

TPSS Youth Baseball & Softball Leagues

General Baseball Rules

TPSS League Goals

The League's primary goal is to create a fun and successful experience for all players and for all involved. TPSS also hopes to achieve the following objectives:

- ✚ To teach players basic skills and rules of the game;
- ✚ To instill a strong sense of teamwork, good sportsmanship, and fair play;
- ✚ To help players do their best and improve their skills;
- ✚ To teach players the value of helping each other;
- ✚ To teach players to hustle and play the game properly;
- ✚ To teach players to play and practice safely; and
- ✚ To create a foundation so players enjoy playing the game.

Rules of Play

These rules apply to all Divisions. Each division may also have its own set of additional rules that apply to only that Division.

Rules, by their nature, sound formal. Everyone should respect, understand, and abide by the rules. However, the League hopes that rule applications, interpretations, and disputes are handled in an informal, cooperative spirit of good sportsmanship and fair play.

General Rules

1. The rules of the Takoma Park-Silver Spring League (TPSS) are the *Official Baseball Rules and Regulations* of the Cal Ripken Division, except for the following modifications adopted by TPSS.
2. All TPSS modifications of official baseball rules are stated in these rules. Some official baseball rules are restated in these rules, for clarification and information purposes. Therefore, anyone with a basic knowledge of baseball can read this document alone to know the basic TPSS rules.
3. Everyone must read and follow the [TPSS Safety Code](#) and the [TPSS Code of Ethics](#). The Manager must insure that the Safety Code and the Code of Ethics are distributed to and followed by all players, parents, coaches, and, in divisions that supply their own umpires, the umpires.
4. All managers, coaches, team parents and umpires must read and follow these Rules.
5. The umpire has authority to: enforce rules; control the game; make a final call on each play and any disputes; determine the appropriate penalty for rule violations (where no penalty is prescribed); and, when necessary or appropriate, eject managers, coaches, players, parents or fans from the game and spectator area. Once a call is made, umpires are instructed not to change their mind on issues involving judgment; however if an umpire neglects to apply a relevant rule (for example, allowing runners to

steal in the Rookie Division) it is appropriate for a manager to remind the umpire of the rule so the mistake can be corrected immediately.

The manager, and only the manager, may question an umpire's call or raise issues involving the application of rules, and only in a sportsmanlike manner that respects the umpire's authority. A manager, coach, player, parent or fan who vehemently or repeatedly objects to an umpire's call may be ejected from a game or banned from future games. In the event that an umpire does not show up for a game, the managers of the two teams, by mutual agreement, will select a coach, parent, or other adult familiar with TPSS rules to umpire the game. In such an event, that person has full umpiring authority, and must remove themselves from any coaching or parenting obligations, and may not cheer for either team.

As a guiding principle in ambiguous situations, umpires should give the benefit of the doubt to the defense and rule in favor of the interpretation or judgment which stops play, grants an out, or returns runner to a prior base.

6. Only players registered in TPSS may play or practice.

7. Only TPSS players, managers, coaches, scorekeepers, official team parents, safety captains and umpires are allowed in the playing area, described below. No batboys or batgirls are allowed in the playing area, for safety reasons.

8. The manager is responsible, and shall be held accountable by the umpire, for the conduct of his or her team and the team's fans.

9. No tobacco (including smokeless tobacco) or alcohol is allowed on the playing field, in the playing area, or stands or areas where fans sit.

10. **The playing field:** The field of play is the area where the ball is in play. The infield is a 60-foot square (60 feet between bases). It's 46 feet from the front side of the pitcher's plate to the rear point of home plate. There's a 10-foot circle surrounding the pitcher's mound. The coaches' boxes, if made, are 4 feet by 8 feet, and not closer than 6 feet from the foul lines. If a mound is built, the pitcher's plate is 6 inches above home plate. The catcher's box, if made, is about 6 feet, 4-3/8 inches to the rear of home plate. It's determined by extending each foul line 9 feet beyond the back point of home plate.

11. Prior to the game, the umpire and managers shall agree to a safe "field of play" adhering to the stated dimensions. They will also agree to a safe "playing area." The playing area is the field of play plus an additional area behind the backstop and "dugouts."

12. The home team is responsible for placing and measuring the bases.

13. **The ball:** A RIF-1 is used in the Rookie League; a RIF-5 is used in Minors A; and a RIF-10 is used in Minors AA. Majors and all older divisions use a regulation baseball.

14. The bat can't be more than 33 inches long. The bat barrel can't be more than 2-1/4 inches.

15. **Protective gear:** During all games and practices, a batting helmet must be worn on deck, at bat, and on the base paths. If a player is in a coaches' box, the player must wear a batting helmet. The helmet must cover the top of the head, have extended earflaps covering both ears, and must properly fit the players. A chin strap must be used with a helmet.

16. **Catcher's equipment:** Any player warming up a pitcher must wear a mask. A throat protector is considered part of the catcher's mask. In game situations (at practice or in games), the catcher must wear properly fitting protective gear, including: a mask; headgear covering the top of the head; a cup (males only); shin guards; chest protector.

17. **Shoes** with metal cleats or spikes are not permitted.

18. **Trips to the mound:** For all divisions using players as pitchers, managers and coaches are allowed one trip to the mound each inning. Upon the second trip to the mound in the same inning to the same pitcher, the pitcher is automatically removed as a pitcher. The pitcher can re-enter as a pitcher once that inning is complete.

19. **Strike zone:** For all divisions in which balls and strikes are called, a generous "good, old-fashioned" strike zone, from arm pits to knees, shall be used.

20. **Batters:** Because of time constraints, batters are discouraged from stepping out of the batter's box unless the situation clearly warrants it, such as to see a coach's signal or to clear the eyes. Umpires may at their discretion order a batter to stay in the box, under threat of a one-strike penalty in divisions where balls and strikes are called, or, in the younger leagues, of being replaced for that at-bat with the next person in the lineup.

21. **Time limits:** Prior to the start of the season, each division president shall specify a time between 75 minutes and two hours after which no top of an inning shall start. Under no circumstances shall the top of an inning start fewer than 20 minutes prior to the scheduled starting time of the next game. To accommodate concerns about heat and sun exposure, opposing team managers may by mutual consent on game day shorten the time limit of the game. Such decision shall be reported to the umpire before the start of play. Make every effort to start and stop games on time so all scheduled games can be played in full.

Extra innings are allowed if conditions permit. Managers by mutual consent may agree to modify rules during extra innings so the game can be finished expeditiously. For example, a one-pitch rule could be adopted (each player gets one pitch: a ball is a walk, a strike or foul is an out).

22. **Weather:** If any manager, coach, parent, fan or player hears thunder or sees lightning, they shall report it to the umpire. All players must immediately clear the field. No batting practice or other use of aluminum bats is permitted during this time. Play may not resume until ten minutes has passed without thunder or lightning. In case of rain, or prolonged thunder and lightening, the umpire has discretion to call the game.

23. **A regulation game is six innings.** If the game is called due to darkness, weather, time limits, etc., a regulation game is four innings, or 3-1/2 innings if the home team is ahead after 3-1/2 innings. If the game is called before six innings, and after four innings, the last full inning shall be considered the final inning of the game. A game ending in a tie will be recorded as a tie, as long as it's a regulation game. If the tie affects final regular season standings, the result will be determined by a coin toss. If a game doesn't reach the minimum regulation limit, it is declared a "no game," it is not a regulation game, all records are erased, and the game must be replayed from the start as a new game. However, innings pitched in a "no game" situation DO COUNT toward pitching eligibility requirements.

24. Play can begin with any number of players. If a team does not have enough players to field a full lineup (Majors and Minors nine, all others ten) there's a five-minute grace period. Play begins immediately after the grace period, even if a team can't field a full lineup. Each team must have between 12 and 15 players on its roster at the start of the season.

25. Before the start of the season, each division president may designate an individual with 24-hour, voice mail facilities to receive the results of each game for that division, and shall instruct managers to call in results. The home team manager should call in the results.

26. **Protests** of games are not favored and are only allowed based on a claim of an ineligible player or ineligible pitcher. No protest is allowed on an ump's judgment decision. (See Grievance Process section.)

27. Managers may mutually agree to end a one-sided game. However, given that TPSS wants players to play as much as possible, calling a game should be done only in rare circumstances.

28. All teams shall use a continuous batting order. Players arriving late are inserted at the end of the lineup. There is no designated hitter.

29. Managers may substitute for their players at any time. There are no limits on players reentering a game, except those detailed in the division-specific rules for pitchers.

30. **Post-season tournament:** Prior to the start of regular practice in the spring, each division president shall decide on the type of post-season tournament, if any, for their league, e.g., double-elimination, single-elimination, or two-day, round robin, "non-elimination."

31. A batter who throws a bat after swinging is automatically out, except as specified in younger divisions where a single warning is allowed. Any player can be ejected for repeated violations of this rule.

32. **Runners can't lead:** In divisions where stealing is allowed, a runner may leave base once the ball crosses the plate. In other divisions, players may only leave when the batter makes contact with the ball. A runner who leaves a base early is declared out, and the play is nullified. However, the play is not nullified if the offensive team would benefit from the nullification.

Examples: Fred is on first. Barbara is at bat.

a) Fred leaves early and Barbara hits a HR. Fred is out. Barbara returns to the plate to bat.

The pitch count is the count prior to the HR.

b) Fred leaves early and Barbara hits into a double play. Both Fred and Barbara are out.

33. Umpires shall notify pitchers if a balk is committed, but no penalty is assessed.

34. **The dropped third strike rule does not apply.** The batter is out whether a third strike is caught or not caught by the catcher. In divisions where stealing is allowed, runners may still advance once the ball crosses the plate or on any passed ball.

35. A runner in pursuit of a base can't bowl or knock over a defensive player. A runner who does so is declared out. An umpire may eject a player who intentionally bowls over or attempts to injure another player. If a catcher is in position to tag out a runner at home, the catcher can't block the plate, and the runner must slide (rather than run through the plate or catcher).

36. **Fake tags are not allowed**, and if one is attempted the runner is awarded an extra base.

37. **The infield fly rule does not apply.** However, a player can't purposely miss an infield fly.

If the umpire judges that a player did so, the batter will be called out and runners will be held to their positions at the start of the play.

38. On an overthrow or missed ball at first or third base that goes out of the playing area, the runners advance one base beyond the base they were standing on, or one base beyond the base they were already running to when the ball was thrown. If the ball does not go out of play, runners may advance at their own risk until time is called.

39. **Bunting** is not allowed in Rookies, Minors A. Bunting is allowed in Minors AA and Majors.

40. In Rookies, Minors A and Minors AA, except for the last inning of a game, there's a limit of five runs per inning or three outs, whichever comes first. In the last inning, a team can bat all of its players once (unless three outs are recorded). The last batter can keep running, unless the defensive team tags the runner out or executes the signal for calling time. If one team has more players than the other team, the team with fewer players can keep the batting rotation going in the last inning, up to the number of players on the other team. (For example, Team One, with 14 players, is playing Team Three, with 11 players. Team Three, batting in the fast inning, may bat 14 players, unless three outs are recorded.)

41. The umpire calls and signals time once a play is dead.