

# **RULE BOOK V.1**

## **Mountain Elite Sports Baseball Tournament Series Rule Book**

**Welcome to the Mountain Elite Sports Baseball Tournament Series! Our goal is to provide your team with the most enjoyable and competitive tournament experience possible. We appreciate your participation and are here to assist you with any questions or suggestions.**

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## **Quick Reference:**

### **- \*\*Time Limits:\*\***

- 7U/8U Coach Pitch – 65 minutes/Drop Dead Time

- 10U through 18U – 65 minutes/Drop Dead Time

- The on-site director has the authority to adjust game schedules as necessary in response to adverse weather conditions.

### **- \*\*Run Rules:\*\***

- 15 run lead after 2 innings

- 12 run lead after 3 innings

- 10 run lead after 4 innings

- 8 run lead after 5 innings

### **- \*\*Regulation Games & Weather Shortened Games:\*\***

- Games are typically scheduled for 5 innings, except for 7U/8U coach pitch categories, provided that time allows. In cases where inclement weather prevents the completion of a game, the outcome will be determined based on the last fully completed inning. For example, if the home team leads 6-5 after two innings, but the visiting team moves ahead 8-6 in the top of the third before weather interrupts play, the score will revert to 5-4 in favor of the home team, as the third inning was not completed.

- Should the home team be leading when a game is halted during the bottom of an inning due to weather conditions, that team will be declared the winner. If an inning cannot be completed to determine a winner, or if the game is tied after the last full inning, the victory will be awarded to the higher-seeded team.

### **- \*\*Determining Placement in Weather Shortened Events:\*\***

- For games shortened due to weather, the outcome will be determined based on the score at the end of the last completed inning. If the score is tied at that point, the result will be decided by a coin flip.



- **\*\*Age Classification and Age-Up Date Guidelines:\*\***

**10U Division**

- **January 1st through August 31st of 2015**
- **Any 2014 Birthdays**
- **Sep 1st through December 31st of 2013**

**8U Division**

- **Sept 1st - December 31st of 2015**
- **Any 2016 Birthdays**
- **January 1st through August 31st of 2017**

- **\*\*Pitching Limits:\*\***

- **1 Day Tournament: 50 Pitches per night**

- **Enforcement of Pitching Limits:**
  - If it is discovered during a game that a pitcher has exceeded the innings limit, the team will forfeit that game. Challenges regarding pitcher usage cannot be made once the game has concluded and the umpires have left the field.

**Batting Lineup Guidelines**

- **Full Roster Batting:** Teams have the option to include all players on the roster in the batting lineup by listing them as Additional Players (APs). This allows for free defensive substitutions throughout the game for everyone listed in the batting lineup.
- **Consistency in Lineup Size:** The number of players you start with in the batting lineup must be maintained throughout the game. For example, if you start the game batting all 12 of your rostered players, you are required to end the game with the same 12 players in the batting lineup.
- **Handling Mid-Game Departures:** If a player must leave the game due to injury or another unforeseen reason, an automatic out will be recorded each time that player's turn at bat comes up in the lineup.

**Courtesy Runner Rules**

- **Eligibility for Courtesy Runners:** Courtesy runners may be utilized solely for the pitcher and catcher to help maintain the pace of the game. The courtesy runner must be a substitute player not currently in the game or the last batter who completed their at-bat prior to the catcher or pitcher reaching base.



- **Selection of Courtesy Runners:** If the catcher or pitcher who reached base is the last completed batter, the courtesy runner should be the second-to-last batter who completed their at-bat.
- **Notification Requirements:** Using a substitute player as a courtesy runner does not require notification to the umpire, except in cases where the substitute will also be entering the game defensively in the next inning.

### **Documentation Requirements: Roster, Waiver Forms, Team Insurance, and Birth Certificates**

- **Submission Requirements:** Teams are required to submit their roster, a completed waiver form, and proof of team insurance before their first game begins.
- **Roster Lock:** Once a team's roster has been submitted, no additional players can be added for the duration of the tournament. Teams must also ensure that a copy of each player's birth certificate is readily available upon request.
- **Access to Forms:** All necessary forms, including roster and waiver documents, can be downloaded from our website.

### **Pickup Players and Tournament Classifications**

- **Use of Pickup Players:** Teams are permitted to use pickup players to fill their rosters for any specific tournament, ensuring full team participation.
- Must notify tournament director by Friday 12:00PM and supply the necessary verification documents.



## Section 1 – Pitching

### - Pitching Positions and Regulations

- **Windup Position:** There are no specific rules regarding how a pitcher must hold the baseball. The pitcher's pivot foot must be on top of the pitching rubber, and the non-pivot foot must be on top of or positioned behind the pitching rubber. From this stance, the pitcher can choose to deliver a pitch or step backward off the rubber using the pivot foot. If stepping back, the pitcher must remove both feet from the rubber before transitioning to the set position.
- **Set Position:** In the set position, the pitcher can hold the baseball in either hand. The hand holding the ball must start either at the pitcher's side or behind their back. The pivot foot must maintain contact with the front edge of the pitching rubber. While in the set position with hands apart, the pitcher is allowed to turn their shoulders to check the bases. However, once the pitcher brings their hands together, any subsequent turning of the shoulders is considered a balk.

### - Balk and Illegal Pitch Definitions and Examples

- **Balk:** A balk is an action by the pitcher, whether intentional or not, that is deemed deceptive to a baserunner or the batter, as judged by the umpire.
  - **Enforcement:** A balk can only be called if at least one runner is on base. When a balk is called, all runners on base are awarded one base advance.
- **Illegal Pitch:** An illegal pitch is identified when there are no runners on base, and the pitcher commits an act that would normally be ruled a balk. In such cases, the result is a ball called against the batter.

## Examples of Balks and Illegal Pitches:

1. **Faking a Throw:** The pitcher fakes a throw to first base while on the pitching rubber.
2. **Faking a Pitch:** The pitcher mimics a pitching motion to home plate without actually delivering the ball.
3. **Discontinuous Motion:** The pitcher starts their pitch but stops the motion before the ball is released.
4. **Lack of Pause in Stretch:** In the stretch position, the pitcher fails to pause noticeably before delivering the pitch.
5. **Shoulder Movement After Set:** After bringing hands together in the set position, the pitcher illegally turns their shoulders.
6. **Dropping the Ball:** The pitcher drops the ball while engaged on the pitching rubber.
7. **Improper Pickoff Move:** The pitcher fails to step directly toward the base during a pickoff attempt.
8. **Use of Foreign Substances:** The pitcher applies a foreign substance to the baseball.

**Warm-Up Pitches:** Pitchers are allowed up to five pitches or one minute between innings, whichever occurs first, to prepare for the next inning.

**Intentional Walk:** To intentionally walk a batter, the catcher must inform the umpire of their intention to send the batter to first base. Upon notification, the batter will be granted first base immediately without the need for any pitches to be thrown.

## Section 2 – Visits and Coaching Guidelines (Offense & Defense)

- **Offensive Guidelines:**
  - Teams are permitted one offensive timeout per inning.
- **Coaching During At-Bats:**
  - During the team's at-bat, a third base coach and a first base coach are allowed on the field. All other coaches should remain inside the dugout.
- **Defensive Guidelines:**
  - Timeouts: Teams are allowed up to one per inning and three defensive timeouts over the course of a standard seven-inning game. If a team uses more than one in a single inning and/or a fourth additional timeout, the current pitcher must be substituted out and cannot return to pitch for the remainder of the game.
- **Pitch Calling Coach:**
  - One coach is allowed to position themselves on a bucket just outside the dugout to call pitches. This coach must take care not to disrupt the flow of the game or interfere with play in any way.

## **Section 3 – Batting Lineup & Courtesy Runners**

### **- Batting Lineup Rules**

- **Full Roster Batting:**
  - Teams have the option to bat their entire roster by designating additional players as "APs" (Additional Players) in the batting lineup. This allows for free defensive substitutions for all players listed in the batting lineup throughout the game.
  - Consistency is required in the number of players in your lineup from start to finish. For instance, if you begin the game batting all 12 of your rostered players, you are obligated to end the game with the same 12 players in the batting lineup. Should a player need to leave the game due to injury or another unforeseen event, an automatic out will be recorded each time their batting turn arises.
  
- **Minimum Players to Start a Game:**
  - A team can start a game with as few as 8 players. However, an automatic out will be recorded in the 9th spot of the batting lineup until the missing player arrives and is able to participate.

### **- Courtesy Runner Guidelines**

- **Eligibility for Courtesy Runners:**
  - Courtesy runners are permitted exclusively for the pitcher and catcher to help maintain the pace of the game. The courtesy runner must either be a substitute player who is not currently in the game or the last batter who completed their turn at bat before the pitcher or catcher reached base. If the last batter is the catcher or pitcher, then the next to last batter due up becomes eligible as the courtesy runner.
  
- **Notification to Umpire:**
  - The use of a substitute player as a courtesy runner does not need to be reported to the umpire unless the runner will also be entering the game defensively in the subsequent inning.
  
- **Correction of Courtesy Runner Errors:**
  - If an incorrect player is mistakenly used as a courtesy runner, no penalty will be applied. The error will be rectified by substituting the incorrect runner with the appropriate player, and the game will continue without disruption.



## **Batter Regulations**

- **On Deck Circle Location:**
  - The on deck circle for each team is situated outside of their respective dugout. Batters must use this designated area, on their dugout side when preparing for their at-bat.
- **Bunting Rule:**
  - Batters who attempt a fake bunt and then retract the bat to take a full swing will be automatically called out. This rule is enforced to ensure safety and fair play.

## **Runner Safety Regulations**

- **Avoiding Contact:**
  - Runners are required to make a conscious effort to avoid contact during plays at home plate. While sliding is not mandatory, actively avoiding collision is necessary to ensure safety. Failure to attempt to avoid contact will result in the runner being called out.
- **Consequences of Malicious Intent:**
  - If an umpire determines that a runner's contact was made with malicious intent, the runner will be called out and also ejected from the game. This rule is strictly enforced to maintain the integrity and safety of the game.

## **Section 4 – Substitutions**

- **Role of Substitutes:**
  - Substitutes are players not initially listed in the batting lineup and must be recorded as substitutes below the main batting lineup. Substitutes are permitted to enter the game in place of a player listed in the batting lineup; the replaced player then becomes a substitute. When executing a substitution, the team is required to inform the umpire, who will then notify the opposing team's scorekeeper of the change.
- **Integrity of the Batting Lineup:**
  - The composition of the batting lineup must remain constant throughout the game. For example, if a game starts with 10 players in the batting lineup, it must conclude with the same 10 players listed, barring substitutions due to injury or other extenuating circumstances.



- **Re-entry Rules:**
  - Any player, including those who have been substituted, is allowed to re-enter the game once. However, they must return to the same position in the batting lineup they previously held. This means a starting player re-entering the game cannot overlap in the lineup with the substitute who replaced them initially.
- **Defensive Changes Involving Additional Players (APs):**
  - When an Additional Player (AP) is brought into the game for defensive purposes, this change does not need to be reported to the umpire as it does not impact the batting order.

## **Section 5 – Batting Out of Order**

- **Appeal Process:**
  - Only the defensive team may appeal a batting out of order situation.
  - Appeals must be made before the next pitch, whether it is legal or illegal.
  - Appeals must be made before the defensive players leave their fielding positions.
- **Consequences of Batting Out of Order:**
  - **During the Incorrect Batter’s At-Bat:** If the mistake is caught while the incorrect batter is at the plate, the correct batter will replace them and inherit the existing count. Any advances or scores made by runners during the incorrect at-bat are considered valid.
  - **After the Incorrect Batter’s At-Bat Completes:** If the incorrect batter completes their at-bat before the error is noticed, the batter who was supposed to bat is declared out. Runs scored and bases gained during the incorrect at-bat will be nullified. The next batter will be the one following the player who was supposed to bat, unless it is the incorrect batter, in which case it moves to the subsequent batter.
  - **After a Legal or Illegal Pitch Following the Incorrect At-Bat:** Once a pitch is thrown to another batter following the incorrect at-bat, all plays and actions that occurred during the incorrect at-bat are deemed legal.

## **Section 6 – Interference & Obstruction**

- **Interference Definition:**
  - Interference occurs when an offensive player impedes a defensive player's ability to make a play.
- **Obstruction Definition:**
  - Obstruction happens when a defensive player hinders an offensive player's ability to advance to the next base.
- **Umpire's Discretion:**
  - Both interference and obstruction are judgment calls made by the umpire. The umpire has the authority to award bases or call players out based on their observation of the situation. These decisions are final and cannot be protested.
- **Rules on Batted Balls Striking Runners:**
  - If a runner is struck by a batted ball while they are in front of a fielder attempting to make a play, the runner will be called out and the play is dead.
  - If a runner is hit by a batted ball but is positioned behind the fielder attempting to play the ball, there will be no interference call, and the play continues with the ball remaining live.

## **Section 7 – Infield Fly & Dropped Third Strike**

- **Infield Fly Rule:**
  - The infield fly rule is invoked when there are fewer than two outs, and runners are on first and second, or the bases are loaded, creating a potential force play at third or another base. If a fly ball is hit that, in the umpire's judgment, can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, the batter is automatically called out regardless of whether the ball is actually caught. This rule is intended to prevent the defense from gaining an unfair advantage by intentionally dropping a routine fly ball. The ball remains live, and runners may advance at their own risk, needing to be tagged out if they attempt to move.

- **Dropped Third Strike:**
  - A batter is allowed to attempt to advance to first base on a dropped third strike if first base is unoccupied or if there are two outs, regardless of whether first base is occupied or not. Runners may also advance at their own risk under these conditions.
  - If the situation involves a dropped third strike with two outs and the bases loaded, a force out can still be applied. For example, if the third strike is dropped and all bases are occupied, the defense may make a play to any base for a force out to end the inning.

## **Section 8 – Tournament Seeding, Championship Games, & Tiebreakers**

**Tournament Seeding Criteria:** Seeding for the tournament will be determined based on the following criteria, applied in order:

1. **Best Record:** Teams are first ranked by their overall points total.
2. **Head to Head:** If teams have identical records, head-to-head results are considered next.
3. **Runs Allowed:** If still tied, the team with the fewest runs allowed across all games ranks higher.
4. **Runs Scored:** If runs allowed are identical, the team with the most runs scored is favored.
5. **Coin Flip:** If all other criteria are equal, a coin flip will determine the seeding.
  - Seeding is processed from the highest to the lowest seed.
  - Head-to-head is only decisive if one team has defeated all others it is tied with. After moving to runs allowed, we do not revert back to head-to-head comparisons.
  - Tied seeding games count as half a win and half a loss.
  - In formats with an odd number of teams, each team's worst game result is excluded from their record for seeding purposes, though head-to-head results from these games are still considered.
  - The higher-seeded team chooses to be home or visitor in bracket play. In blind draw brackets, home or visitor for the championship matchup between the winners' and losers' brackets is decided by coin flip.

## **Section 9: Bat & Cleat Regulations**

### **Cleat Guidelines:**

- **Ages 7U through 12U:** Only non-metal cleats are permitted to ensure safety and prevent damage to playing surfaces.

### **Bat Specifications:**

- **Ages 8U through 12U:** There are no drop weight restrictions for bats; however, all bats must meet the 1.15 BPF (Bat Performance Factor) standard.
- **Age 13U:** The lightest permissible bat is a drop 8, which must also meet the 1.15 BPF standard.

### **Game Balls:**

- Game balls are provided by Mountain Elite Sports for consistency and quality control. All game balls will feature a genuine leather cover and will be comparable in quality to a Diamond DOL-1 baseball, ensuring a standard playing experience across all games.

## **Section 10: Pitching and Base Distances by Age**

### **Pitching and Base Distances for Various Age Groups:**

- **7U/8U Coach Pitch:** Pitching distances range from 30 to 42 feet (between the safety arc and pitcher's circle) with bases set at 60 feet apart.
- **9U and 10U:** Pitchers throw from 46 feet, with base paths extending to 60 feet.

## **Section 11: 7U/8U Coach Pitch Rules**

### **Game Format and Regulations:**

- **Innings:** Games are scheduled for 6 innings, provided the time limit allows.
- **Pitch Count:** Each batter is entitled to 6 pitches or 3 swinging strikes. If the 6th pitch is fouled off, additional pitches will be granted until the batter hits the ball into play or strikes out.
- **Play Stoppage:** The play concludes when a defensive player halts the lead runner's progress, or all action has ceased and the umpire calls time. The umpire will then determine each runner's position at the time of stoppage. Runners who have passed the halfway mark to the next base may advance; those who haven't must return to the previous base.
- **Run Limit:** A maximum of 8 runs per inning is allowed, except in innings that begin with less than 5 minutes remaining on the game clock, which have no run limit.
- **Advancing on Overthrows:** Runners may advance on overthrows until the umpire stops play.



- **Coach Pitching:** The coach pitching to the batters must keep at least one foot on or straddle the pitcher's line.
- **Defensive Positioning:** All defensive players must remain behind the 30-foot safety arc until the ball is struck. The pitcher must stay within the pitching circle until the ball is hit.
- **Enforcement of Defensive Rules:** If defensive players prematurely cross the safety arc or if the pitcher exits the circle before the ball is hit, the offensive team may choose to accept the play's outcome or opt for a no-pitch call.
- **Bunting:** Bunting is prohibited.
- **Intentional Walks:** No intentional walks are allowed.
- **Slap Hitting:** Slap hitting is not permitted.
- **Lead Offs and Stealing:** Runners are not allowed to lead off or steal bases; they may only run once the pitch crosses the plate.
- **Infield Fly Rule:** The infield fly rule does not apply.
- **Defensive Alignment:** Teams may field up to 10 players on defense, including 4 outfielders.
- **Coaching on the Field:** Two coaches from the defensive team are allowed to position themselves beyond the outfielders for instructional purposes, provided they do not interfere with the play.

## **Section 12: Protests and Ejections**

### **Protest Procedures:**

- **Rule Application Protests:** To lodge a protest regarding the application of a rule by an umpire, a fee of \$200 in cash must be submitted to the tournament director onsite. A ruling will then be issued regarding the protest. It is important to note that judgment calls made by umpires are not eligible for protest.
- **Roster and Age Eligibility Challenges:** There is no fee required to challenge the roster or age eligibility of a player. Outcomes of such challenges are as follows:
  - If the challenge is valid and the player is found ineligible, the opposing team will forfeit the game.
  - If the challenge is invalid and the player is found eligible, the challenging team will forfeit the game.

### **Ejection Policy:**

- Players, coaches, or spectators ejected from a game will be required to leave the field for the remainder of that game, and they will also face a mandatory one-game suspension. Severe or flagrant violations may result in additional disciplinary measures, which will be determined at the discretion of the onsite tournament director.



## **Section 13: Refund Policy**

### **Event Credit System:**

- If a game day that was canceled cannot be rescheduled, we will issue a partial refund credit to each team for that specific day.

### **Game Count Policy:**

- Once a game has begun, it is considered played in full for refund purposes. This policy is in place because umpires are compensated for the entire game regardless of whether it is completed.

### **Non-refundable Fees:**

- All ticket sales and team gate fees are non-refundable under any circumstances.

### **Cancellation Due to Weather:**

- In the event of a cancellation of the entire tournament before it starts due to weather or other uncontrollable circumstances, teams that have paid their registration fee will receive a full refund.

## **Section 14: Closing Words**

This rulebook provides a comprehensive guide to the regulations that will govern play in Mountain Elite Sports tournaments. For any situations or rules not explicitly addressed in this document, we will defer to the National Federation of High School rules as the standard. Our aim is to ensure clarity and fairness in all our competitive events.

**Decisions made by the on-site tournament director are final and binding.**

**Thank you for participating in this Mountain Elite Sports event!**

