

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP RULEBOOK 2018



‘Sports for All, Forever’

**Rules will be discussed at the Coaches Meeting at each National Championship.
Any changes to this document will be announced at the Coaches Meeting.*

FORMAT

Grand Nationals (9-14u, June 23-30, 2018)

- 7 game minimum schedule
- 2 Rounds of Pool Play followed by single elimination bracket
- If there are more than 12 teams in an age division, teams will be broken into Diamond and Gold brackets for the elimination segment

Nationals (14-19u, July 12-19, 2018)

- 5 game minimum schedule
 - 1 Rounds of Pool Play followed by double elimination bracket
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COMPETITION RULES

- Unless otherwise stated in this handbook the rules of competition shall be those of Major League Baseball (American League).
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BAT RESTRICTIONS

- The 14U, 15U, 16U/17U, and 18U/19U divisions will follow NFHS bat requirements. There are no bat restrictions for all other age groups.

BASE LENGTHS & PITCHING DISTANCES

- 9u – 10u: 65' base paths; 46' pitching distance
- 11u – 12u: 70' base paths; 50' pitching distance
- 13u – 19u: 90' base paths; 60' 6" pitching distance

PLAYER'S UNIFORMS, CLEATS, AAU PATCH

Uniforms and equipment shall be pursuant to the rules published by MLB (American League) with the following exceptions/additions:

- In the 12U and younger divisions, **metal cleats** may NOT be worn
- In the 13U and older divisions, **metal cleats** MAY be worn
- The official AAU patch and shield **patch** are optional

CATCHER'S HELMET

13U & Younger

- Must meet the NOCSAE standard
- Any helmet or helmet and mask combination shall have full ear protection (dual ear flaps).
- A throat protector, which is either a part of or attached to the catcher's mask, is mandatory. A throat protector shall adequately cover the throat. The commercially manufactured catcher's head, face and throat protection may be a one-piece or multi-piece design. While in a crouch position, any non-adult warming up a pitcher at any location shall wear a head protector, a mask with a throat protector and a protective cup (male only).

14U & Older

- Shall abide by Major League Baseball (American League) rules for catcher's helmets and masks.

Penalty

- Failure by a player to wear proper equipment after being so ordered by the umpire, shall result in ejection

COACHES UNIFORM

- Preferred attire for coaches is the full baseball uniform
- If coaches are not in full uniform, they must be in appropriate matching athletic attire consistent with the team uniform (i.e. collared shirts, team baseball jersey, dri-fit shirts in team colors or with team logo or name, coaches' shorts with team logo and similar, golf shorts, khakis, chinos, etc.; baseball caps, and athletic shoes.
- Open-toed shoes are not acceptable.
- Basketball shorts, mesh shorts, shorts that extend well below the knees, and the like, are not allowed. Only baseball caps may be worn on the field and must be worn with the brim in front. No hats other than baseball caps may be worn. The key is that coaches are expected to have a professional and neat appearance as this is a National Championship event
- PENALTY - If these requirements are not met, that particular coach(es) will not be eligible to participate until he is in compliance with the rule. Coach(es) not in compliance will not be allowed to take the field until they are properly attired. Whether a coaches' attire is appropriate is solely a judgment call by the tournament director and may not be appealed.

INNINGS

Complete Game

- 9u – 12u: Six (6) innings (5 ½ innings if home team is ahead).
- 13u – 19u: Seven (7) innings (6 ½ innings if home team is ahead)

Last Half Inning

- The bottom half of the last inning will **NOT** be completed solely for tie-breaker purposes once the home team has more runs than the visiting team in that inning.

Called Game

- See AAU Baseball Rain Policy

TIME LIMIT (Pool Play)

- 9u – 12u: No new inning shall begin after 1 hour, 45 minutes, unless the score is tied
- 13u – 19u: No new inning shall begin after 2 hours, unless the score is tied
- If the score is tied at the end of regulation innings or reaches its time limit, one extra inning will be played using the international tiebreaker rule (See Tiebreaker section)

TIME LIMIT (Bracket Play)

- No ties and no international tiebreakers.
- The game will continue to extra innings until one team scores more runs than the other after equal at-bats.
- Time limits will not apply in semifinal or championship game

MERCY RULES

9-12U

- 10-run rule shall apply after four (4) innings (3 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead.)
- the 15-rule shall apply after three (3) innings (2 ½ innings if the home team is ahead)
- Mercy rules apply in all games

13u- 19u

- 10-run rule shall apply after five (5) innings (4 ½ innings if the home team is ahead)
- the 15-rule shall apply after three (3) innings (2 ½ innings if the home team is ahead)
- Mercy rules apply in all games

COURTESY RUNNER

- May be used at all National Championships and may be used in other tournament levels at the discretion of the tournament director.
- At any time, the team at bat may use courtesy runners for the pitcher and/or the catcher. The same individual runner may not be used for both positions (pitcher and catcher). Neither the pitcher nor the catcher will be considered to have left the game when a courtesy runner is used. A player may not run as a courtesy runner and then be used as a substitute for another player in that half inning, unless an injury, illness, or ejection occurs and no other runners are available. A player who violates the courtesy runner rule is considered to be an illegal substitute. Should an injury, illness or ejection occur to the courtesy runner, another courtesy runner may run.

DH & EP (Designated Hitter & Extra Player)

Available, and optional, for all games in all age groups.

1. At the beginning of a game, either the EP and and/or the DH may be elected.
2. The Designated Hitter (DH) provision as covered in Major League Baseball (American League) rules.
3. The Extra Player (EP) is listed in the batting order and may assume any of the nine defensive positions (including pitcher) without being counted as a substitution.
4. Under all of the following options, there are never more than the standard nine defensive positions
 - a. *Use neither DH nor EP: Nine (9) players in the batting order and the same nine (9) players on defense.*
 - b. *Use only the DH, and not the EP: Nine (9) players in the batting order, one of which is replaced by another line up player on defense.*
 - c. *Use only the EP, and not the DH: Ten (10) players in the batting order, of which nine play on defense.*
 - d. *Use both the DH and EP: Ten players in the batting order. One of the nine (9) defensive players is replaced by the DH in that batting order. The DH can be removed during the game. The EP position may not be removed during the game.*
5. The same number of players that are listed in the batting order to begin the game will continue throughout the game. If the game is started using an EP, the game must be finished using an EP.
6. Players not listed in the starting line-up may serve as substitutes.
7. In case of injury, if an EP is being used and injury prevents that slot in the batting order from being filled, an automatic "out" applies in that slot.

RE-ENTRY RULES

- Any of the starting players may be withdrawn and re-entered once, including a player who is the Designated Hitter or Extra Player (EP), provided such player occupies the same batting position whenever he is in the lineup.
- A substitute who is withdrawn may not re-enter

PITCHING

- 9u- 12u: 6 consecutive innings then must have one day of rest
- 13U: 10 consecutive innings then must have one day of rest
- 14U- 19U: No pitching restrictions on number of innings pitched. Coach should use his own discretion

5-Team Pools in Age Groups with Pitching Restrictions: If any team is in a five-team pool during the pool play round, that team may be afforded two additional innings of pitching for pool play only.

HEAD FIRST SLIDE

- Headfirst slides will be allowed in all age groups

TIEBREAKER RULES

Tiebreakers are applied after pool play round is completed for bracket play seeding purposes.

- A. **Head-to-Head** - *provided all teams in the tie* have played each other
- B. **Runs Allowed** - Least number of runs allowed in pool play (all games in that round are considered; not just games between tied teams)
- C. **Runs Scored** - Most runs scored in pool play round. 10 run differential maximum
- D. **Random Draw**

- When more than two teams are tied, **each time a team breaks the tie the remaining teams revert back to criterion b (head-to-head) and begin the process again.**
- If three or more teams are tied and if any one of the teams has not played all the other teams in the tie, criterion (b) – head to head - will **not** be used.
- If three or more teams are tied, all teams have played each other and head-to-head competition does not break the tie, all teams will continue to criterion (c) – fewest runs given up. If one team breaks the tie in criterion (c) – fewest runs given up - but other teams are still tied, those teams will revert to criterion (b) – head to head. If the three (or more)-way tie is not broken with criterion (c) – fewest runs given up, all teams continue to criterion (d) – most runs scored

*If not all pools in an age group are even, bracket play seeding tiebreakers will be based on winning percentages, head-to-head **if** all teams have played each other, **average** number of runs given up per game, and **average** runs scored per game.

International Tiebreaker – Pool Play Only

During pool play **only**, In the event of a tie at the end of regulation play (or when the time limit is reached), **one** extra inning will be played using the ***International Tiebreaker Rule***. At the beginning of the extra inning, coaches will meet at home plate and indicate to the umpire where in their batting order they will begin. Each team has the option of beginning anywhere in the batting order that was in place the previous inning. The previous two batters in the order will be placed on first and second base accordingly with no outs.

- Once the tiebreaker begins, there is no re-entry of players.
- If at the end of one extra inning with the international tiebreaker in place neither team scores, the pool play game will end in a tie

INJURIES INVOLVING BLOOD

- A player or coach who is bleeding or who has an open wound shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment has been administered.
- If medical care or treatment can be administered in a reasonable amount of time, the individual would not have to leave the game
- The length of time that is considered reasonable is according to the umpire's judgment
- The reentry rule would **not** apply to players in case of a bleeding injury
- If there is an excessive amount of blood on the uniform, it must be changed before that individual may participate.

TOBACCO POLICY

- A coach, player, substitute, attendant, or other bench personnel shall not use tobacco or tobacco-like products within the confines of the field.

PROTESTS

1. Protests must be made verbally with the umpire by the offended team at the time of the play and before the next pitch.
2. A fee of \$100.00 cash (refunded if protest is upheld) must accompany the protest and be remitted to the plate umpire.
3. At that time, the official game clock will stop.
4. All decisions of the protest committee shall be final. The site director, tournament director, Umpire-In-Chief, AAU Senior Sports Manager and/or National Chair shall comprise the protest committee for rule challenges.
5. The protest fee will be returned to the head coach of the protesting team if the protest is upheld.
6. If the protesting team does not win the protest, the plate umpire will hand over the fee to the tournament director.
7. Once the protest is decided, the official time clock and the game, will be resumed.

Only decisions involving the misinterpretation or misapplication of a rule may be protested. No protest shall be allowed in matters involving solely the umpire's judgment.

ELIGIBILITY CHALLENGES

- Any protest pertaining to the eligibility of a team or individual at a National Championship shall be directed to the tournament director (if a member of the AAU Executive Committee) or the national committee representative assigned to the tournament.
- Any protest must be lodged by the protesting team's head coach. The protest must be accompanied with a \$100 fee.
- The Tournament Director, National Sport Chair, Senior Sports Manager, or Director of Sports, or any combination thereof, will determine whether the player or team is eligible. If the player or team is found to be ineligible, the \$100 protest fee shall be returned to the protesting team's head coach.
- If the player or team is found to be eligible, the protesting team shall lose the \$100 protest fee.
- If a player is found to be ineligible prior to the start of the tournament, the player will be expelled from the tournament.

- If a player is found to be ineligible after the tournament has begun, upon discovery, that player and head coach will be expelled from the competition. All games in which the ineligible player participated in the most current round will be forfeited. Teams will be seeded by record incorporating the forfeits. The team may be subject to future sanctions. Article 4- Coaches are responsible to see that their team meets all eligibility requirements.

EJECTIONS

1. The first occurrence results in suspension for the rest of the game (removal from game site) in which ejection occurs, and for the next scheduled game.
2. The second occurrence results in suspension for the remainder of the tournament as well as possible further sanctions subject to the review of the National AAU Tournament Official.
3. If *all* coaches listed on the team's tournament roster are ejected during a game; then the team must forfeit upon the removal of the last coach.

FORFEITS

Any team which causes a forfeit will *not* benefit from the forfeiture and may *not* advance to bracket play unless the tournament committee determines there were extenuating circumstances causing the forfeit.

1. The offended team shall be credited with a win. 12u + under forfeit recorded as 6-0, 13u + above forfeit recorded as 7-0. However, runs scored and runs allowed during tiebreaker procedures will be based only on actual games played.
2. Teams or coaches who fail to compete in *all* scheduled games are subject to sanctions, which may include suspension from current and future national championship play.
3. Coaches may *not* mutually agree to end a contest without first receiving the approval of the respective AAU Baseball tournament committee representative.

RAIN POLICY

1. If rain occurs during a game, the game will be suspended and picked up from that point if game has not reached official status.
2. If game has reached official status see Official Status (Regulation Game) and Note below

Official Status (Regulation Game):

For 9u through 12u, four full innings have been played, or the home team has scored an equal or greater number of runs in three, or three and a fraction, turns at bat than the visiting team has scored in four turns at bat.

For 13u -19u, five full innings have been played, or the home team has scored an equal or greater number of runs in four, or four and a fraction, turns at bat than the visiting team has scored in five turns at bat.

NOTE: *If the game is suspended when the teams have not had an equal number of completed times at bat, the score shall be the same as it was at the end of the last completed inning; except that if the home team in its half of the incomplete inning, scores a run (or runs) which equals or exceeds the opponent's score, the final score shall be as recorded when the game is called.*

For all divisions, the umpire may suspend a game, but not declare the game complete, in order to hold discussions with AAU tournament officials.

3. In the event of extended inclement weather, at its sole discretion the tournament committee may deem it necessary to alter the tournament format by shortening either the time limit for games and/or reducing the number of innings that will constitute an official game, or other means necessary to complete the tournament within the published dates.
4. Every attempt will be made to complete the scheduled minimum number of games per team. However, in the event of extended, extreme, weather (as determined solely by the tournament committee), 100% refund will be given if the event is totally cancelled, 75% refund will be given if one game is played, 50% refund will be given if two games are played, and no refund will be given if three or more games are played.