



Harford County Travel Baseball

## 2025 League Rules

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## **1. League Overview**

The Harford County Travel Baseball (HCTB) exists to provide regional baseball organizations with a place for their players to improve themselves through competition. To this end, the league, in partnership with the local and regional baseball organizations supports and organizes league play between advanced level youth baseball teams.. All players and teams are required to carry adequate insurance coverage. All teams are required to have a home field and register players in accordance with the roster verification process later outlined.

During the spring/summer season, the league will follow the traditional eligibility requirement as outlined in section 3. For the fall, it is a requirement for teams to play up in their next year's age group. For example, if the next spring/summer season will be the team's 11U season, the team MUST play 11U in the fall preceding that spring/summer season.

## **2. League Organization and Administration**

The League is administered and managed by the HCTB Executive Committee and the Age Group Commissioners. While many of the rules are outlined below, at any given moment, the HCTB executive committee reserves the right to address any situation as needed and agreed upon by the members of the executive committee. The goal of the league is to create a competitive and fair environment.

## **3. League Divisions – Player and Team Placement- Eligibility**

HCTB organizes and sanctions full time play. Play is organized into the following age group divisions 8u, 9u, 10u, 11u, 12u, 13u, 14u, 15-16u and 16-19u. If supported by an adequate number of teams and the consensus of the Age Group Commissioner (AGC), on a per-season basis age groups may further be divisionalized into travel and open divisions, or should it be necessary the AGC may combine two age groups, to encourage participation and maximize competition. Teams may, in the discretion of their coaches and programs, request to play 'up' in older age divisions.

Again, All teams participating in HCTB must carry insurance. The final date to register a team for HCTB League play will be the first day of March.

At times, it will be necessary based on the number of teams per age group to be divided into two divisions. The division of these teams is based upon team competitiveness. To fairly determine a team's division eligibility, the AGD will analyze the team's prior year record (to include tournament play), the coach's input, and any other current relative data (such as competitiveness of games played). Teams in the lower division will be placed in the higher division if they win the previous year's

championship. The HCTB Executive Committee will review and ratify AGD recommendations.

### ***3.1 Player Age***

A player's age **as of April 30<sup>th</sup> of each year** determines his age division eligibility. That is, a player who turns 11 on April 30th of the current year would be considered to be 11 for that season; a player who turns 11 on May 1st is 10u. Players may play 'up' (i.e., in age divisions greater than their league age) but are not permitted to play down. Proof of age (e.g., copy of birth certificate) must be maintained by the team for inspection at any time.

### ***3.2 Player's Age Exceptions***

There will be no age exceptions. No teams are eligible to roster players outside of the player's age in section 3.1. If a team has a special request for one player for health reasons or unique circumstance, it must be made directly to the AGD and HCTB Executive Committee to be either approved or denied within 10 business days. There will be no rule in place to prevent players capable of higher play from participating upward, but players will not be allowed to play down a level.

### **3.3 Player and Team Eligibility**

HCTB discourages cross-program recruiting for players and reserves the right to refuse or withdraw sanctioning for such a team if the HCTB Executive Committee determines that explicit cross-program recruiting has occurred. It is the position of HCTB that all players and parents should be able to openly choose the best program for their needs free of undue pressure or coercion, and that open and ethical recruitment practices best support both our baseball programs and our players.

**Questions regarding an individual player's or team's eligibility should be referred to the Executive Committee. Ignorance to a rule is not an excuse.**

### **3.4 Age Group Commissioner Communication**

***It is the responsibility of the individual coaches to know and understand the rules as written.*** Coaches are not permitted to make any player/team additions or adjustments without proper communication with their AGD. Not fully understanding a rule will not be tolerated. When in doubt, reach out to the appropriate AGD. Again, ignorance is not an excuse.

## **4. Rosters**

A roster of players, to include a copy of the player's birth certificate, must be submitted to the AGC by the Monday before the first game of the official season starts for every team in the league (except 15 through 19, which shall be June 1st). HCTB will provide the roster to be filled out as part of the Per- Team HCTB Registration and Roster Form. All information must be filled out completely and legibly on the roster. Failure to submit a roster by the deadline may result in forfeiture of all subsequent games until the roster is turned in. Rosters will be limited to (18) players. **In order to participate in the HCTB playoffs, all players must have participated in 50% of more of scheduled HCTB league games.** AGC's will have write to determine player eligibility of injury prevents participation to the minimum. *A copy of the roster and of all players' birth certificates must be available for inspection at coaches' or officials' request at all games; failure to present them may result in a forfeit.*

All teams must verify players through the NSID process. HCTB utilizes this verification for all teams associated in the league. Information on how to do this will be provided prior to the season. No exceptions to this will be granted.

**UPDATES RELATED TO DUAL ROSTERING:** Dual rostering is not permitted. A player is rostered at the highest age group established at the beginning of the season with the AGD. A player who is registered for 12U, but eligible for 11U, is not permitted to play down for another team.

Upon start of the season, rosters are locked. Teams may not add a permanent player unless under certain situations. Any requested exceptions to this rule must be made directly to the AGD AND Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will

make the final determination.

Given potential injuries, illnesses, and other absences, it is understood that there are times when a team may have difficulty fielding an entire team. Teams have the following options to promote play and avoid potential forfeits or postponements. However, in all scenarios, use of fill-in players **must** be provided to the opposing manager and **APPROVED** by the AGC as soon as possible. The following applies to all “fill-in” players:

- all potential additions must be APPROVED by the AGD in advance of the game.
- Player additions are only to get a team to 10 total players, no more.
- Teams are permitted to ‘call up’ from another peer or younger age HCTB team from the *same* baseball program.
- Teams may utilize a non-rostered HCTB age eligible player
- Fill-in players are not required to have identical uniforms or unique numbers for the team they are temporarily joining. These players are ineligible to participate in the playoffs. Birth certificates must be available for inspection.
- Approval from the AGD must be given by 5pm the night prior to the game. *NOTE: Again, The intent of this rule is to allow teams to play games they might otherwise forfeit or postpone, and it is intended to be a rare and temporary occurrence; HCTB reserves the right to prohibit teams not adhering to the spirit of this rule from using it on a case-by-case basis.*

## 5. League Fees

League fees are due by Monday before the official start of the season. Teams forfeiting games may be assessed a \$150.00 forfeit fee at the discretion of the AGC and/or HCTB Executive Committee. Forfeit fees must be paid before the team will be allowed to play in the league tournament or any team from that baseball program is allowed to enter the league the next year. League fees will be as follows: \$450 for teams from 8 to 14 and \$400 for teams 15 through 19. League fees can be paid online when registering or a check should be made out to Emmorton Rec Council. League fee checks should be mailed to **Attn: Treasurer Emmorton Rec Council 2213 Old Emmorton Rd Bel Air, Md 21014. Please note HCTB and the team name age in the comments.**

## 6. Umpires

All umpires should be a minimum of sixteen (16) years old. Sanctioned umpires (i.e. Harford County Umpires Association, Baltimore's Best, Central Maryland Umpires Association, Chesapeake Umpires Association, etc) are required to be used. For Part-Time divisions, a single umpire will be used for 8, 9, 10, and 11 age divisions; two umpires are recommended (one required) to be used for 12u division games. Two umpires will be scheduled for all 13, 14, 15-16 and 16-19 age division games, but sanctioned play may occur if only one is available. All sanctioned umpire programs must meet with the HCTB Executive Committee prior to the season.

The league will provide its schedules to the Harford County Umpires Association (HCUA) and Baltimore's Best for their scheduling purposes and will cover assignor's fees for the home games of HCTB-registered teams. Ultimately, it is the home team's responsibility to confirm and secure the umpire(s) for the game. Umpire on-field fees (\$68-70/umpire/game, or as may be increased from time-to-time) will be split 50/50 by both teams for all games. All umpires should be paid before the first pitch is thrown. Umpires paid by check will be charged additional fees (\$66+\$1 admin fee/umpire/game).

If the scheduled umpire does not show up, the home team has thirty (30) minutes to find a replacement. At that time, it is the visiting team's right to declare a forfeit (at the visiting team's discretion), although they are encouraged to attempt to reschedule the umpire(s) and game(s). *Note: the intent of this rule is to encourage the home team to confirm before the game the location and time as a courtesy for the contracted umpire association, and to avoid scheduling problems or confusion.*

If a game is rescheduled or postponed for any reason it is the home team's responsibility to provide notification as soon as possible to the scheduled umpire and/or the organization providing the umpire (as well as the opposing team). It will be the responsibility of the home team to pay any penalty fees associated with a failure to provide proper notification in the following time frames:

For postponements not due to weather or unforeseen home field conditions, proper notification should be provided at least 24 hours prior to the originally scheduled game time.

For postponements due to weather or unforeseen home field conditions, then notification should be provided at least 2 hours prior to game time.

For postponements due to unanticipated forfeits, the forfeiting team will be responsible for all fees.

## 7. Games – Regulation, Postponement and Makeup

Single games should try to be started by 4:00PM. Double headers should try to start by 2:00PM. All doubleheader games will be six (6) innings in duration; single games inning length will be determined BY AGD. Games will be considered regulation and complete if called by the umpire after: 1) for six inning games, four (4) innings are finished or three and a half (3 ½) innings are finished if the home team is leading, or 2) for seven inning games, five (5) innings are finished or four and a half (4 ½) innings are finished if the home team is leading. The home plate umpire is responsible for determining if a game should be called once started and is responsible for also determining if the field is playable before and during a game.

If the score is tied after the regulation number of innings, World Baseball Classic Extra Innings rules shall apply.

### **World Baseball Classic Extra Innings Rule:**

**For any inning beginning with the 7<sup>th</sup> inning (6 inning games) or 8<sup>th</sup> inning (7 inning games), the team at bat shall begin the inning with runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> base. The batter who leads off the inning shall continue to be the batter who would lead off the inning in the absence of the extra-innings rule. The runner on 1<sup>st</sup> base shall be the player (or a substitute player) in the batting order immediately preceding the batter who leads off the inning. The runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> base shall be the player (or substitute for such player) in the batting order immediately preceding the runner at 1<sup>st</sup> base. All other standard rules apply.**

If game times need to be adjusted due to field availability, the home team will notify the opposing manager one week prior to negotiate a starting time. If an agreement cannot be reached, the home team shall contact the AGC for resolution.

Postponement of games should be avoided if at all possible. Prior to postponing a game due to weather or field conditions, the teams involved should investigate playing the game at an alternative location, such as the away team's field, or at other fields under the control of the involved baseball programs. If postponement is unavoidable, make-up games should be played the next day if possible; if not, the game should be re-scheduled within the next week. The AGC shall be notified within one week of the original game date of postponed games and their make-up date. If the AGC has not been notified within two weeks after the original game date of a makeup date, then the AGC may unilaterally set a make-up game date and time. At the discretion of the AGC, failure to make up a game may result in a single or double forfeit, with associated forfeit fees being assessed. In the event of a forfeiture, the score is recorded as 6-0 (6 inning games) or 7-0 (7 inning games) (*also see [UMPIRES](#) above for additional conditions regarding game postponements*). Postponement of double-headers may result in two separate make-up dates; however the games will be played in length as if they were one-half of a double-header, not the length of a single game.

Games may be played in advance of their scheduled date *if agreed to by both teams* and may include the use of a tournament game as fulfilling a regular season game. If teams have a postponed regular season game still yet to be played when they meet in a tournament game, then it is *mandatory* that they count the result of the tournament game as the result of the postponed game. In all cases, all normal game reporting requirements apply. *Note: the intent of this rule is to ensure that all teams fulfill their league schedule as efficiently as possible.*

All 8U-14U teams are expected to play their entire HCTB schedule, as written. The league will not write schedules around tournament bye week requests during the defined regular season. HCTB will make every effort to accommodate tournament schedule requests but can NOT guarantee all requests can or will be honored. Any team that forfeits games due to entering outside tournaments during the defined regular season will not be allowed to participate in the end of season tournament and runs the risk of removal from the league.

**PROTEST PROCEDURE:** The protesting manager shall, before any succeeding play begins, notify the umpire and opposing manager that he is playing under protest. Following this notice the umpire will consult with both managers in an effort to resolve the protest. If this cannot be done, he shall note the game score, names and positions of base runners, the count, the number of outs, inning, etc. in the official score book and announce that the game is being played under protest (notation must be made in ink and signed by both coaches and the umpire).

Any protest must be submitted by the protesting manager in writing to the AGC within two (2) working days. The Executive Committee shall hear the protest and reach a decision. Protest Fees: \$75.00 (non-refundable)

All protests must be resolved within two (2) weeks.

## 8. Game Scoring and Reporting

It will be the hosting team's responsibility to report the game results via email to their AGC, visiting team manager and post online or report to their AGD no later than 9:00PM two calendar days from the date of the game. At a minimum, team name, age group, and score must be included when reporting game results. Each team is responsible for keeping their own score and scorekeepers should verify scores and pitching changes throughout the game. In cases of dispute, the hosting team's scorebook will be the authoritative source.

## 9. Awards, Standings, and Post Season Play

Awards will be offered for the tournament champions, runners up, and MVP trophies for each team. The goal of HCTB is that each Age Group Division will have an end of season tournament. Standings will be kept for all divisions and used for determining the regular season champions (when appropriate) and for tournament seeding purposes.

Teams will be seeded for the league tournament according to their divisional win/loss records for the regular season, winning percentage will be used if the Division chooses an unbalanced schedule. In the case of a tie for division position the following tie breakers will be used:

1. Head-to-head record among the two tied teams will be the first tie breaker.
2. Average runs allowed per game against all teams.
3. Total Runs Allowed
4. Average runs scored per game against all teams.
5. A coin toss will be used as a last resort to break remaining ties for position.

The higher seeded teams per the final regular season standings will determine the home team in league tournament games. The Most Valuable Player for each team in the Championship game will be selected by the coaches of the opposing team.

#### ***9.1 15-16 & 16-19 Exceptions:***

The 15-19 Age Group will host two tournaments. All teams will compete in the year end tournaments. The tournaments will be set up to allow for each team to compete with their appropriate level of competition as determined by the AGC with input from the teams participating.

League standings will be based on a 14-game schedule pre-determined by the AGC and constitutes “league play”. Other games may be added and played but will not count toward the league standings.

## **10. Ejections, Suspensions & Protests**

The following Code of Conduct seeks to promote and strengthen the reputation of baseball in the region by establishing a standard of performance, behavior and professionalism for its participants, coaches and the executive committee. In addition, it seeks to deter conduct that could impair public confidence in the honest and professional conduct of HCTB or in the integrity and good character of its members, players and volunteers.

#### ***10.1 Code of Conduct:***

- Unless specifically designated otherwise, tobacco and/or alcohol are prohibited at all HCTB games.
- Weapons (including but not limited to firearms) and illegal drugs are prohibited at HCTB games.
- Umpires are to be treated with respect and professional courtesy.

- Use of illegal and or altered equipment is prohibited.
- Use of noisemakers in the dugout or by spectators is prohibited.
- Deliberately antagonizing

Failure to abide by the above Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to:

- Verbal warning
- Confinement (to dugout or other designated area)
- Restricted use of equipment or item involved in situation
- Ejection from game
- Game forfeiture
- Suspension from HCTB games for any length of time, including permanently

Any player, manager, coach, or fan using profanity or demonstrating unsportsmanlike behavior will be immediately ejected, not only for the current game but also for 1 additional game (regular or tournament) **as a minimum**. Managers and coaches are responsible for controlling their parents and fans and may be ejected if they fail to do so. Ejection is defined as the offending person(s) must leave the field and spectator area or their team will be subject to forfeit of the game. *Note: at most fields, this will mean the ejected person must go to the parking area or leave the facility altogether.* The Umpire has sole discretion for making the ejection decision.

Players, coaches, or managers who have been ejected **must** notify their Age Group Director and the HCTB Executive Committee within 24 hours. The AGD and HCTB Executive Committee will discuss within 4 business days any additional actions. Those ejected for a second time during the season (regular and tournament) shall be suspended for the remainder of the regular season and post-season and may not be allowed to play or coach again in HCTB unless a request to do so is approved by the HCTB Executive Committee.

Assistant coaches, parents or fans may be ejected as determined by the umpire. If a parent or fan is ejected, the head coach will immediately be suspended as well. The head coach, assuming they were not directly suspended, will be permitted to return the next game. The head coach is **RESPONSIBLE** for notifying the AGD and executive committee within 24 hours of any coach, parent or fan ejected for the HCTB executive committee to evaluate.

## 11. Other General Rules

### 11.1 Rules Basis:

2023 Major League Rules apply to all HCTB divisions, except for the exceptions described herein. These rules shall apply to all HCTB games when the home team is an HCTB-registered team playing an HCTB regular season or post-season game.

## **11.2 Minimum Players**

Eight (8) players are required to start a game.

## **11.3 Substitutions:**

**Offensive:** Team may bat 9 players, the entire lineup or in-between. Once the number of batters is determined, it must remain for the entire game. An ejection may result in an out if a substitute is not available. A substitute is anyone not placed in the batting order. Once a substitution bats or runs for a player, the sub and the original starter are locked into that batting position and either one may bat or run in that position ONLY.

If batting entire line-up, a player arriving late will be added to the bottom of the line-up. Players leaving early may do so without penalty.

If only 8 players are available, the 9<sup>th</sup> spot in the batting order will be an automatic out.

Should a player be injured and/or unable to continue play for any reason, except ejection, their spot in the batting order shall be removed from the lineup without penalty. If an injury occurs while the player is at bat, the next player in the lineup shall assume the injured batters' count as play is resumed. Once removed from the batting order, that player may not reenter the game offensivly or defensivly.

**Defensive:** Any player on the roster may play in any defensive position at any time, regardless of being in the batting order.

**Example:** A team may have 18 players: Bat 9 of them and play the other 9 in the field. No one player in a game can assume more than one offensive position.

8U Only Rule – All players must play a minimum of 2 innings per game in the field. *Note – this is to promote development and sportsmanship.*

## **11.4 League Week:**

The week is defined as Monday through Sunday.

## **11.5 Pitching:**

Any pitcher hitting two (2) batters in one inning or three (3) in one game must be removed as a pitcher (8U-13U only). Delivery of one pitch constitutes an inning. The pitcher is removed when the manager makes 2<sup>nd</sup> trip to the same pitcher in the same inning. A player removed as a pitcher, regardless of whether the removal is during or in-between innings, is not eligible to pitch again in the same game. For pitching records, innings pitched are calculated in the week the game is played, not the week of the original scheduled date in the case of make-up games. Violation of the pitching limits for the age divisions may result in forfeit of *all* of the games comprising the violation. Balks will be called only in the 11 and

above division games. *However, in 10U and below, if a pitcher stops the throwing motion to the plate upon seeing the batter square for a bunt the pitcher shall be given a warning by the umpire that the ball must be delivered to the plate even when the batter squares to bunt. If after that warning the same pitcher fails to deliver the ball to the plate the umpire shall call a “dead ball” and award a “ball” in the count on the batter.*

## **11.6 Sliding:**

Runners must avoid contact. Any runner who in the judgment of the umpire fails to slide, slides with malicious intent, or otherwise does not avoid contact shall be called out and may be ejected from the game (umpire's discretion). *Headfirst sliding is strongly discouraged in Age Groups 13U and above. For Age Groups 12U and below, headfirst sliding is prohibited except for sliding back to a bag. A runner that slides headfirst into a bag not yet achieved shall be called out. This is not intended to limit a runner's ability to avoid a tag and use his hands to reach for the bag, it is intended to prohibit a runner from sliding on his belly with hands extended to reach for a bag when doing so with a feet first slide is possible.*

## **11.7 Collisions:**

All players, whether on offense or defense, shall make a good faith effort to avoid unnecessary collisions at all times. This means that the offensive player must slide or take other appropriate action to avoid collisions, and the defensive player must avoid contact other than that necessary to attempt to get the out. The umpire is the sole authority in determining if the collision is intentional or incidental, and in determining the appropriate response. Failure to observe this rule may result in the awarding of the base and/or an out and may result in additional sanctions by the umpire, including a warning or ejection of the offensive and/or defensive player where necessary. NOTE: It is recognized that some degree of collisions are inevitable on plays at home plate; however, blatant (in the judgment of the umpire) attempts by the runner to dislodge the ball or cause injury are not allowed, and in likewise fashion the catcher must avoid contact other than that necessary to attempt to get the out.

## **11.8 Obstruction:**

Defensive players shall have unimpeded access to attempt to field the ball. Likewise, the offensive player's ability to advance must not be unnecessarily blocked by defensive players. In cases where the advancement would interfere with the fielding of the ball, the fielding of the ball shall take precedence. Offensive players must take any reasonable action (e.g., pausing or slowing their advancement, etc.) needed to provide that unimpeded access to the defensive player. If the defensive player's ability to field the ball is impeded – inadvertently or intentionally - by the offensive player, then the umpire may choose to call the impeding player out. If an offensive player's ability to advance is impeded by any defensive player's action other than that associated with fielding the ball, then the umpire may award an advancement. The umpire's judgment is final.

## **11.9 Field Dimensions, Safety, and Warm-ups:**

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The playing field is defined as the area contained within the backstop fences, including the area contained within imaginary straight lines extended from those fences and parallel to the foul lines. Any balls traveling outside of the playing area are considered out of play.

Distances between bases and the pitcher's mound shall be as listed below for each age group. Note that the distance to the pitcher's plate is measured from the point at the rear of home plate to the front edge of the pitcher's plate. Distances to the bases are measured from the point at the rear of home plate to the rear edge of the base (or in the case of second base, to the point of the base pointing toward the outfield). All bases, including home plate, are contained within a square whose sides are the length of the designated distance from home plate to first base. This square defines the foul lines and the infield for purposes of ball control.

7-8: Pitching distance 40'; bases set 60' apart; Home to 2<sup>nd</sup> base 84'10"  
9-10: Pitching distance 46'; bases set 60' apart; Home to 2<sup>nd</sup> base 84'10"  
11-12: Pitching distance 50'; bases set 70' apart; Home to 2<sup>nd</sup> base 99'  
13 and above: 90' bases/60'6" pitching required (Home to 2<sup>nd</sup> base 127'3").

Note that for safety reasons, the pitcher's plate and home plate should be dug into the ground such that the top surface of the plate is level with the ground immediately around it. It is acceptable for a pitcher to dig away a big part of the dirt from the edge of the pitcher's rubber that faces home plate in order to get a good foothold for leverage during the delivery of a pitch.

Before the start of the game, the field (including the entire playing area in fair and foul territory, the backstop and fence, and the team bench areas) must be checked to ensure it is safe to play. Field safety determination is the umpire's responsibility, and their decision shall be final. If the field is determined to be unsafe, every effort should be made to immediately move the game to any appropriate alternative locations available to the two teams. If none are available, the home team is responsible for rescheduling in accordance with the league's postponement and rescheduling policies.

Subject to the home team's local program rules regarding warm-ups on the field, both teams should be provided equal access to the field before the game for warm-ups. Managers and coaches shall be permitted to warm up pitchers between innings and prior to the start of the game. Returning pitchers shall be allowed at least 4 warm-up pitches between innings; newly inserted pitchers shall be allowed at least 8 warm-up pitches. Warm up of pitchers and catchers during the game shall be in an area behind the fence sheltered from foul balls; otherwise, a coach or player must be dedicated to warn of threatening foul balls. If a player is used to warm up a pitcher, they must wear a catcher's facemask or batting helmet with facemask.

The second game of a doubleheader shall not start less than 15 minutes after the official end of the first game. Teams are encouraged to start the second game within 30 minutes of the first game's end.

## ***11.10 Uniforms and Equipment:***

It is the responsibility of the coach to ensure that their players are in conformance with all HCTB league rules regarding uniforms and equipment (e.g., protective gear, bats, gloves, baseballs, etc.). Umpires have the right to inspect uniforms and equipment at any point before or during a game, or upon request by the opposing coach. If, upon inspection by the umpire, the uniform or equipment item is not found to be in conformance with HCTB league rules, then the offending item shall be replaced with a conforming item. Failure to do so may result in a forfeit at the umpire's discretion. Discovery of an offending item after a play has been made with it may also result in a forfeit at the umpire's discretion.

Each team shall be responsible for providing one (1) game ball at the outset of the game and will alternate in providing additional game balls as required.

### ***11.10.1 Uniforms:***

All players on a team should wear uniforms (hats, jerseys, pants, and socks) of similar style and color, and each player should wear a uniquely numbered jersey with the number matching that recorded on the team roster. Metal cleats are not allowed in 8U-12U.

### ***11.10.2 Protective Equipment:***

Catchers must wear a protective cup, throat (either hanging or integral/hockey style helmet), chest, and shin protection, a catcher's mask and helmet, and use a catcher's mitt while playing in the field (players must also wear the catcher's mask and helmet while warming up a pitcher). Double earflap batter's helmets must be worn by all batters, base runners, and player base coaches.

### ***11.10.3 Bats:***

The highest performing allowed bat in HCTB League games are:

8U-12U: No barrel restriction, unlimited drop, USSSA BPF 1.15 stamped, USA Baseball Marking, or Wood.

13U: No barrel restriction, unlimited weight drop, USSSA BPF 1.15 stamped, USA Baseball Marking, Wood, or BBCOR .50 Stamped.

14U and above: 2 5/8" diameter maximum, -3 weight drop, BBCOR .50 stamped or Wood.

Each season thereafter, the HCTB Executive Committee will decide on bat eligibility as needed.

#### **Penalty**

- If the illegal bat is discovered prior to a batter completing his "at-bat" the bat is

- simply removed and the “at-bat” continues.
- A player who uses an illegal bat or non-conforming barrel dimension and hits a fair ball will be ruled out. No advancement on the bases will be allowed, and any outs during the play shall stand. This is an appeal play. The “at-bat” will be considered legal once a pitch is thrown to the next batter.
- Any bat discovered prior to the game that does not conform to the above rule shall be directed to be removed immediately and not be allowed for use during the game.

#### ***11.10.4 Baseballs:***

8U-13U: Official size and weight Cal Ripken, Babe Ruth, Little League, USSSA, Pony League, or Official League leather baseballs. HCTB recommends Cal Ripken stamped baseballs.

14U & Older: Official size and weight NFHS stamped baseballs.

## **12. Division Rules: 8U**

**PITCHING LIMITS:** Pitchers in the 8U age group may pitch:

A maximum of 2 total innings in a double header.

One official pitch in an inning counts as an inning pitched.

**STRIKE ZONE:** The strike zone should be agreed upon by both managers and the umpire before the start of the game. It is recommended that the strike zone be slightly enlarged to speed up play and minimize the number of walks.

**COURTESY RUNNER:** A courtesy runner can be used for the Pitcher or Catcher of record at any time. A courtesy runner must 1st be a player not in the lineup. If everyone is in the lineup then the courtesy runner must be the last batted out.

**STEALING:** Stealing and leading will not be permitted.

**SLIDING:** "Diving back" to the base is not permitted.

**BUNTING:** Intentional bunting is not allowed. If a batter, in the determination of the umpire, appears to have tried to intentionally bunt, the play will be called dead, and the pitch is a “no pitch.”

**THROWING THE BAT:** Throwing the bat after a batted ball will result in a “Dead Ball” violation. The first violation results in a team warning. The second and all subsequent occurrences by that team result in an automatic “Out”.

**GAME LENGTH:** Six (6) innings only.

**SCORING:** In innings 1 through 5, the team batting may score a maximum of 5 runs (**‘continuation’ runs will be recorded**). During the 6th inning and extra innings, there is unlimited scoring.

**MERCY RULE:** If the losing team has batted three (3) innings and is losing by 15 or more runs or four (4) innings and is losing by ten or more (10) runs, the game will be considered complete.

**SUSPENDED-GAMES:** A game called by the umpire shall be considered a regulation game if the losing team has batted four (4) times. If a game is called before it has become a regulation game (due to lack of daylight or weather conditions), the umpire shall declare it "Suspended" and the game must be replayed from the start.

**FIELD SIZE:** 60' bases / 40' pitching

**FIRST BASE:** a "double" base is recommended to be used at first base but is not required.

**OUTFIELD:** Four (4) fielders are allowed in the outfield. All outfielders must be positioned in the outfield grass.

**INFIELD FLY RULE:** The infield fly rule will not be in effect.

**ENDING A PLAY (DEAD BALL RULE):** *NOTE: The intention of this rule is to foster team play by encouraging players to make the appropriate play by throwing the ball to a base and attempting to get an out. Players running the ball across the infield or running the ball in from the outfield, without involving their teammates, is to be discouraged.* A play ends ONLY when the ball is in the “control” of any infielder; Once “control” is there established, then the play is dead; unless the player with the ball makes an immediate move to make a play on a runner by throwing the ball or attempting to tag a runner. Any delay in making the play by the “player in control” should be interpreted as the play happening after the dead ball, and runners cannot advance, nor can they be put out. The determination of “control” and whether an immediate move by a player extends the play is solely in the discretion of the umpire. Also, if a play results in a rundown play, then play will be maintained until the player involved in the rundown is either put out or successfully advances to the base he was attempting to reach. Placement of Runners – A runner who is halfway or more to the next base before the play ends will advance to the next base. If the runner is less than halfway to the next base when the play ends, the runner goes back to the previous base. Placement of the runners shall be in the sole discretion of the umpire.

The home team is **responsible** for marking the half-way point from 1<sup>st</sup> base to 2<sup>nd</sup> base, 2<sup>nd</sup> base to 3<sup>rd</sup> base, and 3<sup>rd</sup> base to home to assist the umpire in the placement of runners.

**ENDING A PLAY (Out of Play Overthrows- DEAD BALL RULE):** An overthrow that leaves the field of play is a dead ball (an overthrow to second base or any other base that does not leave the field of play is a “live” ball). The umpire must determine which base the runner has “achieved” at the time the overthrow goes out of play (i.e., is the runner more or less than halfway to the next base). If the runner is half-way or more to the next base, then the runner has achieved that base. If the runner is less than halfway, then the runner has not “achieved” the next base. After the dead ball, the umpire must then award an additional base from the “achieved” base.

Players are not allowed to advance on throws from the catcher to the pitcher after a thrown pitch.

**BATTING HELMETS:** Batting helmets with a face guard MUST be made available to the batter. It is not mandatory that a helmet with a face guard be used, but it is recommended.

## **13. Division Rules: 9U through 14U**

### **PITCHING LIMITS:**

**9U: 3 innings in a double header**

**10U: 3 innings in a double header**

**11 through 12:** Pitchers in the 11 through 12 age groups may pitch:

A maximum of 6 innings in a day.

*EX. If a player pitches 4 innings in the 1<sup>st</sup> game of a double header, he may pitch 2 innings in the 2<sup>nd</sup> game of the double header.*

**13 and 14:** Pitchers in the 13 and 14 age groups may pitch:

No pitching restrictions.

HCTB recommends that managers follow the USA Baseball recommended daily max pitches and required rest recommendations per age group: (Source: USA Baseball)

Age	Daily Max (Pitches in Game)	0 Days Rest	1 Days Rest	2 Days Rest	3 Days Rest	4 Days Rest	5 Days Rest
7-8	50	1-20	21-35	36-50	N/A	N/A	N/A
9-10	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
11-12	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
13-14	95	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
15-16	95	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+	N/A
17-18	105	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-80	81+	N/A
19-22	120	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-80	81-105	106+

**BALKS:** Balks will be called in the 11 through 14 divisions. One (1) warning will be issued per pitcher in 11U and 12U.

**SLASH BUNT:** Slash bunting is not allowed in 9U-12U. A slash bunt is when the batter assumes the position for a bunt and then changes grip and takes a swing at the ball. *Any batter pulling the bat back to a hitting position (changing their grip) after assuming the position for a bunt will be deemed guilty of slash bunting whether the baseball is put into play or not).*

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense: The batter is out, the runners go back to their bases, and the manager/coach is given a warning.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: The batter is out, the runners go back to their bases, and the manager/coach is ejected.

**THROWING THE BAT (9U-12U):** Throwing the bat after a batted ball will result in a “Dead Ball” violation. The first violation results in a team warning. The second and all subsequent occurrences by that team result in an automatic “Out”.

**COURTESY RUNNER:** A courtesy runner can be used for the Pitcher or Catcher of record at any time. A courtesy runner must 1st be a player not in the lineup. If everyone is in the lineup then the courtesy runner must be the last batted out.

**STEALING:** Stealing and leading will be permitted.

**9 and 10 Only:** A runner may not lead in the 9 or 10 age group. The ball must cross the plate before the runner can leave the base. If a runner leaves the base early, in the judgment of the umpire, he must return to the base from which he came. One warning per team will be given to runners who leave early. On the second time the runner will be called out. UPDATE 3/21/25 Delayed steals are not permitted. Once, a ball is in possession of the pitcher within the mound area, no runners may advance. A batter,

upon a walk, may advance past first base only on a passed ball only. The intent of this rule is to promote fair play.

**GAME LENGTH:** The 9-14 age groups will play six (6) innings in all double header games. All 11 through 14 single games will be seven (7) innings.

**MERCY RULE:** For six inning games, if the losing team has batted three (3) innings and is losing by fifteen (15) or more runs or has batted four (4) innings and is losing by ten (10) or more runs, the game will be considered complete. For seven inning games, if the losing team has batted four (4) innings and is losing by fifteen (15) or more runs or if the losing team has batted five (5) innings and is losing by ten (10) or more runs, the game will be considered complete.

**SUSPENDED-GAMES:** A game called by the umpire shall be considered a regulation game if the losing team has batted four (4) times for six (6) inning games and five (5) innings for seven inning games. If a game is called before it has become a regulation game (due to lack of daylight or weather conditions), the umpire shall declare it "Suspended" and the game must be replayed from the start.

#### **FIELD SIZE:**

9-10: Pitching distance 46'; bases set 60' apart; Home to 2<sup>nd</sup> base 84'10"

11-12: Pitching distance 50'; bases set 70' apart; Home to 2<sup>nd</sup> base 99'

13-14: 90' bases/60'6" pitching required (Home to 2<sup>nd</sup> base 127'3").

## **14. Division Rules: 15-16U and 16-19U**

**TEAM ENTRY FEES:** The 2024 team entry fee \$425 will be collected to cover the cost of tournament awards (champion and runner-up) and the umpire assignor's fees. League fees can be paid online when registering or a check should be made out to Emmorton Rec Council.

**LEAGUE RULES:** Unless otherwise stated in these league rules, the playing rules will be the current Official Major League Rules.

**ROSTERS:** Official team rosters must be submitted to the appropriate AGD by the Monday prior to the first game of the season. The roster must include the player's full name, date of birth and jersey number. It also must include a copy of the birth certificate. Teams not submitting complete rosters will forfeit any subsequent games until an official roster is distributed to each team. Rosters **must** be emailed to the AGC or entered on the website.

**TEAMS AND DIVISIONS:** There will be one or two divisions each year, one consisting of teams comprised of 15 through 16 year olds and one with 16 through 19 year olds, if possible. The AGC will make every effort to schedule games of "like-for-like" consistency. 15U teams will not play 19U teams unless the tournament structure

allows.

Younger players (15 years old) may ‘play up’ with the mutual agreement of the player, the player’s parents and the team manager.

Players younger than 15 years old may NOT play in the 16/19 baseball division under any circumstances.

Use of an ineligible player will result in the forfeiture of any and all games in which that player participated.

**GAME TIME AND SCHEDULING:** Game time is 6:00 pm. Forfeit time is 6:15 pm. For make-up games, forfeit time shall be 15 minutes after the scheduled start time. If a team forfeits a game, they shall be responsible for paying both officials. If a game is forfeited, each umpire shall be paid one half of their normal fee.

There is no minimum player count to start or end a game. Teams with less than 9 players will know they are at a disadvantage. Players arriving late are simply added to the bottom of the line-up based on their arrival.

The only acceptable reasons to reschedule a game are inclement weather and unsafe playing conditions. Conflicts during senior week may be rescheduled if agreed upon by both team managers and coordinated by the commissioner.

**AGE DETERMINATION AND VERIFICATION:** The age determination date is **April 30 (of the current year)**. Verifying the age of a player on an opposing team is done by:

The head coach requesting verification must do so through his program chairperson, providing the name, team, and recreation council of the player in question.

Verification will be done between council chairpersons by providing a copy of a birth certificate or other positive means.

Positive proof of age will be communicated within seven (7) days of the request.

Failure to comply within the seven (7) days will result in the loss of that game.

**EQUIPMENT AND PLAYING RULES:** Metal bats may be used. All metal bats must be taped; wood bats must not be taped.

NOTE: High School Federation rule regarding bat size/weight will apply. No 2 3/4" bats will be allowed. 2 5/8" bat must conform to the minus 3 weight restriction.

Metal or rubber cleats may be worn in this age group, but no jewelry of any kind will be allowed.

Each team is required to provide its own equipment. A minimum of five (5) batting helmets are required. All catchers must wear a cup.

The home team is responsible for providing two (2) new game balls. The visiting team shall provide (2) good game balls.

Regulation baseballs will be used, Rawlings RO or equivalent.

**PITCHING:** This is up to the discretion of each team. Player safety is first.

**GENERAL RULES:**

The infield fly rule will apply.

The balk rule will apply without a first occurrence warning.

**COURTESY RUNNER:** A courtesy runner can be used for the Pitcher or Catcher of record at any time. A courtesy runner must 1st be a player not in the lineup. If everyone is in the lineup then the courtesy runner must be the last batted out.

**MERCY RULE:** For six inning games, if the losing team has batted three (3) innings and is losing by fifteen (15) or more runs or has batted four (4) innings and is losing by ten (10) or more runs, the game will be considered complete. For seven inning games, if the losing team has batted four (4) innings and is losing by fifteen (15) or more runs or if the losing team has batted five (5) innings and is losing by ten (10) or more runs, the game will be considered complete.

**BATTING ORDER:** See General Rules.

**PLAYER INJURY:** Should a player be injured and/or unable to continue play for any reason, except ejection, their spot in the batting order shall be removed from the lineup without penalty. If an injury occurs while the player is at bat, the next player in the lineup shall assume the injured batters' count as play is resumed. Once removed from the batting order, that player may not reenter the game.

**LEAGUE SCHEDULE:** Divisional play will be offered when possible. Teams will play anywhere from a 10-12 game regular season and a single elimination tournament at the end of the regular season.

**COMPLETE/SUSPENDED GAMES:** Five (5) innings constitutes a full game; 4 ½ innings if the home team is ahead.

Games that are stopped due to weather or darkness prior to 7 full innings will fall under one of the two suspended games rules stated below.

Games that are stopped prior to 5 full innings, or 4 ½ with the home team ahead, will be considered incomplete. An incomplete game will be resumed at the same point in the game as where it was halted, including base runners, batter, count, etc. both teams need to agree to a scheduled continuation date as soon as possible. Pitchers who pitched

in the initial game and had been removed from the game may not pitch in the continuation game. Additionally, the original batting order will remain intact for the continuation game with the following exceptions. If a player who played in the first game cannot attend the second game, their place in the batting order will be eliminated with no penalty to the team. Also, if a player is available who could not play in the first game they will be allowed to participate and are to be added to the bottom of the batting order.

Games that are stopped, at any time, after the completion of 5 full innings will be considered complete. However, the following guidelines apply to determining the final score. If a game is stopped at any time during an inning of play, the score will revert back to the score at the end of the previous full inning of play. EXAMPLE: The visiting team is losing 4-2 after 5 full innings of play and scores 5 runs in the top of the 6<sup>th</sup> to go ahead 7-4. At any point during the bottom of the 6<sup>th</sup> if the game is called by the umpire prior to the third out, then the score would revert back to the score at the end of 5 innings and would be considered a complete game victory for the home team with the final score of 4-2.

**Tournament Games:** Unless the slaughter rule applies all games will be played a full 7 innings to completion.

**RESCHEDULING OF GAMES:** Games rained out will be rescheduled by mutual agreement by both managers. Per the published schedule there shall be 3 weekends that should be used to make up games. If additional dates are necessary, the league commissioner will then schedule the game. Saturday and/or Sunday will be considered suitable days for makeup. If a game is rained out, the age group commissioner must be advised of the makeup date within 48 hours of the date missed.

**CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENTS:** The Championship Tournaments will be single elimination and every team in the league is eligible to participate in the tournament.

**TEMPORARY ROSTER ADDITIONS (16-19 ONLY):**

Coaches may call up players in order to avoid a forfeit. Call-up players not on the roster must be declared to the opposing coach prior to game time.

Based on their division, coaches may call up younger players from their baseball program in order to avoid a forfeit. Team may call up players as young as 15. Coaches must receive approval from the AGD and notify the opposing team and the umpires of these non-roster players. Failure to do so will result in a forfeit for the team. Games must be played on assigned dates weather permitting.

Players within your organization may be moved up from the next younger age group to ensure a roster of 9. Failure to field a team on the assigned date will result in a forfeit.

*Additional Rules: Coaches may call up players in order to avoid a forfeit. Coaches must notify the age group director and the opposing team of these non-roster players.*

We recognize that playing baseball during the summer can be very difficult (vacations, Holidays, players needing to work, etc). The intent behind this was to help teams get games in and avoid forfeits.

- 1) Non-Rostered players can only be called up/used when you have less than 9 players. You may not use a non-rostered player if you already have 9 position players. No exceptions as there are no need for any other players, therefore Non-Rostered players are not allowed.
- 2) Non-Rostered players must meet the age standards set by the league.
- 3) Non-Rostered players must be on the field prior to the beginning of the game and may not be added after play starts.
- 4) The opposing team must be told that you are using non-rostered player/players PRIOR TO THE START of play.
- 5) Non-Rostered players may not pitch.
- 6) Non-Rostered players must bat last in the batting order (9<sup>th</sup>).
- 7) If you begin a game with a non-rostered player and a regular rostered player arrives late, the Non rostered player is removed from the line up and the rostered player is added. (In the last 9<sup>th</sup> position in the batting order). There is no penalty, just a switch.

**PARENTAL CONCERNs:** Parental concerns should be addressed to the coach and/or chairperson of his baseball program. ONLY chairpersons and head coaches may contact commissioners for clarification of league rules or game procedures.

Malicious contact is prohibited.

HCTB is concerned that some coaches have not explained to their players that malicious contact is illegal. Player's risk serious injury anytime a runner purposely tries to run over another player. A majority of intentional collisions occur at home plate where the catcher is blocking the plate. Runners should be instructed to slide or attempt to avoid making contact with any defensive player. A player who maliciously runs into another player is automatically ejected, and is declared out, unless he scored prior to committing the infraction.