

LEAGUE RULES OF VIRGINIA BASEBALL CONGRESS, INC.

Revised March 2022

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All playing rules governing major league baseball shall apply unless they conflict with the following league rules.

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TEAMS

1. TEAM NAMES

All league teams shall be named after major league franchises.

2. AGE REQUIREMENTS

Eligible players must turn twenty-five (25) in the calendar year. An opposing Manager, at any time, has the right to require any player on an opposing team to present evidence of his age within one week. Prospective players who do not meet age requirements shall be screened by the Roster Form submittal process.

3. ILLEGAL PLAYERS - PENALTIES

All games played with an illegal player will result in a forfeit of all games during which said player participated. The Manager of a violating team may be suspended for up to four (4) games, as decided by a Board of Directors vote.

4. ROSTER FORMS

All players must submit a completed roster form, with age verification, to the league office. A copy of a driver's license or birth certificate is acceptable for proving eligibility. Players will have to submit age verification only once. The league may request to view the actual form of verification, if a copy is deemed illegible or appears altered. Players, who do not have a roster form on file (registered on league website), in accordance with clause 4.1, shall be considered illegal and/or not eligible.

4.1 DEADLINE - INDIVIDUAL ROSTER

The deadline for the submission of individual rosters shall be the Friday before the first game. No new player is eligible for play unless a signed form is submitted by the Friday before their first game.

5. TEAM ROSTER

Each manager is required to submit a complete roster for his team to the league office, including the full name and jersey number of each player, on the Friday before the first game. All coaches shall receive the initial rosters of eligible players for each team and will receive updated rosters when new players are added. Managers are expected to submit updated rosters, adding new players, the Friday before the new player's first game. Even after rosters are set, players can be added to the team roster at any time during the season.

6. PLAYER MOVEMENT

6.1 OFF-SEASON

Any player can move to another team during the off-season without their current manager's approval, providing that the player is in good standing with the league and their new team finished the previous season ranked with a worse record or no more than one position ahead of his existing team. Team rankings are based on the prior year's record or winning percentage, in comparison with other teams who completed the season. If a player requests to move to a team two or more positions ahead of his present team's ranking, his current manager's approval is required. The Commissioner can settle any disagreement, ruling in the best interests of the league or seeking resolution through a Board of Director's vote.

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6.2 IN-SEASON

A player can change teams during the season, if both managers agree. The Commissioner can settle any disagreement, ruling in the best interests of the league or seeking resolution through a Board of Director's vote.

6.3 DISBANDING OF TEAMS

If a team disbands at any time, then players in good standing must follow the off-season player movement rules.

6.4 FORMATION OF NEW TEAMS (considering existing league players)

Any team submitting an application for admission into the league as a new team must supply a prospective roster for consideration during the application period. If players identified on the prospective roster were on an active VBC team roster, the season immediately preceding the new team formation, the former manager must acknowledge and approve the player movement. This is to avoid the cannibalization of existing teams to create new teams. Discussions during the new team approval process will be held with the board of directors and a vote of acceptance into the league with the information provided, or subsequent requests for information, in the month of January – allowing time for inclusion in league scheduling and team fee determinations.

7. FEES

All teams must pay the team fee in order to participate in the current season. Team fees may change from season-to-season due to added expenses and/or number of teams. The team fee will be established at the league's annual meeting, occurring in January of each year.

The payment schedule will be established at the January meeting and added as an appendix to this rule book. Payments considered late by established league deadlines shall result in a \$150 late payment fee. A team may only play up to the point that their dues have covered the games of their participation, until full payment is received. Payment in full is a requirement of playoff eligibility.

EQUIPMENT

8. BASEBALLS

Only those baseballs provided by the league are permitted. The home team shall provide all game balls. The league will provide 5 dozen baseballs to each team. If teams need additional baseballs, they should be purchased from the leagues reserves. The hitting team is responsible for collecting the foul balls hit during their at-bat. Baseballs for the playoffs will be provided by the league.

9. BATS

Only bats with a wood, wood-laminate or wood-shell are allowed in league play. Ash, maple, bamboo are allowed. The hitting surface must be wood. Metal bats or composites are not allowed for league play.

9.1 ILLEGAL BATS

Using an illegal bat in a game will result in an automatic out and the player will be ejected from the game. The ejected player's position can be filled by another player, not already in the batting order; if

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no player is available then the rules of playing with 8 apply. Umpires shall rule on the legality of a bat. If an opposing team objects to the use of a bat, they must bring it to the attention of the umpire prior to next pitch.

10. UNIFORMS

All teams must have full baseball uniforms. A uniform shall be considered a major league style hat, numbered jersey, baseball pants and athletic shoes (cleats). Players and coaches without uniforms will not be allowed to play without consent from the opposing manager and report to the league Commissioner. Each uniform must be numbered on the back, with the team name displayed on the front of the jersey. The jersey shall be tucked in and there shall be no bare legs.

GAMES

11. FIELDS

All managers, coaches, players and fans must respect rules for each field and refrain from littering, alcohol use, drug use, and tobacco use while on county school property. The umpires and managers are responsible for enforcement. Players from each team are expected to help line, drag/rake the field, and sweep/clean the dugouts following each game. It is each team's responsibility to leave the field in as good, or better, of condition as it was found.

11.1 DUGOUTS

The home team gets its choice of dugouts. For insurance reasons, visitors are discouraged from being inside the dugout while the game is in progress.

12. ALCOHOL/INTOXICANTS

There will be no alcoholic beverages or intoxicants permitted during any VBC game play/practice event.

12.1 VIOLATIONS

Players will be ejected from the game and made to leave the grounds. Fans shall be asked to discard of the alcohol or intoxicant away from the grounds. Failure to comply could result in a fan being asked to leave the grounds permanently. Players and fans may be forever barred from future VBC games or events for poor conduct during violations.

13. RAINOUTS

A game is official after the losing team has batted in the fifth inning. If a game is rained out before becoming official, the game shall be made up in its entirety.

14. NUMBER OF PLAYERS FOR GAMES

Teams must have at least eight defensive players at all times for an official game. If a team has only eight players, that team may accept a player from the opposing team as a defensive player only. Offensively, the team with eight players shall record and automatic out for the ninth position in the line-up. If, during the course of the game, players are injured or leave and this results in that team having seven players, then that team must forfeit the game. Additionally, if a player is ejected from the game, thereby causing that team to have seven players, then that team must also forfeit the game.

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14.1 PLAYOFFS ONLY

A team may play with 8 defensive players, but may not borrow a player and must still record an out for the ninth position in the line-up.

15. STARTING TIME FOR GAMES

Generally, weekday games begin at 7:00pm. Sunday games begin at 1:00pm, but could vary per the master schedule. If a double header is scheduled and the first game is forfeited, the second game must begin no later than 1 ½ hours from the start time of the first game. A 20 minute break is required between games of a double header.

15.1 GAME TIME (Length)

All league games, regardless of 7 or 9 inning contests, will have the following time limit – No new inning may begin after 2 hours and 45 minutes from game start time. Games can end in a tie if the time limit established by this rule come into effect.

15.2 FORFEITS

Forfeits on three (3) consecutive dates by any team can lead to expulsion from the league playoffs, if voted by the Board of Directors.

16. OFFICIAL GAME

A single weekend day game is nine (9) innings and a doubleheader shall consist of two (2), seven (7) or nine (9) inning games. A game is considered complete once the losing team has had a chance to bat in the fifth inning and at the umpire's discretion for a game that should be stopped because of darkness, rain and lightning and with the consent of at least one manager.

17. RUN DIFFERENTIAL RULE

If there is a 10 run discrepancy and either of the following is fulfilled, the game will be ruled complete.

Seven Inning Game:

1. Five (5) full innings have been played (4 ½ if the home team leads).
2. The game has gone for 2 hours

Nine Inning Game:

1. Seven (7) full innings have been played (6 ½ if the home team leads).
2. The game has gone for 2 ½ hours.

18. PITCHER

If a pitcher is removed, he may not pitch again in that game unless he stays in the game defensively. A pitcher may return to the field during any game.

19. BATTER

Before the game begins, each manager will have the option of batting as many players as he desires. Lineups can consist of an A/B batting slot scenarios to accommodate more players while maintaining a reasonable lineup length. Once the game begins, a manager can add batters to the bottom of the lineup at any time. The opposing team does not have to match their numbers.

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19.1 BATTER – PLAYOFF RULE

A regulation lineup consists of nine (9) batters. As previously indicated, a legal lineup of eight (8) is required to play the playoff game while taking an automatic out for the ninth slot (any position in batting lineup identified at start of game). If a manager decides to utilize the A/B batting slot scenarios it can be implemented with a nine (9) player lineup.

The A/B scenario is in place for the duration of the game and batting slot must alternate. The A/B scenario can be eliminated during the game; however, the A or B player “skipped” or “removed” from the lineup can not return to the batting order in any capacity. Likewise, a bench player can be substituted into an existing A or B position in a batting slot (keeping the A/B alternating intact) by Pinch Hitter (see rule 20.1 below)

20. OFFENSIVE SUBSTITUTION

20.1 PINCH HITTER

If a batter is pinch-hit for, he may not re-enter the lineup as a hitter, unless he becomes the ninth player. He may still stay in the game defensively.

20.2 PINCH RUNNER

Pinch runners are considered substitutions and the original player is removed from the game, permanently, unless he becomes the ninth player. Only then may the original player re-enter the game.

20.3 COURTESY RUNNER

A courtesy runner for an injured player can be used if the injured player is not playing a defensive position. The courtesy runner should be a player that is not in the lineup. However, if all players are in the lineup, then the last batted out will become the courtesy runner. Managers should identify players requiring a courtesy runner to the umpires and opposing manager. These runners cannot steal or advance on a hit-and-run play. These runners may only advance on a ball put in fair play or on a wild pitch/passed ball.

20.4 DESIGNATED HITTER

A player may DH for anyone in the field, including the pitcher. Extra hitters (EH) can be placed into any spot in the order. Major league DH rule applies.

21. DEFENSIVE SUBSTITUTION

All players may be substituted for defensively at any time during the game except for the pitcher (rule 18 applies). If there is a change in the batting order, it shall be considered an offensive substitution. A defensive substitution does not need to change the offensive lineup.

21.1 PLAYERS LEAVING THE GAME

If a player is forced to leave the game due to injury, commitment, or ejection from the game, then a reserve player, not previously in the lineup, can take the players place in the lineup. If no reserve is present, that spot is skipped and all batters shall move up accordingly.

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22. SPEED UP RULES

22.1 SPEED UP RULE-RUNNING

Any catcher or pitcher may elect to have a runner at any time to speed up the game. The runner must be someone not in the lineup. If there are no reserves, then the runner must be the last batted out.

22.2 SPEED UP RULE-BATTING

Refer to Rule 7 of the NCAA handbook, concerning the batter's box rule between pitches.

23. INTENTIONAL WALKS

Each team is allowed one intentional walk per inning and the batter can be waved to first base without throwing a pitch.

24. DECOYS

If a fielder decoys a throw, all runners will be entitled to advance one base. If the same fielder decoys twice in a game, he shall be ejected. A decoyed throw is when any fielder pretends to be receiving a throw and the runner slides unnecessarily as a result of the decoy. See Rule 2-32, High School Rule Book – Force Play Slide Rule.

25. INTENTIONAL COLLISION

All players must avoid an intentional collision. Runners and fielders must strive to avoid any intentional contact. In the event of intentional contact, the runner is automatically out. That runner may be ejected if, in the umpire's judgment, the action was flagrant. In the event of an intentional collision caused by the fielder, the runner will automatically be awarded a base. That fielder may be ejected if, in the umpire's judgment, the action was flagrant.

26. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

The umpire shall be given broad authority to eject from the game and premises any player, manager or fan who engages in unsportsmanlike conduct; acting in a manner that is threatening to the health or safety of others. Any ejected player, or their manager, must contact the league office and explain the situation behind their ejection before playing the next game. If the ejection occurs during the first game of a double header, the player may play in the second game with consent from the opposing manager or a league official. If the ejection is the result of threats or profanity towards an umpire, player or fan and/or harmful conduct towards an umpire, player or fan then that player will receive a one game suspension.

Any ejected player or manager may be subjected to additional suspension, up to barring from the league, following a vote by league officials and/or a vote by the board of directors.

26.1 UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT DEFINED

Conduct which may result in ejection from the game and premises shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Harmful or offensive physical contact with an umpire
- Harmful or offensive physical contact with another player
- Threats made to an umpire, player or fan

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- Throwing at a batter or runner
- Throwing objects or equipment
- Using foul, profane or abusive language
- Flagrant violation of the league rules

26.2 FIGHTS

All participants of any physical confrontation, occurring during a league event will be ejected from the game, or requested to leave the event, and the premises. The event will be investigated by the league office and involved players and teams may be sanctioned by the league, up to being forever barred from future league activities and games. Any ejected player or manager may be subjected to additional suspension, up to barring from the league, following a vote by league officials and/or a vote by the board of directors.

26.3 REPEATED EJECTIONS

Two (2) ejections during a season will result in an additional two (2) game suspension. Three (3) ejections may result in a suspension for the remainder of the regular season and playoffs, following a vote by league officials and/or a vote by the board of directors.

27. GAME PROTEST

A game protest must be lodged with the head umpire, prior to the next pitch after the incident. All game protests must be submitted in writing, within 48 hours of the game and accompanied by a \$50.00 filing fee. The league commissioner shall rule over all protests (if needed, by calling for a vote by league officials and/or a vote by the board of directors). If a protest is upheld, then the \$50.00 filing fee will be returned to the protesting team.

27.1 APPEALS PROCEDURE

The appellant must file a written appeal, accompanied by a \$50.00 filing fee, to the league office within 48 hours of any game ruling by the league commissioner. If an appeal is upheld, then the \$50.00 filing fee will be returned to the protesting team.

27.2 SCOPE OF REVIEW

The appellant's written appeal shall list the rule(s) in question, document all the facts related to the situation and the requested disposition.

LEAGUE STRUCTURE AND FORMAT

28. STATISTICS

The league shall provide each manager with a scorebook. The league shall compile the official win/loss/tie records and percentages. Each team is responsible for maintaining the accuracy of hitting/pitching statistics and to record them in a format provided by the league. The statistics are to be updated on the league approved and supplied electronic format which ties to the league website in a timely manner. The league will determine the statistical categories. Any team, not providing statistics, will not be playoff eligible.

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Statistics will be aggregated and shared with all managers at two points to determine playoff eligibility. Managers will provide the number of games played and innings pitched to qualify players identified with completed roster forms. These will be captured within the statistical categories identified above.

29. SCORES

The winning manager shall be responsible for providing scores to the league office, within two (2) days, so that standings can be recorded.

30. TIEBREAKERS

If two or more teams are tied, the following tiebreakers, in order as listed, will be used to determine the final position for seeding in the post season tournament.

- Best winning percentage “head-to-head” in games concerning the teams tied
- Run differential in “head-to-head” games (runs scored minus runs allowed)
- Fewest runs allowed of teams remaining tied (all games and teams)
- Coin flip

31. PLAYOFF ELIGIBILITY

31.1 PLAYERS

To qualify for the playoffs, a player must meet one (1) of the following criteria, in a 20 game regular season schedule (subject to adjustment by league officers/board by vote), and be in good standing with the league:

- Appear in seven (7) games
- Pitch twenty-one (21) innings
- Have fourteen (14) plate appearances

31.2 TEAMS

To qualify for the playoffs, teams must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Pay entire team fee (be in good standing with the league)
2. Submit a playoff eligible roster
3. Submit final statistics

32. POST SEASON AWARDS

- TBD