

# TOURNAMENT NATION USA PLAYING RULES

All Tournament Nation USA games will be played in accordance with the By-Laws & Rules outlined below unless special exceptions are noted.

## Coach/Manager Responsibility

1. Team Insurance, TBR (Travel Baseball Rankings) Roster, Tournament Fee and Gate Fee will be required before first game. NO EXCEPTIONS - please check-in at the gate 1hr. 15-minutes before game start.
2. All teams should be ready to present team/player documentation for tournament entry or protest. Example: Player legal name on roster must match birth certificate. A player shall be eligible to compete in the Tournament Nation USA By-laws & Rules when players first name, last name (no middle names, nick names, shortened names, slang names, initials, prefixes or suffixes are allowed) and date of birth (in proper format – mm/dd/yyyy) are listed **EXACTLY** as they appear on players birth certificate, as a member on an eligible team's Official Online Roster. Failure to comply with this rule may result in your team being prohibited from participating in events. Age Restriction: Age as of May 1<sup>st</sup> current year. Tournament Nation USA recognizes USSSA and Perfect Game rules regarding rosters, age grade exemptions.
3. No infield practice allowed prior to game start.

## Special Safety Rules

1. No players, coaches, managers, sponsors, and/or spectators may use electronic devices including photograph/video, cell phones, PDA's, iPad's, etc. on the field during live ball.
  - a. First Offense: Warning will be issued.
  - b. Second Offense: Manager will be ejected.
    - i Note: If devices are determined to be used during live ball for communication between players or coaches, team will forfeit game
2. NO SLASHING for 8U-12U  
Slash Bunt: A play by the team at-bat where the hitter assumes the position for a bunt and then changes grip and takes a swing at the ball.
  - i. First Offense: The batter is out, the runners go back to their bases, and the coach/manager is given a warning.
  - ii. Second Offense: The batter is out, the runners go back to their bases, and the coach/manager is ejected.
3. With a runner on 3rd attempting to steal home with the pitch (either on his own or in conjunction with a squeeze bunt), THE BATTER MUST BUNT OR TAKE THE PITCH.
  - a. If the batter swings, the ball will be dead with runners returning to their original bases, the batter will be out, and the coach/manager will be **EJECTED. NO WARNING** will be given in this situation.
4. Bat / ball boys / girls under the age of eighteen (18) shall not be permitted. Only rostered players in dugout and on playing field

5. ALL players, coaches, managers, sponsors and spectators must stay inside the dugout during live ball.
  - a. Exception: One (1) on deck player and two (2) offensive coaches in their designated coaching boxes located at first base and third base.
6. Throwing Bats 7U-18U — If batter is determined to throw the bat in a dangerous manner the umpire in his discretion will:
  - a First Offense: Issue a team warning.
  - b Second Offense: Dead ball, batter is out.
7. Pitcher Warm-up Area is live ball territory.
  - a. Protective gear during warm-up is required at all times
  - b. A coach or player (wearing a helmet) must have a glove and standing near the pitcher to protect him from balls hit in his direction during a live ball.
  - c. Live Ball Pro Rule: Any contact with player(s) or coach will be considered a dead ball.
    - i. If the umpire, in his sole discretion, deems interference by player or coach in live ball territory the play will result in a dead ball and two bases awarded to the offense.
8. SMOKING: Shall be prohibited around all playing areas at the facility.
  - a Please use the parking lot or stay three hundred (300) feet from any playing area where kids are practicing or playing baseball.
9. No ALCOHOLIC beverages are allowed.
10. FIREARMS are strictly prohibited.

## **IF Medical Emergency — CALL 911 FIRST. Notify management or umpires.**

### **Shoes**

1. Shoes with pointed spikes similar to golf or track shoes shall not be worn in any division of play.
  - a. In age divisions 8U — 12U non-metal cleats must be worn.
  - b. In age divisions 13U — 18U traditional metal baseball spikes may be worn.

### **Protective Equipment**

1. The catcher shall wear all appropriate protective gear including:
  - a. Catcher's helmet with facemask and either a built-in extended throat guard or a separately attached throat guard
  - b. Chest protector
  - c. Shin and / or leg guards
  - d. Protective cup
2. In age divisions 8U — 12U
  - a. The catcher's helmet shall fully cover both ears.
  - b. All offensive players shall use a double ear-flap batting helmet whenever at bat, on deck, on base or any other time outside of the dugout and the ball is live and in play.

Note: If the umpire observes any violation of these rules, he shall direct the violation to be corrected. If the violation is not immediately corrected, in the umpire's judgment, the umpire shall eject the offender from the game.

## Game Preliminaries

1. A flip of a coin between the two teams shall determine the home team for each pool play game
  - a. The highest seeded team will be the home team for bracket play games and championship game.
2. **Time Limits:** Umpires will start the clock at the plate meeting
  - a. 8U **All pool games will be 1:15** unless otherwise noted.
    - i. 8U **All bracket games will be 1:15** unless otherwise noted.
  - b. 9U-18U **All pool games will be 1:30** unless otherwise noted.
    - i. 9U-12U **All bracket games will be 1:30** unless otherwise noted.
    - ii. 13U-14U **All bracket games will be 1:45** unless otherwise noted.
  - c. 15U-18U **All pool AND bracket games will be 1:45** unless otherwise noted.
  - d. Note: No inning will start after, 8U (1:15Hr), 9U-12U (1:30Hr), 13U-18U (1:45Hr) on Championship Games.
  - e. Inclement Weather at sole discretion of Tournament Director game times may be reduced to 8U (50 Min), 9U-18U (60 Min)

## Slide Rule

1. Whenever a tag play is evident, a runner must:
  - a. Slide or seek to avoid contact with the fielder and/or catcher.
  - b. Attempting to jump, leap, or dive over the fielder and/or catcher is not interpreted as seeking to avoid contact.
  - c. Malicious contact shall supersede all obstruction penalties.
2. **Penalty:** The runner shall be called out and may be ejected from the game at the umpire's discretion.
  - a. **Note:** When enforcing this rule, the umpire should judge the runner's intent.
    - i. If the umpire feels that the contact was unintentional, then the runner should only be declared out.
    - ii. If the umpire feels that the contact was intentional and/or malicious, then the runner should be declared out and ejected.

## Conferences

1. The following rules pertain to the visit of the manager or a coach to the pitcher.
  - a. This rule limits the number of visits a manager or a coach may make to any pitcher in any one (1) inning.
  - b. A second (2nd) visit to the same pitcher in the same inning will cause this pitcher's automatic removal from the pitching position.
2. **Offense** — one time out per half inning allowed.
3. Note: If umpire feels the coach is delaying the game, a called strike will be issued to the batter.

## Balks

1. **9U-10U:** Pitchers will be allowed some leniency in regards to balks.
  - a. Pitchers will be called for all major violations and warned for minor violations that do not affect the outcome of a play.
2. **11U-18U:** Balks will be strictly enforced without warning.
3. **Note:** A Balk is a dead ball.

## Line-ups

1. Teams may bat
  - a. A nine (9) player line-up
  - b. Ten (10) player line-up using an Extra Hitter (EH) or
  - c. Continuous line-up of all present, eligible, uniformed players.
    - i. Such line-up must be declared before the start of the game and used the entire game.
2. If a team uses a line-up that contains substitute players
  - a. All starting players may be removed and reenter the game once, but must re-enter in their original position in the batting order
  - b. Non-starters are not allowed to re-enter
    - i. When a starter re-enters, the player in the starter's batting position in the batting order must be removed from the game and is ineligible for the remainder of the game
    - ii. If a team uses a line-up that contains ten (10) players, the player in the Extra Hitter position, while not actually playing a defensive position, will be treated as such for substitution purposes.
  - c. If a team uses a continuous line-up, all players other than the nine (9) defensive position players are Extra Hitters and may move freely in defensive positions with the exception of the pitching position.
    - i. Any player(s) arriving after the game has begun, shall be added to the bottom of the batting line-up
    - ii. When using the continuous lineup and a player has to leave the game for any reason, that position in the line-up becomes an out when that at bat comes around.
3. In scholastic divisions 15U-18U
  - a. If the Extra Hitter (EH) is not being utilized, then the Designated Hitter (DH) may be utilized in accordance with the NFHS (National Federation of High School Association) baseball rules.
  - b. A Designated Hitter may be (not mandatory) selected for any one starting player and all subsequent substitutes for that player in the game.
  - c. A starting defensive player cannot be listed as the Designated Hitter in the starting line-up.
    - i. A Designated Hitter for said player shall be selected prior to the start of the game, and his name shall be included on the line-up.
  - d. Failure to declare a Designated Hitter prior to the game precludes the use of a DH in the game.
  - e. If a pinch hitter or pinch runner for the Designated Hitter is used, that player becomes the new DH.
  - f. The player who was the Designated Hitter may re-enter
  - g. A Designated Hitter and the player for whom the DH is batting are locked into the batting order.
    - i. No multiple substitutions may be made that will alter the batting order.
  - h. The role of the Designated Hitter is terminated for the remainder of the game when:
    - i. The defensive player, or any previous defensive player for whom the Designated Hitter batted, subsequently bats, pinch-hits, or runs for the DH;
    - ii. The Designated Hitter or any previous DH assumes a defensive position.
4. Teams may play an official game with an eight (8) player line-up.
  - a. If a team plays with an eight (8) player line-up, an out shall be declared for the ninth (9th) position in the batting line-up each turn at bat.
  - b. A ninth (9th) player and all subsequent players may be added to the bottom of the batting lineup as soon as they become available.
  - c. A team may continue a game with a minimum of eight (8) eligible players.

## Position of Fielders

1. When the ball is put in play at the start of, or during a game, all fielders other than the catcher shall be on fair territory.
  - a. This means that both feet must be on fair territory.
  - b. A foot that is touching a foul line is considered to be in fair territory.
  - c. Violation of this rule is not a balk.
2. **Penalty:** The offensive team will have the choice of taking the result of any play or having the play nullified if it benefited the defense.
3. 9U-18U is allowed to have 9 defensive players (three outfielders and six infielders).
4. 8U is allowed to have 10 defensive players (four outfielders and six infielders).
5. All games must start with at least 8 defensive players.

## Run Rules

1. An imposed Mercy (Run) Rule shall be used to complete a regulation game when one team's margin of lead is greater than or equal to the listed run differential in the corresponding inning.
  - a. Six (6) Inning Games: 15 after 3, 12 after 4, 8 after 5
  - b. Seven (7) Inning Games: 15 after 4, 12 after 5, 8 after 6
2. Run Rules Per Innings 8U-14U 7 Runs Per Inning. Championship game is unlimited runs per inning.
3. If team doesn't show up and forfeits, final score is 8-0.

## Intentional Walk

1. An Intentional Walk may be issued upon announcement from the coach, pitcher or catcher.
  - a. The four (4) pitches need **not** be thrown.
2. Note: An Intentional Walk may be issued at any point in the count to the batter.
  - a. "Time" will be called by the umpire prior to the award and play will not resume until after the batter has reached first base and umpire issue play.
  - b. 8U Only ONE Intentional Walk per game.

## Courtesy Runners

1. At any time, the offensive team may use a courtesy runner for the pitcher and catcher of record the previous inning on defense.
  - a. The courtesy runner must be a player not presently in the line-up.
    - i. If no players not presently in the line-up are available, the courtesy runner shall be the player making the last batted out.
    - ii. In 8U can only use courtesy runner for the catcher of record. Can NOT use for Pitcher.
2. Note: The re-entry status of the courtesy runner, pitcher, and catcher shall not be affected by this rule.
  - a. If at any time, a courtesy runner is determined to be ineligible, a proper replacement pursuant to these rules (if available) will be used without penalty.

## **Sportsmanship & Ejections**

1. All players, coaches, managers, sponsors and spectators are expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times.
  - a. Any player, coach, manager, sponsor or spectator whose conduct is unbecoming or abusive shall at a minimum be reprimanded with a warning.
  - b. If warranted, the offending party shall be ejected from the game at the discretion of the Umpires and/or the Tournament Director.
  - c. Any player, coach, manager, sponsor or spectator leaving their position or base, in the field, on the bench, in the dugout area or grandstands to participate in a fight, brawl or altercation shall be immediately ejected from the game and may be disbarred/suspended pursuant to Tournament Nation USA events.
  - d. Any coach, manager, sponsor or spectator ejected from a game shall immediately remove himself from the vicinity of the playing field and/or grandstands for the remainder of the game.
  - e. Additional penalties may be assessed at the discretion of the Tournament Director.
  - f. Any player ejected from a game shall either immediately be confined to the dugout area or asked to leave the park for the remainder of the game.
  - g. All persons ejected may be asked to leave the park and/or venue at the discretion of the Tournament Director.
  - h. Abusive language or cursing shall not be tolerated under any circumstances and shall result in an automatic ejection.
  - i. Throwing of equipment shall result in an automatic ejection.
  - j. If necessary, a team may be forced to forfeit a game and/or be removed from the tournament.
  - k. As these rules indicate, the matter of disorderly conduct shall be taken seriously.
  - l. The tournaments your team will be participating in will include some of the finest baseball teams in the world.
  - m. The level of competition will be high and at times fierce. Because of this, please remind all players, coaches, managers, sponsors and spectators to be extra aware of good sportsmanship.

## **Protest**

1. Umpires will work to settle all situations on the field.
  - a. Protests will be allowed for age and pitching violations or rule interpretations only.
  - b. Protests must be declared to the Home Plate Umpire, Umpire-in-Chief and then to the Tournament Director before the next pitch following the dispute.
  - c. If a call to be protested is the last recorded out of a game or on a game ending play, the protest MUST be filed prior to the umpires and the protesting team leaving the field of play.
  - d. No protest will be allowed following the game (and after umpire leaves field).
  - e. Tournament Nation USA officials will rule on all protests and their decisions shall be final.
  - f. The Protest fee is \$100.00 cash. The fee shall be returned only if the protest is upheld.

## **Pitching Rules**

1. Less than 9 Outs Per Day, Per Pitcher with no days rest needed to pitch next day.
2. More than 9 outs per day, per pitcher, player must have one days rest.
3. Maximum number of outs per pitcher, per day is 18.
4. No more than 24 outs in a tournament per pitcher. (Exception is if make to championship game).
5. Championship game, each player gets 3 additional outs to use (that gives total of 27 outs per player).
6. It is each Coach responsibility to sign the umpires pitchers card and check for accuracy at conclusion of each game. Any disputes must be resolved prior to coaches signature. All signed cards are final.

## **Coach Pitch Specific Rules**

1. 5 Pitches Per Batter, 3 Strikes, on strike 3 or final pitch, if fouled, batter continues until pitches are exhausted or batter out or gains a hit.
2. No Infield Fly Rule shall not be in effect at anytime.
3. Runners Shall not lead off, a runner is out for leaving the base early before the ball is hit.
4. The Coach Pitcher shall not coach physically or verbally coach the players.
5. The Coach Pitcher shall not be an obstruction to the defensive player once the ball has been hit (First offense is a verbal warning, Second Offense is removal of the game).
6. The Coach Pitcher must be 18+ years old.
7. The 4th Outfielder shall not assume a infield position.
8. Defensive Coaches shall not be allowed on the field of play and shall coach from the dugout area.
9. When a team is mathematically eliminated due to "mercy rule" the game is over.
10. If a batted ball hits the Coach Pitcher, it is a dead ball and the ball is re-pitched. The runners on base do not advance.
11. After every play, the umpire shall call "TIME OUT" and declare dead ball. "TIME OUT" shall be called as soon as all the runners are not attempting to advance.
12. The player cannot call "TIME OUT" till the lead runner is stopped (this is a sole discretion of the umpire judgment).
13. The player Pitcher must keep one foot in Pitcher circle.
14. The Coach Pitcher must pitch from inside the Pitcher circle.
15. Each team must provide and hit their own baseballs.

## **Equipment**

1. Only non-altered from the manufacture Bats Stamped "USSSA", "USA" are allowed in to be used in Tournament Nation USA tournaments
2. -8 through -13 is allowed in 8U-12U (No BBCore, -5, or -3 allowed)
3. Bats that are altered through "shaving" or any other means are considered illegal.
4. Equipment that appears Abused, Altered, Damaged, contains a Foreign Substance , Unsafe or Worn may be not allowed in game play at the sole judgment of the umpire and/or Tournament officials.

## **Bracket Placement**

1. Pool Play decides bracket placement: Record, Head to Head, Runs Allowed, Runs Scored, Runs Differential, Coin Toss

## **Tournament Changes:**

The tournament director reserves the right to make changes that are in the best interest of the tournament. In the event of inclement weather, we will do our best to get all scheduled games in. If not, the format of the tournament may be altered.

## **Weather**

We will try to play through the rain until it becomes a safety hazard, but we will not play through thunder/lightening. If lightening is seen, we will suspend the game for 15 minutes. Games will not resume until we have gone 15 minutes lightening free.

Zero games=100% credit toward future Tournament Nation USA Event in 2021 or 2022, 1 game

Tie Ball Games: Pool Play: Games will end in a tie. Bracket Play: No ties

Games and Field Dimensions: 8U, 9U, 10U - Played on 46/60 no lead offs, 10u Played on 46/65 with lead offs, 11U & 12U - played on 50/70 with lead offs. \*10U Field Dimensions announced prior to tournament whether 46/60 no lead offs or 46/65 with lead offs.

General Information: 2 coaches receive coaches pass at gate and only 1 team cooler allowed. No food and drink permitted to be brought in by spectators.

## **Schedule**

Schedule will be out 10:00PM Wednesday before Tournament Weekend.

***All rules subject to alteration by Tournament Nation USA without further notice.***