



# Rule Book

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### PREAMBLE

Howard Palmetto Baseball Softball Association (HPBSA) is committed to providing community recreational baseball. All children are welcome and encouraged to play regardless of their experience or level of skill. HPBSA is a volunteer not-for-profit organization in operation since 1962. We look forward to another year of continued success, as we share the ideals of good sportsmanship and fair play to another generation of kids.

Many rules have been modified in a continuing effort to make the playing environment competitive, enjoyable, and safe. These rules are to serve as a guideline for league play. We hope to have created a competitive and still fun environment. Good luck to all teams! Play hard, play by the rules, demonstrate good sportsmanship, and enjoy your time with friends and family. Play Ball!

## **OFFICERS & DIRECTORS**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Email</b>
<b>President</b>	president@howardpalmetto.com
<b>Immediate Past President</b>	pastpresident@howardpalmetto.com
<b>Registrar</b>	registrar@howardpalmetto.com
<b>Treasurer</b>	treasurer@howardpalmetto.com
<b>Baseball Commissioner</b>	commissioner@howardpalmetto.com
<b>Umpires Baseball Junior Division</b>	juniorumpires@howardpalmetto.com
<b>Umpires Baseball Senior Division</b>	seniorumpires@howardpalmetto.com
<b>5U T-Ball Titans</b>	tball@howardpalmetto.com
<b>7U Atom Coach Pitch</b>	atomvp@howardpalmetto.com
<b>9U Bantams</b>	bantampvp@howardpalmetto.com
<b>11U Midgets</b>	midgetvp@howardpalmetto.com
<b>16U Juvenile</b>	juvenilevp@howardpalmetto.com

Individual names and phone numbers are available on the league website; [www.howardpalmetto.com](http://www.howardpalmetto.com)

## **INTRODUCTION**

The President, Baseball Commissioner, Vice-Presidents and Immediate Past President are charged with the full responsibility and total authority of league play. Each manager shall acquaint the players, coaches, sponsors, parents, spectators, etc. with the rules by which our league will operate. Ignorance shall not be accepted as an excuse for any violation of the Official Major League Baseball Rules, Official USSSA Rules, or the Howard-Palmetto Baseball Softball Association Rules.

## **RULE 1: REGISTRATION**

The League Commissioner will evaluate the number of fields available to determine the number of players that each division can accommodate. Players who have registered in the previous year in the league will have priority in being assigned to teams; said priority expires on the last day of pre-registration. Extra players will be placed on the wait list based on their date of registration (last to register will be first to be placed on wait list). Players may be moved by the League to upper or lower divisions based on skill level number of registered players in each division.

## **RULE 2: DIVISIONS**

The players will be divided into divisions according to their age as of Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> in the year of registration:

### **BASEBALL DIVISIONS**

<b>5 &amp; Under</b>	<b>T-Ball Titans</b>	<b>as of Sept. 1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>7 &amp; Under</b>	<b>Atom Coach Pitch</b>	<b>as of Sept. 1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>9 &amp; Under</b>	<b>Bantam</b>	<b>as of Sept. 1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>11 &amp; Under</b>	<b>Midget</b>	<b>as of Sept. 1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>15 &amp; Under</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>as of Sept. 1<sup>st</sup></b>

All children must play in the division determined by the above chart. Exceptions to this rule will be evaluated on a case by case basis by the HPBSA Division Vice-Presidents and Commissioner.

## **RULE 3: PLAYER RATINGS**

**1. New Players and Returning Players** - All boys and girls will be evaluated by the appropriate Division Vice President with the assistance of the league Commissioner. All managers of record at the time of evaluation must be notified of the time and place of the evaluations. Players will receive a rating for draft purposes.

**(a)** All applicants for the Atom Coach Pitch Division will be rated in all categories except PITCHING.

### **Rating Format**

#### **(a) INFORMATION SECTION**

1. Player's name.
2. Player's practice/game attendance ("+", "-" or "0"- for returning players only).
4. Player's best playing position.
5. Throws right or left.
6. Bats right or left.
7. Date of birth.

#### **(b) RATING SECTION**

##### **(1) ALL DIVISIONS (except T-Ball)**

- a. Offense: Numerical grades to be compiled as follows:
  - (1) Batting: 1 – 10
  - (2) Power: 0 – 2
- b. Defense: numerical grades to be compiled as follows:
  - (1) Fielding: 1 – 7
  - (2) Throwing: 1 – 5
- c. Other: numerical grades to be compiled as

follows:

(1) All Around Speed:	1 – 5
(2) Baseball Knowledge:	1 – 3

d. TOTAL POINTS: 5 – 32

2. Player ratings will be based on a bell curve in each of the offensive, defensive and general categories. For example, in baseball, the BEST batter or hitters would be given a numerical grade of 8-10; all others within that division would be evaluated based on that player's abilities and graded accordingly. Each of the other categories, power, fielding, throwing, all around speed and baseball knowledge, will be evaluated based on the best player at that skill.
3. **Pitching** - All Bantam and above players will be rated in pitching prior to the draft. Their pitching skills will be evaluated and given a score from 1 to 6 (highest rating). If such a player or his parents decline this request to be so rated, the player will automatically be considered as a "NO PITCH" at the coming draft. All Baseball players who have requested that they not be selected as pitchers for the purposes of the draft, along with the players whose parents request that their children not be selected as pitchers in the draft, will NOT be permitted to pitch under any circumstances during the current season. (HPBSA play, regular and post season). All requests for no pitch status must be verified by the Division Vice President prior to the draft.
4. Prior to the draft of teams for the new season, each Division Vice President will collate all scores in their respective division for each player. This overall score (TOTAL POINTS) from the evaluation form Rating Section, along with the Information Section and Pitching rating, will be made available to all managers in the division at least three (3) days prior to the draft.
5. The Division Vice President will indicate on the evaluation form those players who played in the league during the previous season.

## **RULE 4: THE DRAFT**

1. All divisions will conduct a draft. Each manager or appointed representative should be present at the draft. The Division Vice President, Commissioner or designated league representative may select teams in the absence of a manager or representative. No team will be selected if a manager has not been assigned to it. If there is an insufficient number of managers by the final date for drafting (as

designated by the League Commissioner), the last registered players will be placed in the Player Pool. NOTE: Only one (1) representative shall be present per team, with the exception of first time managers who are strongly encouraged to bring a "Big brother/sister", who does not have a child in the division, but with prior experience in the Howard-Palmetto Baseball Softball Association to provide counseling help. (This must be cleared with the division Vice President prior to the draft).

## **2. Rules of the Draft:**

**(a)** No individual may manage more than one team or be a coach who in actuality is managing said team unless prior approval is received from the Executive Committee.

**(b)** The sons, daughters, or family related members (brother/sisters) of managers are restricted to selection by their parent or relative. These players cannot be chosen by another manager without the approval of the relative-manager.

**(c)** No special requests may be initiated on the night of the draft.

**(d)** Co-managers are not permitted under any circumstances. Only the children or family members of managers may be isolated in the draft. Coaches' children are not permitted to be isolated under any circumstances.

**(e)** Anyone choosing to coach in a division in which they have a child playing must coach on that child's team.

**(f)** It is the Division Vice President's duty to notify the managers of any injuries reported to him/her prior to the draft.

**(g)** Draft numbers will be selected individually by managers during a blind drawing on the day of the draft. DRAFT NUMBERS CANNOT BE TRADED. The draft will be started by the manager who drew "1" and will move in sequence to the highest number in the draft. The second round will start with the highest number in the draft working backwards to number "1". The process will continue until the draft is completed. In an eleven (11) player, the order of the last round will be reversed.

**(h)** The first round draft in all divisions, except Atom Coach Pitch will be for pitchers who must come from the isolated list. (NOTE: The pitching list may be waived only by a unanimous vote of the Managers, subject to the approval of the League Commissioner, or his representative and the respective Division Vice President.) The Division Vice President will isolate the top rated pitchers in the division. All "4", "5" and

“6” rated pitchers will be on the pitching list, regardless of the number of teams in the division. In the event there are not enough “4”, “5” and “6” rated pitchers for all teams to make a selection from the pitching list, the “3” rated pitchers will be added to this list. If any of these pitchers is designated as a “1-inning” pitcher, they will be identified as such and moved to the bottom of the pitchers list, but not removed from the list and are available to be selected in the first round (not applicable to Juveniles division). Any manager’s child who is on this isolated list as a “3-inning” pitcher must be drafted in the first round by that manager. If any manager’s child is isolated as a “1-inning” pitcher, they will NOT be required to be drafted in the 1<sup>st</sup> round, but they will be required to be selected in the next available round. This will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> round unless there are combined divisions in which case the next available round may be later (see Rule 4.3 below).

**(i)** All Managers whose child is listed on the isolated pitching list will be assigned a pick in the draft relative to the pitching and overall rating along with inning designation of his child before the drawing of draft numbers and in a sequence as follows:

- I.** All players listed on the isolated pitching list will be sorted by pitching inning designation (either 3 or 1-inning).
- II.** Within each group, the players will be sorted by pitching rating (6, 5, 4 and if necessary, 3).
- III.** Within each of the pitching ratings the players will be sorted by overall rating, highest to lowest. (Theoretically this is the sequence of the first round of a draft.)
- IV.** Managers with a child on the isolated pitching list will then be assigned their draft pick number according to the placement of their child on the list. If a manager’s child is on the isolated list but their rating places them below the number of teams in the draft, they will automatically pick last in the first round (or just before any manager(s) with a 1-inning pitcher).
- V.** Any manager with a child in the “1-inning” pitchers group will be given the last pick of the pitching round. If there is more than one manager with a “1-inning” pitcher, the highest pitching rating then overall rating will be last followed by the next highest and so on.
- VI.** Should there be a tie among players, the manager will draw from the draft pick numbers of those players tied with his/her child.

**(j)** If there are two siblings or family members that are

isolated in the draft and must be placed on the same team and both players have each received pitching rankings of a "6, 5, or 4", then the following conditions will be made in order to maintain the competitive balance of the division:

- I. The second sibling or family member to be drafted must be immediately selected in the first round for which his age group is available regardless of whether there are players available with a higher overall ranking.
- II. Additional restrictions and limitations on the number of pitches and/or the number of innings the two players can pitch will be made. The specific restrictions and limitations are set forth in Rule 17 – Pitching Regulations. Note: The restrictions and limitations regarding the number of pitches and/or the number of innings are subject to waiver by the Division Vice President and League Commissioner and if the managers of the division agree to the waiver by majority vote. Any proposed waiver of the restrictions and limitations and the vote by the managers must take place prior to the blind drawing determining the draft order of the teams.

(k) Atom Coach Pitch, the first round of the draft will not be for pitching. If a manager's child is rated as a 1<sup>st</sup> round pick relative to the number of teams in the division, then this manager will be assigned a draft pick based on this slotting. For example, if there are eight teams, and the child is one of the top eight (8) rated players (including ties), the child must be the manager's first pick in the first round. The manager will be assigned a draft number by the Division Vice President identical to the position of his/her child on the draft list. For example, if the child were the fourth (4) highest rated player on the draft list, the manager will draft in the fourth (4) position. If the manager's child is tied with one or more other players, the Manager shall select his/her position from a sequence of selections equal to the number of players in the tied spots by blind drawing. For example, if the child and another player are tied for the fourth (4) best rating, then the manager will pick from either the fourth or fifth spots. If two or more Manager's children are tied for the last rating in the first round, they will all be drafted in the first round.

(l) Managers with a child not on an isolated pitching list or designated as a first round pick may select their child at any time, but they may not chose a player with a rating equal to or lower than their child until they have selected their child. For example, a manager's child is classified with a rating of "12". In each round of the draft they may choose any player

with a rating higher than “12” or their own child, but they cannot select a “12” or lower rated player until after they have selected their child.

**(m)** All teams will be restricted to a maximum of twelve (12) players per team in Atom and Bantam, and eleven (11) in all other divisions at the time of the draft. An additional player can be added to any team with the permission of the Manager, Division Vice President, and League Commissioner.

**(n)** Trades between managers are permitted with prior approval of the Division Vice President and League Commissioner or his delegate. Coaches or representatives are not permitted to participate in player trades. All trades must be concluded no later than one (1) hour following the completion of the draft. No manager may participate in a trade once he/she has left the draft meeting. Trades beyond that time are prohibited except in special instances that have been granted by the prior approval of the League Commissioner.

**(o)** Managers must contact players selected by them by telephone or in person within 48 hours following the draft. Players refusing to play for the manager who selects them in the draft will be dropped from the Baseball-Softball Association roster. If possible, a player from the pool with a similar numerical grade will be assigned to the manager by the Division Vice President, after the approval of the League Commissioner.

**(p)** Any restrictions or representations relating to the pitching limitations on a player (i.e. limited pitch count or limited number of innings pitched) made prior to the draft will be strictly enforced. Penalty: Team will forfeit any game where the restriction was violated.

**3. COMBINED DIVISION.** In the event a single baseball division is formed by combining two school years of players (for example, a Midget division consisting of both 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade players), the draft **may** be conducted as follows at the discretion of the Division VP and Commissioner:

**(a)** The first round of the draft will be from the isolated pitcher’s list.

**(b)** The second and third rounds will be restricted to “upper grade” level players.

**(c)** The fourth (4), fifth (5), and sixth (6) rounds will be restricted to “lower grade” level players. Any remaining players may be selected on any of the subsequent rounds.

**(d)** If the pitching list is waived, then the first three (3) rounds shall be restricted to “upper grade” level players.

## **RULE 5: PLAYER POOL**

Those players registering late and extra players from the initial registration period will be placed in a pool maintained by the Vice President of each division.

1. The Registrar shall notify the appropriate Division Vice President as new players are registered, and the Vice President shall evaluate these players as soon as possible.
2. The names of the players in the pool, and their numerical grades, will be strictly confidential and shall not be made available to managers and/or coaches until a player is placed on a team.
3. The pool players will be evaluated separately from those players on the active players list.
4. Players may be assigned to teams with vacancies by the Division Vice President after approval by the League Commissioner. All player assignments must be immediately communicated to the applicable division managers by the Vice President when a decision has been made about any player.
5. Such assignments are to be premised upon the numerical grade of the player being replaced and the numerical grade and date of registration of the player being assigned.
6. All decisions of the Division Vice President and League Commissioner are final.

## **RULE 6: STATUS OF PLAYERS**

1. No manager or coach will be permitted to drop a player from a roster under any circumstances without prior approval of the Division Vice President and the League Commissioner. Repeated absences from games or practices without a legitimate excuse, or a serious behavior problem, are sufficient cause for a manager to request that a player be dropped from the team roster. In order to drop such a player, however, both the player and his parents must have been warned about the possible consequence by both the manager and the Division Vice President. If the warning does not result in an adequate improvement in the player's attendance and/or behavior, the manager may request a decision from the Disciplinary Review Committee. The manager must also notify the parents that he/she is initiating such a request. Subsequently, the Division Vice President must personally inform the parents as to the decision of the Committee.

2. Players who drop out will not be allowed to play the following season unless exempted by the Disciplinary Review Committee or Commissioner based on extraordinary circumstances. The Registrar will be notified accordingly.

## **RULE 7: PRACTICES**

1. It is the policy of the Howard Palmetto Baseball-Softball Association to discourage daily mandatory practices. Up to three practices per week prior to the start of the season and one or two practices per week once the games commence would be considered reasonable. Managers must meet with the parents at the start of the season to discuss mutual expectations and develop a cooperative spirit. Prior to the start of the regular season, Division Vice Presidents will assign to each manager a practice schedule for use of the Park(s) fields. Teams must be ready to take the field, under proper supervision by a manager or a coach, in order to utilize these facilities. All fields will be policed for trash following practice. Utilization of fields is a privilege and can be taken away.
2. No practices will be allowed on fields or in areas that interfere with or cause a possible danger to participants in an official game in progress and/or the spectators attending that game. The umpire and/or league official will be responsible for determining the possible danger and taking the necessary action to remedy the problem. If a manager or coach refuses to comply with a request from an authorized official, he will be subject to action by the Disciplinary Review Committee.
3. At Suniland Park, whenever games are in progress on fields 2 and 3, only practice drills that can be safely controlled in the open grass areas will be allowed and no teams may engage in batting practice except in the batting cages.
4. At all Parks where games are being played, for 1 hour prior to scheduled league baseball games, teams scheduled to play will have priority for the use of the batting cages.
5. There shall be no practices scheduled during the annual picnic.

## **RULE 8: RULES GOVERNING PLAY**

The Howard-Palmetto Baseball-Softball Association Rules along with the Official Major League Baseball Rules and USSSA Baseball Rules (provided said rules

are not at variance with any HPBSA Rules) will govern play for all HPBSA divisions.

## **RULE 9: THE PLAYING FIELD**

1. The pitching distances and the distances between bases for each division are as follows:

Division	Mound to Plate (ft)	Bases (ft)
Titans (t-ball)	N/A	55'
Atom I Coach Pitch (7U)	N/A	55'
Bantam (9U)	46'	60'
Midget (11U)	50'*	70'
Juveniles (16U)	60'	90'

\* The baseball mounds of 46', 50' and 60' will be raised (not height specific)

2. Written description of ground rules affecting play at all baseball and softball fields shall be drafted by the League Commissioner and Chief of Umpires and distributed to each Division Vice President.
3. As per County rules and regulations, "Hit down drills" (hitting balls into any fence) are not permitted with any ball other than a tennis or soft rubber ball. Violation of this rule could result in action by the disciplinary committee.
4. The home team will occupy the third base dugout or bench at all fields.
5. The playability of the field for a game shall be decided by the Park Personnel in conjunction with the Umpire, League Commissioner, and/or league representative.
6. If any base or pitcher's plate is discovered to have been incorrectly placed during the course of a game, it shall be immediately corrected, and play will continue. No parts of the game will be replayed because of such error.
7. A "Safety Base" may be used at first base to prevent collisions between base runner and fielders for Atom and Bantam games. If a safety base is not used for a game, the game will be played using a standard base.

## **RULE 10: UMPIRES**

1. The umpires are the representatives of the league and as such are authorized and required to enforce all playing rules by which our league will operate.
2. There shall be no appeal from any decision of any umpire on the grounds that he/she was not correct in his/her conclusion as to whether a batted ball was fair or foul, a base runner safe or out, a pitched ball a strike or ball or any other play involving accuracy or judgment, and no decision rendered by any umpire shall be reversed except that he/she be convinced it is in violation of a rule.
3. In all divisions, umpires are required to obtain an official game day lineup sheet (Rule 16, item 5) from each team which identifies all of the players present for the game and shall submit the lineups to the concession stand. The Division Vice President is expected to pick up the lineups and review them to ensure that all managers and players are complying with the league's attendance rules.

## **RULE 11: PROTESTS**

1. A protest can only be lodged regarding a violation of the playing rules in use during the current season. No protest shall be permitted on judgment decisions by the umpire.
2. Only the manager or acting manager is allowed to register a protest on the field of play. The umpire in charge must be notified immediately of the protest. Such notification must be delivered to him/her prior to the next pitch being thrown in the game. If this does not occur, the protest will not be allowed. If there is a protest on the last play of the game, the protest must be lodged immediately.
3. The home team scorekeeper shall indicate the exact position of the game (i.e., number of outs, players on base, next batter, time of protest, etc.).
4. At the time the umpire-in-charge is advised of the protest, he/she must immediately advise the opposing manager, as well as the scorekeepers, that the game is being played under protest.
5. The umpire will suspend the game time clock during the notification and recording of a protest.
6. After the completion of a protested game, the protesting manager must put in writing the rule and section under protest as well as all the facts and exact conditions at the time of the protest. This written protest must be delivered to a member of the Protest Committee who shall be the League Commissioner (Chairperson), the Division Vice

President, and the Tournament Director not later than 48 hours after the completion of the protested game. If any of the Committee members is directly involved in the protest, the League President shall be substituted as the third member of the Committee. A protest fee of \$25.00 must accompany each protest. This fee will be refunded if the protest is upheld; if not, the fee will go into the league's general fund.

7. The Protest Committee will notify the opposing manager and the umpire-in-charge of the game within 72 hours of the filed protest. The Committee will request from these individuals, within 72 hours after notification of filed protest, a written statement explaining their position and a summary of the protest as they saw it.
8. All decisions of the Protest Committee will be final. No further discussion will be permitted after the decision is rendered. The Committee has the authority to call before them any individuals they feel can add information to assist the Committee in arriving at a decision.
9. The League Commissioner has the right to discipline any manager or acting manager who protests in an indiscriminate manner.
10. If the Protest Committee finds that a ruling in favor of the protest would not have made a difference in the outcome of the game, IT MAY DENY THE PROTEST.
11. If the protest is upheld, the Protest Committee will determine at what point play will resume. When the protested game is rescheduled, the lineups and substitutions will be subject to the same rules as a suspended game.
12. A protest of any violation of the Baseball-Softball Association rules governing player eligibility may be filed by any registered manager or coach of a bona fide Baseball-Softball Association team. An eligibility protest of this type shall apply only to a player not properly registered, a player registered with more than one team, or a player not meeting the division's requirements.
13. To handle protests that may occur during play-off, league championship or tournament games, the respective Commissioner may appoint a Protest Committee to be present at the field to resolve, on the spot, any protests that may occur.

## **RULE 12: CONDUCT**

The Howard Palmetto Baseball-Softball Association is

committed to creating and maintaining an environment based on principles of sportsmanship and fair play and it will not tolerate conduct on the part of its managers, coaches, spectators and/or players which it deems to be contrary to those principles. Accordingly, the Association has established and will strictly enforce the following Rules of Conduct.

1. A Disciplinary Review Committee will be established to consist of the President (Chairperson), League Commissioner and the Division Vice President of the division involved in the disciplinary action. The Committee will act on suspensions and review possible disciplinary actions against managers, coaches, and players. The Committee may appoint a member or members of the League to said Committee as needed in order to establish an equitable decision on the matter.
2. **Managers and Coaches** – During a game, a team is limited to one manager and three coaches (including the scorekeeper). All managers and coaches are urged to remain in the dugout except for the purpose coaching first or third base. All managers and coaches must stay off the playing field and must remain behind the out-of-play line. Managers and/or coaches who violate this rule may receive one warning and upon a second violation may be ejected from the game. The team manager or acting manager is the only team representative who is permitted to approach an umpire to contest any ruling. Managers and/or coaches who violate this rule shall be ejected from the game. At the discretion of the umpire, any manager or coach who demonstrates unsportsmanlike conduct may be immediately ejected from the game or will receive one warning, and upon the second violation, shall be ejected from the game. If any ejection occurs during the last inning of any game, the ejection shall be effective for the next succeeding game scheduled for that individual's team. Unsportsmanlike conduct will include, but not be limited to, the use of profanity, the continued harassment of a player, umpire, spectator, or league official. The Association strictly prohibits managers and coaches from using physical contact as a means of disciplining a player. A manager or coach who violates this rule shall be suspended from all Association activities for two weeks subject to further action and/or review by the Disciplinary Review Committee. All ejections will be made by the umpire. Any coach or manager ejected two (2) times during any one playing season is automatically suspended from league participation, pending action by the Disciplinary Review Committee. All ejections of managers or coaches will be reviewed by the Disciplinary Review

Committee to determine if any further disciplinary action is warranted and the nature thereof. Smoking is not permitted on any portion of the playing field and dugout during league and tournament games. Managers and coaches must wear proper attire while on the field. They are encouraged to wear the shirts issued to them by the league. All equipment must also be in the dugout.

- 3. Players** - All players should be warned by the manager that ejection is possible if they intentionally throw batting helmets or bats. The use of profanity by players under any circumstances may be cause for immediate ejection. Players exhibiting unsportsmanlike conduct will be subject to immediate ejection from the game. If such conduct occurs after the completion of a game, but before a player has left the playing field or the immediate area of the field including the stands, the umpires in their judgment are authorized to eject such players for the next scheduled game for that player's team. If any ejection occurs during the last inning of any game, the ejection shall be effective for the next succeeding game scheduled for that player's team. If any ejected player continues to display unsportsmanlike conduct justifying expulsion after having been already ejected and leaving the playing field, the umpire in his judgment may eject such player for the next succeeding game scheduled for that player's team. Any player ejected two (2) times in any one playing season is automatically suspended from league participation, pending action by the Disciplinary Review Committee. Any ejection of a player from a game will be reported within 24 hours to the Division Vice President by that player's manager and also to the Chief-of-Umpires by the game umpire, either of whom may refer the incident to the Disciplinary Review Committee for possible further disciplinary action. Any further disciplinary action must be taken by the Disciplinary Review Committee and communicated to the player and his manager prior to the second succeeding game after which the ejection occurred. Players cannot be suspended by a manager or coach without prior approval of the Disciplinary Review Committee. The Howard-Palmetto Baseball-Softball Association is a drug and alcohol abuse free organization. Any player found to be in possession of alcohol, drugs, or drug paraphernalia will be subject to action by the Disciplinary Review Committee.
- 4. Spectators** - In the event spectators become unruly and exhibit behavior detrimental to the league's sportsmanship objectives, the umpire will issue a warning to both managers who, in turn, will inform their team's spectators of the umpire's ability to suspend the game if the conduct of the spectators

does not improve. Spectators **shall refrain** from the use of artificial noise-makers. If, in the judgment of the umpire, League Commissioner, or authorized agents, the initial warning to the spectators is not sufficient, the game will be forfeited by the team with which the spectator is associated. Alcohol is strictly forbidden at all Division games. Any spectator found to be in possession of alcohol at a game will be asked to immediately leave the premises. Failure of the spectator to leave when requested by the umpire, League Commissioner, or authorized agents, shall result in the game being forfeited by the team with which the spectator is associated.

5. An ejected manager, coach or player may stay at the game and become a spectator provided they:
  - (a) Sit in the bleachers; and
  - (b) Not become unruly or exhibit behavior detrimental to the League's sportsmanship objectives.
  - (c) An ejected manager or coach may not in any way coach his/her team. PENALTY - Forfeit by umpires discretion.

## **RULE: 13 PLAYING SCHEDULE**

1. The playing schedule will be charted for each division, for the entire season prior to opening day. There will be no schedule changes. Any violations will be subject to forfeit by all teams involved.
2. All rained out or postponed games are to be rescheduled as soon as possible by the respective Division Vice President as close as possible to the date of the rained-out game. Failure of a Manager to cooperate in a timely manner with the Division VP in rescheduling the game, may result in a forfeit or double forfeit. Games may not be rescheduled where a pitcher would have pitch back to back days.
3. Ideally, the schedule will provide for each team to play all other teams in their division at least twice. The League Commissioner may make exceptions to this rule.
4. There will be no regular season inter-league play except by approval of the Executive Committee.
5. The playing season begins in January and continues through May. The regular season will be used to determine playoff seeding. Playoffs are to be played at the conclusion of the regular playing season.
6. Playoffs for all baseball divisions will use a double elimination format where all teams are in the

playoffs. Seeding will be determined by the regular season record of all teams per division. The top 2 seeds will, when possible, be given a first-round bye. Playoff brackets will be determined after registration is complete but before the season begins.

7. Procedure in case of ties: Two (2) or more teams with the identical final season record will use the following tiebreakers to determine seeding:
  - i. The tied team's head to head win/loss record.
  - ii. The tied team's run differential against each other.
  - iii. Weighted strength of wins against all other teams.
  - iv. A random draw with performed by the division VP.

Example: In an 8 team division teams **a**, **b** and **c** are all tied for 2<sup>nd</sup> place with the same 14-6 record. Teams **d** and **e** also have a tie for 5<sup>th</sup> place with 8-12 records.

Scenario i: Teams **a** and **c** played each other twice, splitting their games. Teams **a** and **b** played each other twice and also split, but teams **b** and **c** played three (3) times with **b** losing 2 of 3. Team **a** had a 2-2 head to head record, team **b** had a 2-3 head to head record and team **c** had a 3-2 head to head record. Seed 2 will go to team **c**, seed 3 to team **a** and seed 4 to team **b**.

Scenario ii: Teams **a**, **b** and **c** played each other twice and they all split. Their game scores are the following:

Team	Team	Score	Differential
a	b	6-5	a: +1, b: -1
a	b	4-7	a: -3, b: +3
a	c	3-9	a: -6, c: +6
a	c	13-9	a: +4, c: -4
b	c	2-0	b: +2, c: -2
b	c	4-3	b: -1, c: +1

Team **a** had a run differential of -4, team **b** had a run differential of +3, and team **c** had a run differential of +1. Seed 2 will go to team **b**, seed 3 to team **c** and seed 4 to team **a**.

Scenario iii: Teams **a**, **b** and **c** played each other twice and they all split. Their run differentials were also the same at +2. Points will be calculated against the other 5 teams in the division, giving weight to the higher finishing teams. All wins against the #1 team will be given 8 points, wins against the #5 and #6 teams (teams **d** and **e** are tied for 5<sup>th</sup> place) will be given 4 points, wins against the

#7 team will be given 2 points and wins against the #8 team will be given 1 point. Team **a** has 24 points and is the 2 seed, team **b** has 21 points and is the 3 seed and team **c** has 20 points and is the 4 seed.

Scenario iv: The first three (3) tiebreakers do not resolve the tie, so the Division Vice President will have each manager draw a card (2,3,4). The team who draws the 2 will be the 2 seed, the team that draws the 3 will be the 3 seed and the team that draws the 4 will be the 4 seed.

8. Example playoff format for a 6 team division:



The top 2 finishing teams will receive a bye. Seed 3 will play seed 6 and seed 4 will play seed 5. Seed 1 will play the lowest seeded winner and seed 2 will play the other winner. Winning teams continue on in the winners' bracket. There will be a losers' bracket for all teams that lose a game. Once a team loses a second game they are eliminated. The team who comes out of the winners' bracket will play the team who survives the losers' bracket. If the loser bracket team wins this final game, a second game must be played to determine the overall champion (you must lose twice to be eliminated). The higher seed team will be the home team in all winners' and losers' bracket games. The winners' bracket team will be home team in the final game against the losers bracket with a coin flip in the 2<sup>nd</sup> championship game (if necessary). Brackets will be provided once the number of teams has been determined.

9. Final League Standings: (example with a 6-team division)

- 1<sup>st</sup> place:      playoff champion
- 2<sup>nd</sup> place:      finals losing team
- 3<sup>rd</sup> place:      semi-final loser from the loser bracket

- 4<sup>th</sup> place: 2 quarter final losers to play for 4<sup>th</sup> place (add'l game not shown above).  
5<sup>th</sup> place: loser of 4<sup>th</sup> place game  
6<sup>th</sup> place: first team eliminated

## **RULE 14: EQUIPMENT & UNIFORMS**

1. Only official and legal bats will be allowed. A one-piece rubber grip and knob combination is illegal. Metal bats must have a non-metal grip. The batter is OUT if a ball is hit, either fair or foul, with an illegal bat. For T-ball through Midget Divisions bats must meet the USSSA formal **1.15 BPF** standard (allowing diameters of up to 2<sup>3/4</sup>").

In the Juvenile Division, batters can only use bats that are BBCOR certified and bear the "**BBCOR Certified .50**" mark certification logo. If the logo does not appear on the bat, then it is considered an illegal bat. If the batter in the Juvenile Division steps into the batter's box with an illegal bat, he will be immediately ejected from the current game and will be suspended from the next game.

2. A standard fielder's glove may be worn by any player, but mitts may be used only by the Catcher and First Baseman.
3. In all divisions, male catchers must wear hard cups. No players will be allowed to catch if they do not wear a hard cup. A forfeit shall be declared if a cup is not available for either team's catcher. If neither team is able to obtain a cup for their catcher, a double forfeit will be declared. This equipment is the responsibility of the individual player.
4. Catchers must wear headgear (mask and helmet) that protects the ears and back of the head. Throat protectors are necessary and mandatory for all catchers, and headgear (mask, helmet, and throat protector) must be worn by every player when warming up a pitcher. This equipment will be supplied by HPBSA or a catcher may use their own equipment so long as it meets the requirements. It is the responsibility of the manager to get proper fitting equipment. **PENALTY** – The player must be removed from the catching position for the remainder of the game.
5. Batters must wear headgear that protects both ears and the back of the head. Each player is responsible to have their own helmet. Batting helmets will also be used for base running, on-deck areas, and for players coaching bases, and must be shared if necessary. **In T-Ball Titans, Atoms and Bantams, facemasks are required. In Midgets and Juveniles, helmets must be fitted a C-Flap protector (full**

facemasks are a suitable substitute). If a batter or runner intentionally removes or dislodges his/her headgear while a base runner or while a play is being made on this player either as a batter or a runner, he/she shall be declared OUT. The helmet may be removed only when time is out. NOTE: Whether the act is intentional is a judgment call by the umpire.

6. The home team will be required to furnish balls for each game, which will be returned to them after the game. In all divisions two (2) new official baseballs will be required.
7. No players will be permitted to deface their Official HPBSA uniform in any manner, and all players must wear their complete team uniform properly at all times. The uniform includes pants, shirt, and hat. In cold weather, sweatshirts and jackets can be worn (Pitchers may wear jackets when running the bases). PENALTY: 1st infraction - player receives warning, which shall be entered in scorebook, 2<sup>nd</sup> and subsequent infractions - player not permitted to play (unless it will result in a forfeit). Umpire shall report infractions to Chief of Umpires.
8. A pitcher's sweatshirt or undershirt, if showing, must be uniform in color and may not be white or grey. Pitchers shall not wear any type of sweat band and/or batting glove while pitching. Pitchers may not use white or grey gloves.
9. Shoes with metal spikes, metal cleats, or screw-on cleats are strictly prohibited on players in all divisions. Conversion cleats that are made completely of rubber and are attached to the shoe using a tiny screw are not considered to be screw on cleats. PENALTY - The player shall be ejected.
10. For safety and injury prevention, no players shall be allowed to play if they are wearing casts, splints, or other type of hard foreign objects. Soft bandages will be permitted. Also, jewelry, including metal stars, pins and emblems, must not be worn during a game, except for a medic alert necklace/bracelet. Exceptions must not be worn outside the jersey and must be taped down to the body. Players in violation, after a warning, will not be allowed to play.
11. If names are put on the back of a player's uniform it must be the player's last name.

## **RULE 15: PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

1. A team shall consist of nine (9) players in the Midget, and Juvenile Divisions, nine (9) or ten (10)

in the Bantams and ten (10) players in the Atom Coach Pitch Division. \*\*Total number of players assigned to teams in each division may vary based on the number of registered players for that year.

Teams will be permitted to start a game with eight players. Such a game will start on time; waiting for the additional player (i.e., using the 15 minute "grace period") will not be allowed. The location of the missing players on the field will be left up to the discretion of the manager of the team involved. A player shall be considered late if he/she has just arrived at the park and is not within the confines of the field (i.e., inside the fence or dugout) prior to game time. A manager will be permitted to insert a late arriving player in the 9/10<sup>th</sup> position providing the player arrives prior to the end of the third (3) inning. A player who is present earlier in the game but does not enter it at that time because of not feeling well will be considered the same as a late arriving player. Ejections occurring when no substitutes are available will result in an automatic forfeit by the team involved if they cannot field a minimum of 8 players.

2. A forfeit shall be declared if either team is unable to field a minimum of 8 players fifteen minutes after the scheduled starting time or at any time during the game, unless due to injury per Rule 16.7. If neither team is able to field a minimum of 8 players, a double forfeit will be declared.
3. **Batting Substitutions** - All teams shall have their players bat in rotation throughout the game even though they are not playing in the field. A player who arrives after the game begins, but before the end of the third (3) inning, will be considered the last batter in the line-up even if the home team has not batted. The inning ends when the third out is called. If the late arriving player is inserted in the batting order incorrectly, penalty for such action is forfeit for illegal substitution.
4. **Fielding Substitutions** - In ALL DIVISIONS, no player may remain on the bench for two consecutive defensive innings including extra innings.
  - a. Atom Coach Pitch - no player may be on the bench for more than one (1) inning and players must be alternated each inning during any extra innings played.
  - b. Bantams, Midgets & Juveniles - no player may remain on the bench for more than two (2) innings per game in regulation games. Players may sit a third time during extra innings (still not two in a row).
  - c. Bantams and Midgets – if a team has only one

extra player on the bench, then no player may sit more than one (1) inning in regulation game. Players may sit a second time during extra innings (still not two in a row).

Violations of these rules shall constitute an illegal substitution. Except to replace players lost due to injury, disciplinary ejections or pitching substitutions, absolutely no fielding substitutions may be made, from the bench, during a half-inning. In other words, if a player is put on the bench during the defensive half of an inning, he/she may not enter the game as a substitute during that half inning. (Exception - as provided in Rule 15.6 - Disciplinary Substitutions, Rule 15.7 - Injury Substitutions and Rule 15.8 - Pitching Substitutions). PENALTY for illegal substitution: Game will be forfeited. Players arriving after completion of the third (3rd) inning will not be permitted to play. If a player arrives during an inning that inning is considered an inning on the bench.

5. On all batting and fielding substitutions, it behooves all scorekeepers, opposing managers and coaches to see to it that a forfeit does not occur. The League finds it reprehensible for a manager or coach to recognize that a forfeitable offense is about to occur and deliberately allow it to take place for their own advantage.
6. **Disciplinary Substitutions** - Any disciplinary action taken against players during the course of the game for actions which occur during the game is the prerogative of the umpires, the League Commissioner, or Division VP. Managers will be permitted to make disciplinary substitutions only with approval from, after consultation with, the umpires.
7. **Injury Substitutions** - An injured player may be substituted by the manager of the team involved. Injured players are permitted to return to the game at the end of any subsequent half-inning only with the concurrence of the umpire. AN INJURED PLAYER MAY ONLY RETURN TO THE GAME ONCE. If removed a second time, the injured player must remain on the bench for the remainder of the game. Teams with only nine players will be permitted to continue with the 8 players. Games will be suspended when an injury occurs to a team playing with 8 players if the injured player is unable to return to the game. In all divisions, if a player is injured while at bat and cannot complete his/her turn at bat, the next batter in the line-up will then bat and assume the ball and strike count of the injured batter. If a player leaves the game for whatever reason (illness, injury, ejection, disciplinary substitution, or personal reasons), and is unable to return, his/her subsequent turns at bat will NOT be

an automatic out. A player who is injured while running the bases and who cannot continue will be substituted for by the player that made the last out. If a player has been injured before an out has been made in the game, then the last player in the batting order will be the substitute. There will be no pre-determined courtesy runners allowed under any circumstances. A player who is injured while at bat, running the bases, or in the field, may have a substitution, as per the injury substitution rules. If the injured player cannot be safely removed from the field, the umpire will suspend the game time clock until play is able to be safely resumed.

8. **Pitching Substitutions** – a player that is put on the bench during the defensive half of an inning, may reenter the game as a substitute during that half inning for the pitcher of record. The player returning to the game must be the pitcher of record for at least one batter and cannot be replaced until that batter's turn at bat is completed. Once the substitution is made, the pitcher of record must be immediately placed on the bench for the remainder of that half inning and may not enter the game as a substitute during that half inning under any circumstances if there is another player on the bench. If there is not another player on the bench then he may only return during that half inning as a result of the exceptions provided in Rule 15.6 - Disciplinary Substitutions and/or Rule 15.7 - Injury Substitutions). If a player reenters the game as a pitcher, then the inning will not count as an inning sat for that returning player. However, the inning will count as an inning sat for the pitcher that was removed from the field and placed on the bench. A manager may only substitute the pitcher with a player from the bench once per inning.
9. **If a player has not played in two successive games, the managers must, before the next game, notify the Division Vice President.** The purpose of this rule is to prevent deliberate unsportsmanlike manipulation of the number of players participating in games. If the involved player misses the subsequent third (3rd) game without the above-mentioned notification, and if the Division Vice President's judgment is that the circumstances so warrant, then the third game and any such subsequent games will be forfeited to the other team. **Similarly, if a player permanently withdraws from a team, the manager must report this to the Division Vice President, or if not available, the Baseball Commissioner, within forty-eight (48) hours of being notified of the withdrawal.** If this is not done, and the Division Vice President believes that the circumstances so warrant, a meeting of the Disciplinary Committee will

be called to decide if any or all of that team's subsequent victories, beginning with the game in which the involved player was no longer on the team, should be forfeited.

10. If the situation arises that a player is injured to the extent that a replacement from the pool is assigned to a team replacing the injured player, then the newly assigned player is considered a TANDEM player to the "injured inactive" player. The TANDEM player is subject to the same restrictions, if any, as originally specified at the draft for the "injured inactive" player. (For example, if the "injured inactive" player was a "no pitch" at the draft, then the TANDEM player is also a "no pitch", etc.) Should the injured player recover and rejoin the team, the player and his TANDEM will be considered a complete TANDEM for all remaining games, and must be substituted one for the other under all conditions. Tandem players must alternate in the batting order and in the field. When both players are physically able to play, and only one player is present for a scheduled game, the player present may play the entire game. If both players are pitchers, either the returning "injured inactive" player or the Tandem player may pitch in a game, but never both in the same game. The combined Tandem will be created as one player for the purposes of applying Rule 17. NOTE: Consult commissioners, for an appropriate ruling, each time a TANDEM situation arises. The commissioner may restrict or adjust the fielding substitution, including pitching, at his sole discretion.
11. If a player sustains an injury requiring more than first aid, such as a broken bone, concussion, a laceration requiring sutures, etc., the manager must notify a park official and the League President within 24 hours of the injury.
12. If a player has or develops a medical condition that could affect the player's or other players' safety or health, in the opinion of the commissioner, the commissioner may require written medical clearance before the player is permitted to play in the league.

## **RULE 16: THE GAME**

1. **An Official Game** - shall consist of six (6) innings or the time limit. If during the progress of any game, the home team, after at least 3 1/2 innings have been played is leading by 12 or more, or the visiting team, after at least 4 innings have been played is leading by 12 or more runs at the end of any complete inning, the umpire shall terminate the

game in favor of the leading team.

**(a)** The playing time (time limit) shall be determined from the time the umpire calls "play ball" at the start of the game, until the third out is made by the home team at bat. In Juvenile Division there shall be a 2 hour time limit. Atom, Bantam and Midget Divisions will have a time limit of 1 hour and 45 minutes. There will be no time limit in any playoff or championship games.

**(b)** If the allotted playing time has elapsed during any game and:

**(1)** The LOSING team has had its turn at bat in the 4th inning or later, the umpire shall terminate the game in favor of the leading team.

**(2)** BOTH teams have had their turn at bat in the 4th inning and the score is tied, if field availability permits, the game shall be continued until one team is in the lead after a complete inning and is declared the winner.

**(3)** The LOSING team has not had its turn at bat in the 4th inning. If field availability permits, the game may be continued until a winner is declared after the LOSING team has batted in the fourth inning OR -

**(4)** The LOSING team has not had its turn at bat in the 4th inning and field availability does not permit continuance of the game - THIS WILL BECOME A SUSPENDED GAME, and completed under Rule 16.3(d) below.

**2. Time Between Innings** - In order to speed up play, there will be a maximum of two (2) minutes allowed between each half inning. The pitcher will not be allowed any additional time to complete his warm-ups. EXCEPTION: Whenever a new pitcher takes the mound, he will be allowed up to a maximum of eight (8) warm-up pitches. PENALTY – If the team in the field is not ready when the umpire calls "play ball" he may award a count of ball one to the batter and continue to call balls to the batter until the team in the field is ready. If the batter is not ready to bat when the umpire calls "play ball" he may award a count of strike one on the batter and continue to call strikes until the batter is ready.

**3. Suspended Game** - A game interrupted by rain prior to being an official game will be considered a suspended game. Once a game has started, the home plate umpire must wait at least 15 minutes before suspending the game. This is a judgment call by the umpire and not subject to protest. The safety of the players will be the primary concern. If or when play is resumed, any elapsed (rain delay) time will not count against the time limit. The remainder of

the playing time (time limit) will apply.

**(a)** If a game that has gone long enough to be an official game is called because of inclement weather during an uncompleted inning, and the home team is ahead, the game ends and shall be an official game.

**(b)** If a game that has gone long enough to be an official game is called because of inclement weather during an uncompleted inning, and the visiting team has scored one or more runs to tie the score, and the home team has not scored, or the visiting team has scored one or more runs to take the lead, or the game is tied, the game becomes a suspended game.

**(c)** If a game that has gone long enough to be an official game is called because of natural darkness during an uncompleted inning, and the score is either tied or the visiting team is ahead, the game will be considered a suspended game. If the game is an official game and the home team is ahead at the time the game is called, the home team shall be declared the winner. This does not refer to failure of park lights.

**(d)** A suspended game may be rescheduled to be resumed, at a later date, from the exact point of suspension of the original game. The completion of a suspended game is a continuation of the original game. The lineup and batting order of both teams shall be exactly the same as the lineup and batting order at the moment of suspension, subject to the rules governing substitutions and the following exceptions:

**(1)** When a game is suspended after the completion of the third inning, a player who was in the original lineup but not present for the rescheduled game, will be replaced by a player, if available, who was not present at the original game. If two or more players who were not present at the original game, are available for said substitution, they will act as tandem players under Rule 16.9 for the remainder of the game.

**(2)** When a game is suspended **prior** to the completion of the third inning, any player(s) who was not at the original game, but is at the continuation, will be inserted at the end of the batting order.

**(3)** When a game is suspended **after** the completion of the third inning, and a team was playing with only eight/nine players, it must complete the rescheduled game with only eight/nine players; moreover, the inserted player is not allowed to pitch.

(4) A player (pool player) who was not on the team roster when the game was suspended, may be used in any rescheduled game, even if said player has taken the place of a player who was missing from the original game.

(5) A player who was at the first game will not be allowed in the second game if he arrives after his next turn at bat. If arriving before his at bat but after resumption of play, he will replace the player who replaced him (if any).

4. **Score book** - Each team is required to keep a score book for every game played, with the “official book” belonging to the home team. The home team’s score book will list the date and time of the game, the batting order for both teams by last name and number, which cannot be changed once the game is started, with the exception of authorized substitutions. The score will be verified in each book at the completion of every half inning. In all Divisions starting from Bantam, ALL innings pitched by that team’s pitcher, including pitch count, must be conspicuously and permanently recorded in the pitcher’s own team’s score book. (For record purposes, an inning pitched will be charged once the umpire declares “play ball” and the pitcher addresses the pitching rubber). This record must be made available to the opposing manager, if requested, prior to the start of any game. If the score book is not available, with records sufficient to determine the eligibility of a particular pitcher, then the game will be played, and the outcome will be determined by the Protest Committee, if requested by the offended manager. The scorekeepers are strongly urged to sit together.
5. **Official Game Sheet** - In the Bantam, Midget & Juvenile divisions, umpires will complete an official game sheet for all games. The sheet will include the following information: an accurate roster of participating players from each team and the final score. These sheets will then be given to the division Vice President for review (or left at concession stand if the VP is unavailable).

## **RULE 17: PITCHING REGULATIONS**

No player may pitch more than 10 innings in any seven (7) consecutive day period during the regular season or league playoffs. No player may pitch two (2) consecutive days.

### **1. Pitching Limitations:**

- a. **Bantam** – There will be a limitation of 70 pitches or three (3) innings pitched per game or in a single

day, whichever occurs first.

- b. Midget – There will be a limitation of 80 pitches or three (3) innings pitched per game or in a single day, whichever occurs first.
- c. Juvenile – There will be a limitation of 90 pitches or three (3) innings pitched per game or in a single day.
- d. Pitch counts will be maintained by each team (score keeper or coach). The head umpire will compare pitch counts with each team between innings. In the case of discrepancy, the home team count will be official. Once a player reaches the maximum number of pitches allowed, they must be removed from the game, although they may complete an at bat before being removed. If a pitcher throws beyond the maximum number of pitches allowed and is not removed, they must be removed once the umpire has been made aware that the limit has been exceeded. There will be no penalty in this situation.
- e. IN ALL BASEBALL DIVISIONS no player once removed from the mound may return to pitch in the same game. No inning pitched or re-entry regulation may be waived for any reason. PENALTY: Game forfeited for violation of any of the above rules.
- f. Where two siblings or family members were isolated in the draft and therefore placed on the same team and both players had each received pitching rankings of a “6, 5 or 4”, then the following pitching limitations will be made on both players:
  - 1. In the Bantam, Midget and Juvenile Divisions, the two siblings or family members will be limited to a combined total of five (5) innings pitched per game. Each pitcher is still subject to the division’s restriction on the number of pitches thrown or number of innings pitched per game or in a single day.
  - 2. Breaking balls in baseball are not permitted up to and including the Midget Division. If this infraction occurs, the umpire will declare the pitch a ball. If the batter hits the pitch, the manager of the offensive team may elect to decline the penalty and accept the play. Such election shall be made immediately at the end of the play. If the pitcher continues throwing breaking balls after being warned, he must be removed from the mound for the remainder of the game. Breaking balls are a delayed judgment call by the umpire. NOTE: A knuckle ball is not considered a breaking ball.
  - 3. In the Bantam Division only, there will be a NO BALK penalty in effect (warnings may be issued during the course of the season for educational

purposes).

4. In the Midget Division, each pitcher will be issued one balk warning per game for the first half of the season. After one warning, balks will be called.
5. Only one charged conference per pitcher, per inning will be allowed, with the removal from the mound on the second charged conference. A visit to the mound by the team manager or other team representative between innings is not a charged conference. A visit to the mound will be charged if a manager or coach instructs the catcher to take time out and visit the mound. No visit will be charged if the catcher initiates this action on his own.
6. The pitcher must complete his warm-ups within the two (2) minutes allowed between each half inning pursuant to Rule 16.2. EXCEPTION: Whenever a new pitcher takes the mound, he will be allowed up to a maximum of eight (8) warm-up pitches.
7. If a pitcher hits three (3) batters in the same inning, or four (4) batters in one game, he must be removed from the mound.
8. A player becomes the pitcher of record only when he takes the mound and the umpire declares "Play ball!"
9. A pitching appearance in any part of any one inning constitutes a complete inning of pitching regardless of whether the player throws a pitch to the plate, records an out or makes a pickoff at a base.

## **RULE 18: BASERUNNING**

1. In the Midget Division, a runner at third base may lead off no more than twenty (20) feet after the pitcher has addressed the plate and until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. PENALTY - Runner is out – no pitch. PENALTY - Runner is out - no pitch
2. In all BASEBALL Divisions, if a base runner attempts to steal home, and the batter swings at the pitched ball, the ball will be ruled DEAD; and BOTH the batter and the base runner from third base will be automatically OUT. If there are already two outs when this occurs, the batter will be declared the final out in the inning. NOTE: This rule is designed for the safety of the players and is not intended to discourage the "Squeeze play", (bunt) or the stealing of home, where allowed.
3. If the catcher of record is a base runner, and there are two (2) outs, he/she MAY be replaced as a base runner by the player who was declared the last out.
4. Collisions - In ALL Divisions base runners must slide

or avoid the tag in their own established base line. This rule exists to prevent injuries and thus should be enforced only when there is a collision between two bodies. This would also rule out incidental contact as a reason to enforce this rule. PENALTY - This is a judgment call by the umpire. Runner may be declared out and also may be ejected from the game. Obstruction by the defensive player does not negate the collision rule. 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 possession.

5. A runner may not jump over a defensive player who is in the act of making a play on that runner.
6. In All Divisions, there will be NO head-first slides into home plate. PENALTY - The runner is automatically declared out. Back door slides where the touching of home plate is done with a hand, or a slide to avoid the catcher and a reach for home plate with a hand is not considered a headfirst slide. This is a judgment call by the umpire and cannot be argued.
7. When using the double base, the following rules should be enforced:
  - (a) A batted ball hitting or bounding over the white portion is fair.
  - (b) A batted ball hitting or bounding over the colored portion is foul.
  - (c) Whenever a play is being made on the batter-runner, the defense must use the white portion and the batter-runner the colored portion.
  - (d) The defense may use the colored portion of any force out attempt from the foul side of first base.
  - (e) On an errant throw pulling the defense off the base into foul ground, the defense and the batter - runner can use either the white or colored portion.

## **RULE 19: BATTING**

1. The Florida High School speed-up rule applies to the Midget and Juvenile Divisions. That is, the batter is only allowed to leave the batters box after: A swing, foul ball, wild pitch, or play being attempted at any base. If the batter removes both feet from the box in any other instance, a strike is awarded to the pitcher.
2. In all Divisions, when in the umpire's judgment, a bat is intentionally thrown or the thrown bat hits a

player or umpire, the batter will be declared out. The ball will be dead, and all runners must return to the base occupied prior to the pitch. Players will not be warned.

3. The on-deck batter must stand in the on-deck circle behind the hitter.
4. In all Divisions, only 1 offensive conference (called by the offensive team) will be permitted per inning.
5. Fake bunting followed by a full swing is illegal. PENALTY - Batter is out.

## **RULE 20: T-BALL TITANS**

1. **No keeping score** – scorekeeper will only track batting order and defensive positions in the field.
2. Game will consist of 3 innings with a 1 hour 15 minute time limit whichever occurs first.
3. Base distance 55 feet, pitching rubber distance 36 feet
4. Ball will be hit off of tee all season and must travel 8 feet in order to be a fair ball
5. Batter will receive four swings except when the last swing results in a foul ball at which time the batter will receive an additional swing.
6. No walks will be issued.
7. Batters must wear helmet with facemask and chin strap.
8. Batter must take a full swing, no bunting allowed. (Judgment call by umpire) Penalty: Batter returns to tee and receives the remaining number of swings left in the at bat – runners return to base held before swing. If the infraction occurs on the last swing, the batter shall receive one additional swing.
9. Base runners may not leave the base until the ball is hit – no leads or base stealing allowed. Penalty- dead ball if hit, runners return to bases.
10. All teams will play with ten (10) defensive players - five (5) of whom must be in the outfield (as defined by the umpire) prior to the ball being placed on the tee. The player in the pitcher's position must remain in the vicinity of and behind the pitching plate until the ball is hit. Vicinity is defined as within ten (10) feet of the pitching rubber. There will be no catcher.
11. Every player must play the infield at least one (1) inning per game unless the parent(s) request

otherwise. No player may sit on the bench during the defensive half of an inning more than once.

12. The ball remains alive until the umpire calls "time", which should be done when the ball is held by an infielder in fair territory of the infield area and, in the judgment of the umpire, all play has ceased.
13. Outfielders cannot make an out by tagging a runner or stepping on a base. Must make a throw to the infield.
14. The infield fly rule (automatic out) does not apply. The ball must be caught for an out.
15. **Batting** - The entire batting order (not to exceed the maximum number of players that are present) will bat each inning. The inning shall end even if there are less than three (3) outs.
16. **SECOND HALF OF SEASON** – Batters who are ready for coach pitch may have no more than three (3) balls pitched to them, except when the last pitch is hit foul at which time, they will receive another pitch. If no hit is made, then the batter must use the tee.
17. No on deck batters allowed.
18. During a game a team is limited to one (1) manager and three (3) coaches (four adults). All managers and coaches must remain in the dugout except for the purposes of coaching first or third base or coaching the outfield. Outfield coaches (maximum of two) must remain behind the out of play line. All equipment must remain in the dugout.
19. Runner who has past the halfway mark on base path will be awarded the next base when "time" is called – if not runner goes back to previous base.
20. Feet first sliding only.

Note: There will be no draft of players. Players will be assigned to teams at the sole discretion of the T-ball Vice President.

## **RULE 21: ATOM COACH PITCH**

1. Coaches will pitch all season. Coaches must pitch overhand and his/her foot must be in contact with the rubber. If a coach elects to pitch while kneeling, then his/her knee must be in contact with the rubber. The batter will receive a maximum of three (3) strikes or five (5) pitches except when the last pitch is hit foul at which time he will receive another pitch. If a hit ball strikes the pitcher/coach, it will be ruled a no pitch and all runners must return to their original bases.

- a. Use of a Tee – (first half of season only) the first time through the batting order only, if the batter strikes out either after a 3<sup>rd</sup> strike or 5<sup>th</sup> pitch, a tee will be brought in and the batter will be given one (1) swing to put the ball in play. A swing and a miss or a foul ball will be declared an out. The tee will not be available once the leadoff batter comes to bat for the second time in the game.
2. All teams will play with ten (10) defensive players, four (4) of whom must be in the outfield (as defined by the umpire) prior to the ball being pitched. The player in the pitcher's position must remain in the vicinity and behind the pitching plate until the ball is hit. Vicinity is defined as ten (10) feet from the pitching rubber.
3. No balls will be called or walks issued.
4. Bunting is NOT allowed. Whenever a batter bunts the ball, or attempts to bunt the ball, the batter will be automatically declared "out", and any base runner(s) may NOT advance.
5. Base runner(s) may not lead off any base until the ball passes the plane of the batter, nor may they advance on a wild pitch or passed ball. Base stealing is NOT permitted. PENALTY - Runner(s) out - no pitch.
6. The ball remains alive until the umpire calls "time". Time will be called when the ball is held up by an infielder over his head in fair territory of the infield area, or, in the judgment of the umpire, all play has ceased.
7. The infield fly rule (automatic out) does not apply. The ball must be caught for an out.
8. The fifteen (15) run rule will be in effect after 4 innings. Rule 16-1. does not apply for Atoms.
9. In any one (1) inning, if the entire batting order (not to exceed the maximum number of players that are present) comes to bat, the inning shall end even if there are less than three (3) outs. EXCEPTION: In the sixth (6) and any subsequent innings, three (3) outs must be made.
10. During a game, a team is limited to one manager and three coaches (including the scorekeeper). All managers and coaches are urged to remain in the dugout except for the purpose of pitching, coaching first or third base, or coaching the outfield. All managers, coaches and outfield coaches must stay off the playing field and must remain behind the out-of-play line. All equipment must also be in the dugout.
11. Games shall be six (6) innings or 1 hour and 45

minutes in length. There will be no time limits during playoffs.

12. There will be a maximum of three (3) minutes allowed between each half inning. If the team in the field is not ready when the umpire calls "play ball" he may award the batter first base. The Manager of the team at bat may choose to allow his batter to remain at the plate and hit. If the batter is not ready when the umpire calls "play ball", he may award a count of strike one on the batter and continue to call strikes until the batter is ready.

## **RULE 22: BANTAM**

1. No pitcher shall pitch more than three innings or exceed 70 pitches per game or in a single day, whichever occurs first.
2. No defensive player may position himself closer than 15 feet inside the base or baseline toward home plate from any position, unless the batter commits himself to a bunting position. PENALTY - After one (1) warning, a player violating this rule will not be allowed to play any position in the infield for the remainder of that game.
3. Base runners will not be permitted to lead and shall not be permitted to steal until the pitched ball crosses home plate. If the base runner leaves the bag, either intentionally or unintentionally, before the ball crosses home plate, he will be declared out by the umpire.
4. Steals may occur once the ball has crossed home plate
5. No runner may score from third base to home unless he is either:
  - a. Forced
  - b. Advanced by a hit ball
  - c. There is a pick-off play by any player at any base

NOTE: A fake throw does not constitute a pick-off play. A throw from the catcher to any base is considered a pick-off play.

6. The infield fly rule (automatic out) does not apply. The ball must be caught for the out.
7. No outfielder may encroach within fifteen feet of any base, excluding a pop-up or fly ball. PENALTY - Batter runner is awarded first base and all base runners advance one base.
8. Whenever a third strike is not legally caught by the catcher, the batter shall be automatically declared "out", and any base runner(s) on first or second

base may advance at their own risk.

9. A base runner stealing 3<sup>rd</sup> base is not allowed to continue home regardless of the throw from the catcher. The intent is to promote throws to 3<sup>rd</sup> base from the catcher without fear of giving up a run.
10. A base runner may advance only the 1 base when attempting a steal regardless of the throw from the catcher.

## **AWARDS**

Atom, Bantam, Midget and Juvenile Divisions each receive individual 1st and 2nd place trophies. In Atom Coach Pitch there will also be 3rd and 4th place trophies with participation awards for the remaining teams. T-Ball players will receive participation awards.

