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**Rules and Format**

In addition to the rules below, the *Sporting News*Baseball Rules will be followed, unless otherwise noted.  Home team will be determined by a coin flip prior to the game, with the team winning the flip getting its choice.  Both teams are encouraged to have a scorekeeper, keeping score in a scorebook or on an app designed for score keeping. Teams not keeping score this way will have difficulty defending their score in the event of a score discrepancy.

Bracket Play: Higher seed has the choice of Home or Away (#1 is highest)

***Dugout Rule:*** If possible, home team should be in the 3rd base dugout, but we do not have or enforce a dugout rule.

***Age Requirements***  
A player’s age is based on an April 30 cutoff date (i.e. If a player will turn 10 on or before May 1st, 2025, he must play 10u or above). A player may “play up” but cannot “play down”.

***Rosters***  
Each tournament, all participating teams will be required to submit a signed roster prior to the start of their first game.  If a team is found to be playing with an illegal player, the player(s) will be removed immediately, and the team will forfeit any game(s) an illegal player participated in. The reason there is no disqualification is because that would affect other teams in the tournament, costing them games.

Players may not play for or be on the roster for two teams in the same division.

In addition to the roster, every team needs to have copies of birth certificates for all rostered players. These will be used to verify players’ ages. Failure to produce a birth certificate will lead to the player in question being ruled illegal

***Field Dimensions***  
Bases: 9u: 65'

Pitcher’s Mound: 9u: 46’

***Game Length***  
No new inning will begin after 1:40 for 9u. There is NO drop-dead time. Any inning started will be played to completion, or until a winner is determined (i.e. home team is leading, is at bat, and time limit has passed). Championship games will be 2 hours no new.

Games will be a maximum of 6 innings in pool play. No extra innings will be played in pool play, even if time remains. The game will end in a tie.

In playoff games, a winner must be determined.  If a playoff game is tied after time expires, or the designated number of innings have been played, a California tiebreaker will be used beginning with the first extra inning…a runner (the last batted out of the previous inning) will be placed at 2nd base to begin the inning and the inning will be played out from there.  This will be done each inning until a winner is determined.

***Lineup***  
Teams may bat 9, 10 (with one extra hitter) or entire roster. Anyone in batting lineup is considered “in” the game and can be inserted or removed from any defensive position. If any player (starter or reserve) is removed from the batting lineup for a substitute, for any reason, that player may re-enter at any time, as long as it is in the same spot in the batting order.

If batting the entire lineup and a player is removed due to injury, there is no penalty when the spot comes up. However, the player may not return to the game. If the injury occurs during an at-bat in progress and the team is batting the entire lineup, the last out will finish that at bat. If not batting the entire lineup and

there is no substitute to replace the injured player, an out will be recorded. If the umpire deems that a team is feigning injury to gain an advantage, he can call an out when the injured spot comes up.

If a spot is made vacant due to ejection, and there is no substitute to fill it, an out will be recorded each time it comes up. While a substitute is tied to another player and that spot in the lineup, a sub may fill a defensive position for an injured player that has no sub to take his/her spot. A team may play with any number of players; however, outs will be recorded for any missing players, up to nine (i.e. play with seven players, two outs will be recorded each time through the lineup). Note: The team playing short may designate on the lineup card where the outs will fall. Players arriving late will be permitted to enter one of the “out” spots. We want to avoid forfeits, if at all possible.

***Pitching***  
There are no pitching restrictions.  Coaches are expected to use common sense in protecting the arms of their young players.

A pitcher cannot be removed and return to the mound in the same game.  A pitcher is considered “in the game” if that player throws one warm up pitch from the mound.

The “fake-to-third” by a pitcher, who does not first step off the rubber, is a balk.

The Hound endorses the Pitch Smart program. The program has age-appropriate guidelines to help parents, players and coaches avoid overuse injuries in baseball.

More information can be found at www.PitchSmart.org. One free trip to mound per inning by a coach or manager is allowed and only a total of two free trips are allowed per pitcher per game. On the second trip per inning or third trip per game the pitcher must be removed. Balk explanation trips are excluded as a trip to the mound.

Pitchers – once removed from a game as a pitcher may not re-enter as a pitcher.

Pitchers will receive a maximum five (5) warm-up pitches prior to each inning. Relief pitchers will receive a maximum of eight (8) warm-up pitches.

***Balks***  
Balks will only be called after a warning has been given to that pitcher. A balk will always be called if it leads to an out for the hitting team (i.e. stopping motion and throwing out base stealer).

***Leadoffs/Dropped 3rd Strike***

Leadoffs are permitted. There will be no dropped third strike.

***Protests***  
Protests are only allowed for an umpire’s rules interpretation, not for judgment calls. Protests cost $100, due at time of protest, and will be resolved immediately by tournament director. $100 is returned following successful protest only.

***Courtesy Runners***  
Courtesy runners are allowed at any time for the pitcher currently in the game or the next inning’s catcher. Courtesy runners are mandatory for next inning’s catcher with two outs. Courtesy runner may be any player not currently in the lineup. If batting entire roster, courtesy runner must be last out recorded.

***Intentional Walks***  
To intentionally walk a hitter, no pitches need to be thrown. A manager simply needs to notify the umpire. An intentional walk can take place at any point during an at-bat.

***Slide and Avoid***  
Base runners are expected to slide or avoid collisions. If, in the view of the umpire, a base runner does not slide or avoid a collision when there is a play on him, he will be called out. Malicious “plowing” of a defensive player will result in ejection from the game and could result in suspension of the offending player for the next game.

***Bats***  
For 9u, all bats must have a BPF ratio of 1.15, or be BBCOR or wood. If a bat has a 1.15 BPF, but is not stamped, clear and concise evidence from manufacturer will be required to be shown. 2 5/8" or 2 3/4" are allowed, as long as they meet the other requirements.

*Note: ALL 2017 -10 and -8 Demarini Zen bats are NOT allowed, unless retooled by the manufacturer, containing the new orange cap.*

***Special Rules***  
There will be 90 seconds between half innings. Hustle in, hustle out. Repeated violation of this rule can result in penalties of balls or strikes issued to first hitter, depending on offending team.

Visits to the mound will be limited to two for any given pitcher per game, without removal of the pitcher. On the third visit for any given pitcher, the player must be replaced. Stalling will not be permitted. If, in the umpire’s opinion, a manager is stalling, the umpire may refuse to allow a visit, make a player step in the box, etc. to keep the game moving. Please attempt to get in as many innings as possible and maintain integrity to the game.

Metal spikes are prohibited in 9u

A player coming to bat (stepping in the batter's box) with metal spikes will immediately be called out. A player taking the field with metal spikes will have to be immediately replaced until spikes are removed. If no sub is available, team will play short until spikes are changed. When portable mounds are used, metal spikes are not allowed to be used while pitching.

***Mercy Rule***  
13 after three innings  
10 after four innings  
8 after five innings

***Tie-breaking Procedure***1. Head-to-head Record among all tied teams  
2. Runs allowed for all games

3. Run Differential for all games (Max of 8 in any one game)  
4. Coin Flip

If a tie is among more than two teams, winner will be determined, then remaining tied teams will return to tiebreaker #1 to determine second-place team.

***Format*8 Teams**; Two games to determine seeding. Top four teams to Gold Bracket. Bottom four teams to Silver Bracket. Semi-Finals and Finals in each bracket.

Gold Bracket Champions from each tournament will qualify for the Tournament of Champions, held in February. (Spring Tournament of Champions will be held in July.)

Silver Bracket Championship will have time restrictions, Gold Bracket Championship will be 6 innings, with no time limit. Mercy rules are in effect for all games.

**9 Teams;** 5 Gold, 4 Silver

**10 Teams;** 6 Gold, 4 Silver

***Walk-up/Between Inning Music***

Music is allowed when the ball is not in play. Commonly between innings and/or batter walking up. However;

* The music cannot be too loud (at the discretion of the umpire and/or tournament director)
* Absolutely NO PROFANITY
* Music cannot be played during game play OR delay resuming game play
* Music cannot be songs that provoke others (Example; 3 Blind Mice for a call you deem bad)

Warnings will be at the discretion of the umpire and/or tournament director. If either one rule the violation blatant, then you will no longer be allowed to play music for the rest of the tournament.

***Alterations to Tournament Format***If, for reasons beyond Hounds or SBT's control, tournament needs to be altered to finish in a timely manner, Tournament Director reserves the right to change schedule, game lengths, etc. as necessary. Refunds or credits for future tournaments will be given to teams who do not play guaranteed games