game and the empty spot becomes an out each time it comes up

- 1.2K Courtesy Runners:** Teams in **divisions 10U and up** may use a courtesy runner for the pitcher and/or catcher of record from the previous defensive inning. The courtesy runner must be a player not presently in the line-up. If no players not presently in the line-up are available, the courtesy runner shall be the player making the last out. If at any time, a courtesy runner is determined to be ineligible, a proper replacement pursuant to these rules shall be used without penalty. **In the 8U division**, these rules apply only to the catcher position, and courtesy runners are not permitted in the **4U & 6U tee-ball divisions**
- 1.2K.1** With two outs, a courtesy runner may be used for a player that was not playing catcher the previous defensive inning, but will be playing catcher the next defensive inning. That player shall catch the first complete at-bat of that half inning for the move to be legal. If the team does not comply, the head coach shall be ejected from the game and will be subject to further discipline.
- 1.2K.2 Injured Runners:** A team in any division may use a courtesy runner for any player who, for injury reasons, is unable to run/continue to run the bases. This player is not out of the game at this point, but if he/she is unable to complete their next scheduled at-bat, the team shall be subject to any rules that apply to a missed at-bat.
- 1.2L Intentional Walks:** Intentional walks shall not be awarded upon announcement; the pitcher must throw the required pitches. Intentional walks are not permitted in the 4U through 8U divisions.
- 1.2M Pool Players:** Each head coach will be asked to obtain at least three (3) willing players from his/her team to be a part of NGSAs pool player system. When a pool player accepts a team’s request, the pool player shall start and play the entire game, no matter what. The player shall wear his/her own team’s uniform and may not play the pitcher or catcher position while playing for a team other than their own.
- 1.2M Ruling** Any coach that does not submit a list of pool players by the given deadline will be prohibited from using the pool player system.
- 1.2M Comment** The Pool Player system will not be used during the end of season tournaments

RULE 2 – THE PITCHER

- 2.1** In the **4U through 10U divisions**, any player removed from the pitching position may not return to the pitching position for the remainder of the game. In **divisions 12U and older** the starting pitcher removed from the pitching position, but remaining in the game defensively at a different position, may return as a pitcher, but only once per game.
- 2.2** In the **4U through 8U divisions**, a player may not pitch in more than one game in a day. In **divisions 10U and older** a pitcher who is removed from the pitching position once the zero (0) days required rest pitch limit is reached, he/she shall be allowed to pitch in a second game that day. The pitcher’s pitch count for the second game will begin with the total from the first game, and the total pitches thrown from both games will determine the pitcher’s rest requirement.
- 2.3 Pitch Count & Rest/Availability:** A coach must remove a pitcher when he/she has reached the limit for his/her age group, but the pitcher shall be allowed to remain in the game at another position.
- 2.3A Tables:** The following tables represent the max pitches a player may throw in one (1) day and the days of rest required per number of pitches thrown in one (1) Day;

Ages 14 & Younger		Ages 15 & Older	
Player Age	Daily Max	Pitches / Day	Rest Required
7 - 8	50	1 – 20	Zero (0) Days
9 – 10	75	21 – 35	One (1) Day
11 – 12	85	36 – 50	Two (2) Days
13 – 16	95	51 – 65	Three (3) Days
17 - 18	105	66 +	Four (4) Days

- 2.3A Ruling** If a pitcher reaches an imposed limit while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue pitching until the at-bat is complete and the pitcher’s pitch count will revert back to the imposed limit that was reached during the at-bat
- 2.4** For Purposes of pitching limitation rules, a pitcher is in violation of the rule if he/she has pitched a ball to a batter that has come after the at-bat during which the limit was reached.
- 2.5** The removal of an ineligible pitcher any time before that pitcher has pitched a ball to a batter shall not be considered a violation.
- 2.6** Pitches thrown during a game that ends in forfeit, due to an imposed mercy rule, suspension or cancellation shall count towards a pitchers’ pitch count for that day.
- 2.7** In suspended games resumed on another day, the pitchers of record at the time the game was halted may continue to pitch the extent of their eligibility for the new day, provided said pitcher has observed the required days of rest attained in the suspended game.
- 2.8** The official scorekeeper shall provide the current pitch count for any pitcher when requested by either manager or any umpire.

- 2.9** The official scorekeeper shall inform the umpire-in-chief when a pitcher has delivered his / her maximum limit of pitches for the game. The umpire-in-chief will then inform the pitcher's manager that the pitcher must be removed from the game
- 2.9 Ruling** The failure of the scorekeeper to inform the umpire-in-chief, and/or the failure of the umpire-in-chief to notify the manager, does not relieve the manager of his/her responsibility to remove a pitcher when he/she is no longer eligible.
- 2.10 The Pitcher & Catcher Positions:** A pitcher who delivers forty-one (41) or more pitches shall not play catcher for the remainder of the day. Also, a catcher that catches one (1) pitch into a fourth (4th) inning of play shall not play the position of pitcher for the remainder of the day.
- 2.11** It shall be the responsibility of each team manager to challenge pitching violations by notifying the Umpire and then filing a Protest with the umpire and board member on duty. A protest may be filed at any point after the pitcher in violation records any pitch beyond his legal limit AND while the pitcher in violation is in the game as the pitcher of record. If such violation is the last recorded out of the game, the protest MUST be filed prior to the umpires and/or board members leaving the field.
- 2.12** Any pitch limit or required days of rest violation shall result in immediate forfeiture of the game. If such violation occurs during an end-of-season tournament, the team in violation of the rule may not advance to the championship bracket regardless of record.
- 2.13** Any time a change is made at the pitching position, in any division, it must be announced to the scorekeeper.

RULE 3 – THE 4U & 6U TEE-BALL DIVISIONS

- 3.1** The tee-ball field shall have visible representation of the pitcher's circle, the five foot (5') fair ball arc, the baselines, and a designated area in the outfield which shall be fifteen (15) feet behind the baselines.
- 3.2** There will be no thirty foot (30') safety arc drawn on the field of play. The infielders shall position themselves in an area common to the natural spot of their infield position while playing no more than five (5) feet in front of the baseline, and shall never form a "defensive wall".
- 3.3** The pitcher's plate shall be placed forty-two feet (42') from the point edge of home plate, and the player at the pitcher position shall stay in contact with the pitcher's plate until the ball is hit. If the player at the pitcher position leaves contact with the pitcher's plate before the ball is hit, play shall continue, and after the play has ended, the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or a no-pitch.
- 3.3 Penalty First Offense:** warning; **Second Offense:** Removal of player from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.
- 3.4** If a player at the pitcher position fields the ball inside of the pitcher's circle he/she must attempt to throw the batter/runner out. The act of the player fielding a ball inside or outside the pitcher's circle shall be left to the umpire's judgment and shall not be arguable.
- 3.5** Ten (10) defensive players shall play in the field with four (4) outfielders. The fourth (4th) outfielder shall not assume an infield position, and all outfielders shall stay at least ten (10) feet behind the baseline until the ball is hit.
- 3.6** The player in the catcher position shall wear a catcher's helmet with an attached facemask and shall start each at-bat in the back of the batter's box opposite of the box the current hitter is batting from.
- 3.7** A batted ball must travel past the fair ball arc to be considered a fair ball. The act of the ball traveling past the fair ball arc shall be left to the umpire's judgment as is not an arguable call.
- 3.8 Rules Applied to Batted Balls:** When a fair ball is put in play, the following shall apply;
- 3.8A** If the fair ball does not travel past the base lines, the batter and any runners on base may, at their own risk, advance no more than one (1) base; regardless of any overthrows.
- 3.8B** If the fair ball travels past the base lines but does not travel into the designated area in the outfield, the batter and any runners on base may, at their own risk, advance no more than two (2) bases; regardless of any overthrows.
- 3.8C** If the fair ball travels into the designated area in the outfield the batter and any runners on base may, at their own risk, advance as many bases as they choose, until the ball is dead and the play is over.
- 3.9** Two (2) defensive coaches will be allowed to coach from the field of play. They must coach from the outfield (behind the baseline) and may not touch any player in an attempt to assist them with a baseball play.
- 3.10** Three (3) offensive coaches will be allowed to coach from the field of play. One (1) coach for first base, one (1) coach for third base, and one coach at home plate to assist the batter.
- 3.10 Ruling** The offensive coach assisting the batter shall not verbally instruct the batter, physically touch the batter, or draw directional marks in the batter's box as to position the batter for the purpose of influencing the direction of a hit ball.
- 3.11** The infield fly rule shall not be in effect at any time.
- 3.12** Runners shall not lead off or steal bases. A runner is out for leaving the base before the ball is hit.
- 3.13** If a defensive player, while in possession of the ball, steps on the pitcher's plate or home plate, the umpire shall call time, and any attempt being made to advance to a base (other than first (1st) base), that has not been completed, the runner or runners shall return to the previously occupied base.
- 3.14** Bunting shall not be allowed
- 3.15** A batter has a maximum of three (3) swings to put the ball in play or be called out. No additional swings are awarded on foul balls.
- 3.16** Umpires shall call "Time" after every play and declare the ball dead. "Time" shall be called as soon as the lead runner is not attempting to advance. "Time" does not have to be called by the defense for the purpose of this rule.
- 3.16 Ruling** When a runner stands off a base and "jukes" or "feints" back and forth, this is to be interpreted as "not attempting to advance" and time shall be called.
- 3.17** A team may score a maximum of five (5) runs per inning.

RULE 4 – THE 8U COACH PITCH DIVISION

- 4.1 There will be no fair ball arc drawn on the field of play. A fair ball shall be defined as it is in the MLB rulebook.
- 4.2 There will be no thirty foot (30') safety arc drawn on the field of play. The infielders shall position themselves in an area common to the natural spot of their infield position while playing no more than five (5) feet in front of the baseline, and shall never form a "defensive wall".
- 4.3 The pitching coach shall pitch with one foot on, or straddling, the pitching rubber and shall not verbally or physically coach while in the pitching position.
- 4.3A The pitching coach shall position him/herself as to not be an obstruction to the defensive team on any possible play once the ball has been hit. If a coach violates this rule after the ball is pitched, obstruction shall be called. If a coach violates this rule before the ball is pitched; **First Offense:** The coach will receive a warning; **Second Offense:** Removal of the coach as the pitcher for the rest of the game.
- 4.4 If the pitching coach is under eighteen (18) years of age, he/she must wear a helmet while pitching.
- 4.5 The catcher shall receive the pitch in the catcher's box in a normal baseball manner. If in the umpire's judgment the catcher is not receiving the ball in a baseball manner, a warning will be issued. If the act continues after the warning, the offending team's manager will be ejected.
- 4.6 The line-up shall consist of no fewer than ten (10) players and all ten (10) defensive players shall play in the field with four (4) outfielders. The fourth (4th) outfielder shall not assume an infield position and all outfielders shall play no closer than five (5) feet behind the baseline.
- 4.7 The player listed as pitcher shall not leave the pitching circle until the ball is hit. In the event the player leaves the pitching circle before the ball is hit, the play shall continue. Once the play has ended the offensive team shall have the option of taking the result of the play or a no-pitch.
- 4.7A **Defensive Player Penalty - First Offense:** the player will receive a warning; **Second Offense:** Removal of the player as pitcher for the remainder of the game.
- 4.8 Defensive coaches shall not be allowed on the field of play and shall coach from the dugout.
- 4.9 The infield fly rules shall not be in effect at any time.
- 4.10 The batting order, of ten (10) or more players, shall constitute all present players on the team roster at the beginning of the game. Late arrivals shall be inserted at the bottom of the batting order.
- 4.10A Teams may start a game with eight (8) or nine (9) players. When this occurs, the tenth (10th) or ninth (9th) and tenth (10th) positions in the batting order shall not be declared an out each turn at-bat, they will just be skipped.
- 4.11 Teams may use free substitution on defense but the batting order shall remain the same.
- 4.12 Bunting shall not be allowed
- 4.13 The batter shall receive a maximum of six (6) pitches or three (3) swinging strikes. Extra swings/pitches shall be awarded on foul balls.
- 4.14 Intentional walks are not permitted during the regular season.
- 4.15 Runners shall not lead off or steal bases. A runner is out for leaving the base before the ball is hit or reaches home plate.
- 4.16 The game is over when the opposing team is mathematically eliminated from scoring enough runs to win.
- 4.17 Umpires shall call "time" after every play and declare the ball dead. "Time" shall be called as soon as all runners are not attempting to advance. "Time" does not have to be called by the defense for the purpose of this rule.
- 4.17 **Ruling** When a runner stands off a base and "jukes" or "feints" back and forth, this is to be interpreted as "not attempting to advance" and "time" shall be called
- 4.18 When a batted ball hits the pitching coach, if in the umpire's judgment, the coach made a legitimate attempt to avoid contact, the ball becomes dead and a no-pitch is declared. If, in the umpire's judgment, the coach did not make a legitimate attempt to avoid contact, the batter shall be called out and no runners shall advance.
- 4.19 A team may score a maximum of five (5) runs per inning.

RULE 5 – THE 10U DIVISION

- 5.1 Baserunners are permitted to lead off and attempt to steal bases at their own risk.
- 5.2 **Balk Warnings:** During the fall season, and the first (1st) half of the spring season, a warning and explanation of the call will be given for the first balk committed by each pitcher that pitches in a game. After the first and only warning, each subsequent balk shall be penalized. During the second (2nd) half of the spring season, and the end-of- season tournament, no warnings will be given for balks.
- 5.4 The dropped/missed third (3rd) strike rule shall be in effect. A pitched ball that hits the ground just before, or at the same time, it is secured in the catcher's glove (a "trapped" or "scooped" ball) shall be considered a dropped/missed third (3rd) strike.
- 5.4A If first (1st) base is occupied, and there are less than two outs, dropped/missed third (3rd) strike is not in effect and the batter is out.
- 5.4B With less than two outs, an attempt to steal second (2nd) base on a pitch that is a dropped/missed third (3rd) strike, first (1st) base is to be considered occupied and the batter is out.
- 5.4C Any time the dropped/missed third (3rd) strike rule is in effect and the batter leaves the batter's (dirt) area and, in the umpire's judgment, is not making an attempt to run to first base, he/she shall be called out and it is not an arguable call. For the purpose of this rule, once any part of one (1) batter's foot is outside of the batter's (dirt) area that is considered to have left the batter's area.
- 5.6 A team may score a maximum of five (5) runs per inning.

RULE 6 – THE 12U THROUGH 18U DIVISIONS

- 6.1** Balk rules shall apply at all times.
- 6.2** The dropped/missed third (3rd) strike rule shall be in effect. A pitched ball that hits the ground just before, or at the same time, it is secured in the catcher's glove (a "trapped" or "scooped" ball) shall be considered a dropped/missed third (3rd) strike.
 - 6.2A** If first (1st) base is occupied, and there are less than two outs, dropped/missed third (3rd) strike is not in effect and the batter shall be called out.
 - 6.2B** With less than two outs, an attempt to steal second (2nd) base on a pitch that is a dropped/missed third (3rd) strike, first (1st) base is to be considered occupied and the batter is out.
 - 6.2C** Any time the dropped/missed third (3rd) strike rule is in effect and the batter leaves the batter's (dirt) area and, in the umpire's judgment, is not making an attempt to run to first base, he/she shall be called out and it is not an arguable call. For the purpose of this rule, once any part of one (1) batter's foot is outside of the batter's (dirt) area that is considered to have left the batter's area.

RULE 7 – THE NGSА MID-SEASON CLASSIC (8U – 14U ONLY)

- 7.1** On a designated Saturday during the regular season, NGSА will host a mid-season exhibition game to recognize some of the league's players that exhibit talent, leadership, sportsmanship, and respect amongst the other team's, players and coaches.
- 7.2** Twenty-four (24) players from each eligible division will be nominated by their teams, given a commemorative patch, and will participate in the mid-season exhibition game.
 - 7.2A** Each team shall have, when applicable, an equal number of representatives as part of the twenty-four (24) player selections. If a division has a number of teams that does not represent a multiple of twenty-four (24), the following shall apply.
 - 7.2A.1** For a division with five (5) teams, each team shall have four (4) representatives, followed by another one (1) representative from the first (1st) through fourth (4th) place teams.
 - 7.2A.2** For a division with seven (7) teams, each team shall have three (3) representatives, followed by another one (1) representative from the first (1st) through third (3rd) place teams.
- 7.3** Two (2) teams of twelve (12) players will be assembled, and coached, by the head coaches of the first (1st) and second (2nd) place teams at the time of the exhibition game.
- 7.4 Team Selection:**
 - 7.4A** Both head coaches shall begin the roster selection process with the players from their spring team's roster already included on their mid-season exhibition game roster. The two head coaches shall then pick players back and forth, starting with the coach of the current first (1st) place team, until the rosters are complete.
- 7.5 Pitching Rules:** Any player that pitches in the mid-season exhibition game must be available to pitch that day, per the NGSА rest and availability rules, and shall not exceed the pitch limit that requires one (1) day of rest before being eligible to pitch again.

RULE 8 – THE END OF SEASON TOURNAMENT (8U – 14U ONLY)

- 8.1** In divisions 8U and up, a division winner and runner-up shall be determined by the results of a two (2) day end-of-season tournament.
 - 8.1A Team Record:** A team's regular season record shall determine the seeding order for the pool play part of the tournament.
 - 8.1B Pool Play:** Each team will play two (2) games. The matchups will follow a bracket set up using the seeding order established by the team's regular season records. These games will determine the seeding order for the bracket play part of the tournament.
 - 8.1C Bracket Play:** The bracket play part of the tournament shall be a single elimination event. The final game of the day shall determine the division winners and runners-up.
- 8.2 Tournament Rules of Play:** All NGSА rules shall apply to the end-of-season tournament with the following exceptions;
 - 8.2A Home and Visitors:** During pool play the home team for each game shall be determined by a coin flip. During bracket play the highest seeded team shall be the home team
 - 8.2B Minimum Play Requirement:** Each player on a roster that is in uniform and present at the start of the game shall play at least three (3) defensive outs and complete at least one (1) at bat.
 - 8.2C 8U Minimum Line-up Requirement:** If a team plays a game with only eight (8) players, the ninth (9th) and tenth (10) spots in the batting order are automatic outs each time they come up. If a team plays a game with only (9) players, the tenth (10th) spot in the batting order is an automatic out each time it comes up.
 - 8.2D Time Limits/Tie-Breaker:** The pool play games will use the same time limits used per **rule 1.2H**. During Bracket Play, no game can end in a tie. If a game is tied at the completion of the inning in which time expired, the offensive team will begin their next half inning with one (1) out and the bases loaded. The correct batter shall be up to bat and the players in the three (3) previous spots in the batting order shall occupy the bases, with the player in the closest spot in the order to the current batter on first base, and so on. This shall continue until a winner is declared.
 - 8.2E Intentional Walks:** In all divisions, intentional walks shall now be awarded upon announcement of the defensive team. **In the 8U Division**, each player on a team may only be intentionally walked one (1) time per game.

RULE 9 – POST-SEASON PLAY (8U – 14U ONLY)

- 9.1** NGSА will pay the entry fees for each division’s champion to represent the league in the USSSA Single-A Texas State Championship. Any non-division winners that chose to participate must pay their own way. Teams that participate in the State Championship are also invited to the USSSA Single-A World Series. NGSА does not pay any team’s fees for the World Series; the teams will be responsible for all costs necessary.
- 9.2** Once all spring rosters are set, NGSА shall notify all parents/guardians in the eligible divisions of the State Championship and World Series information and guidelines Any team that wishes to represent NGSА in the State Championship or World Series (*participate while wearing the NGSА uniform and playing under NGSА’s league insurance*) shall do so while following all guidelines set forth;
- 9.2A** Any team representing NGSА in the State Championship and World Series shall invite all players on their roster to participate. All parents/guardians of players in the eligible divisions must then inform their head coach, **no later than May 14th** of the current spring season, of whether or not their child will be available to participate. For any player that does not inform their head coach of their intent by the given deadline, it will be understood by the league as a response of “not available”.
- 9.2B** In turn, all head coaches in the eligible divisions must inform NGSА, **no later than May 14th** of the current spring season, of their intent in regards to participating in the USSSA Texas State Championship. For any team that does not inform NGSА of their intent by the given deadline, it will be understood by the league as a response of “not participating”
- 9.2C** Once the deadline passes, the following rules take effect;
- 9.2C.1** Any coach that stated they would not participate in the State Tournament, or did not respond by the deadline, shall have forfeited their team’s participation, and may not change or alter that status.
- 9.2C.2** Any player that stated they would not participate in the State Tournament, or did not respond by the deadline, shall have forfeited their eligibility to participate. **However**, if a previously unavailable player becomes available, he/she shall be prohibited from being added to another team’s roster and shall only be allowed to participate in the State Tournament with their team from the spring season. The decision to allow this player to still participate shall ultimately be left up to the head coach.
- 9.2D Roster Additions:** Each participating team shall be allowed to add up to three (3) players that were not its spring roster, to its tournament roster. These roster additions can only be made in the form of participating players that are on a team that has chosen not to participate in the State Tournament. Roster additions will be done through a draft system made up of eligible participating players.
- 9.2D.1** All eligible players that would like to participate if asked will be placed into a player pool from which participating teams may select from. The participating teams that wish to add players will select players from the player pool in the order in which they finished in the season standings, and will pick back and forth in a normal draft order; 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.

RULE 10 – PLAYER FREEZES

- 10.1** Player Freezes are players that may be placed on rosters before evaluations are held. Paperwork for any frozen player must be turned in to the player agent by the deadline given and they shall not attend NGSА’s player evaluations. Any player that does not have the paperwork turned in for them by the deadline must attend player evaluations, and will only be available to be selected in the player draft.
- 10.2** The number of allowed freezes per division are as follows; 6U = three (3), 8U = four (4), 10U = five (5), 12U = six (6), 14U = twelve (12)
- 10.2A** In the **6U division** there are no guidelines pertaining to the allowed three (3) freezes.
- 10.2B** In the **8U – 12U divisions** there are three (3) types of players that may be frozen to a roster before player evaluations;
- 10.2B.1 New Players:** Any player that was not on an NGSА roster during the previous spring season.
- 10.2B.2 Returning Players:** A player that was on the head coach’s NGSА roster during the previous spring season.
- 10.2B.3 Released Players:** Released players shall be classified in one (1) of the following four (4) ways; **(I)** a player whose head coach chooses not to freeze as a returning player, **(II)** a player whose previous head coach is no longer coaching and the player has no previous head coach to return with, **(III)** a player whose head coach is moving out of the age division that the player is remaining in, **(IV)** a player that is moving out of an age division that their head coach is remaining in.
- 10.2B.3 Ruling** In the event a head coach attempts to freeze a returning player but the player chooses not to return with the team, for whatever reason, that player shall attend player evaluations and will only be available to be selected in the player draft.
- 10.2C** In the **14U and older divisions** frozen players shall only be allowed in the form of returning players and released players per 10.2B.3.
- 10.3 New Head Coaches to NGSА:** For the purpose of this rule, a new head coach shall be considered one that was not a head coach, or an assistant coach, of an NGSА team during the previous spring season. Any new head coach to NGSА shall be allowed to freeze their own child, the child of one or both assistants, and new players per rule 10.2B.1. Any remaining roster spots shall be filled through the player draft.

RULE 11 – PLAYER EVALUATIONS & THE PLAYER DRAFT

- 11.1 Player Evaluations:** Any player not frozen to a roster must attend player evaluations to be eligible to be selected in the player draft. Any player that does not attend player evaluations shall be placed on a team in the form of a blind draw, in continuation of the player draft order, after all draft eligible players have been selected.
- 11.1A** All players attending evaluations shall participate in the evaluation event scheduled for the division they wish to play in.
- 11.1B** Players that are league age six (6), eight (8), ten (10) and twelve (12) shall be allowed to attempt to play in one (1) age division higher than their league age permits.

11.1B Ruling **Playing Up:** A player that wishes to play up one (1) age division must play in said division during the fall season. The coaches in that division and the league's division directors will observe the player's ability to safely play in and compete in the higher age division. A discussion will be had between the coaches and directors to determine whether or not the player should be allowed to play up in the higher age division in the spring.

11.1C In some instances NGSA will allow a player to play down in one (1) age division lower than their league age permits. These instances are case-by-case and are determined by a discussion/vote by the NGSA board of directors.

11.2 The Player Draft: The President, Player Agent, Secretary, Umpire Director, Equipment Manager and the age group's Division Director will be in attendance at each division's draft.

11.2A Each team must have at least one (1) representative present during their designated draft time, but shall be allowed to have up to three (3) representatives present; the head coach and one (1) or both official assistants. For any team that does not send representation to the player draft, the Division Director will draft the roster for that team.

11.2B The player draft shall not start until all teams have an equal number of players on their roster. For teams that did not use their allowed number of player freezes, the team's representative shall be allowed to pick from the list of draft eligible players until the team's roster is equal to the other teams in the division. If there is more than one team in this situation, the teams shall draw a number from a hat to see who gets to pick first. They shall then pick back and forth until all teams have an equal number of players on their roster.

11.2C Once all teams have an equal number of players on their roster, the draft order shall be determined by a blind draw. Once the order is set, the draft shall begin and will be run as a serpentine draft. The trading of draft positions shall be allowed, but once the draft starts, the draft order shall not change. Once the draft is complete there will be a short period of time where player trades are allowed to be made; however, frozen players are prohibited from being traded or traded for.

RULE 12 – PROTESTS

12.1 Protests shall be allowed for age violations, pitching violations or rule interpretations only.

12.2 Protests must be declared to the umpire-in-chief before the next pitch following the dispute. The umpire will then convene with the official scorekeeper and an NGSA board member, preferably the division director if available. If the call that is to be protested is the last recorded out of the game or on a game ending play, the protest must be filed prior to the umpires and scorekeeper leaving the field of play.

12.3 Once a protest is correctly declared the remainder of the game is played under protest. The NGSA board member that was present and notified of the protest shall communicate the situation to NGSA's Appeals & Discipline Committee. A&D will meet and discuss any game that was played under protest. If decided that the call in question was correct, or cannot be overturned, the game goes in the standings as it finished. If decided that the protested call was an incorrect call, the game shall resume at the exact moment when the game was protested. The A&D shall rule on all protests and their decision shall be final.

RULE 13 – SPORTSMANSHIP & EJECTIONS

13.1 All players, managers, coaches, sponsors and spectators are expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times. The umpires and NGSA board members have the authority to remove anyone from the event at any time for unsportsmanlike conduct. Any unsportsmanlike or abusive behavior shall at a minimum be given a warning. If warranted, the offending party shall be ejected from the game at the discretion of the umpires and/or NGSA board member(s).

13.2 Any person leaving their position on the field, on the bench, in the dugout area or grandstands to participate in an altercation shall be ejected from the game and will serve a suspension from the team's next played game, with no appeal. The A&D committee shall also meet and determine if further discipline is necessary beyond the automatic suspension.

13.3 Anyone ejected from a game shall immediately remove themselves from the vicinity of the playing field and/or grandstands for the remainder of the game. If the ejected party continues to watch from a spot other than the above mentioned they shall not verbally, or physically, communicate with anyone on the playing field and/or grandstands. If this not followed, the ejected party shall be asked to leave and will automatically serve a suspension from the team's next game.

13.4 Any time there is an ejection the A&D committee shall investigate to determine if any further discipline is necessary. If found necessary, any further suspension(s) shall be served by the ejected party during their team's next played game following notification of the suspension. The ejection of a player, coach, sponsor or spectator shall not result in the automatic ejection of the team's head coach; however, the head coach may be ejected if, in the umpire's judgment, he/she contributed to the reason for the initial ejection.

13.5 If found necessary by the umpire-in-chief and/or any acting and present NGSA board member, a team may be forced to forfeit a game and/or be removed from the league/tournament.