



---

## SHOCK THE WORLD BASEBALL TOURNAMENT RULES SPRING 2026

---

*High School Federation rules except as modified below.*

*Updated October 13, 2025*

### **Section 1 - Sportsmanship:**

#### **Rule 1.1 - Conduct**

We expect that every participant will conduct him/herself at all times in a manner that is appropriate for youth baseball. Excessive arguing or complaining about umpire judgement calls (balls/strikes, out/safe or fair/foul) or any display of inappropriate behavior, to include foul language used by coaches, players, parents or spectators will not be tolerated. Anyone in violation of this sportsmanship rule will be asked to leave the premises immediately by either the umpire, or a tournament official. If after five minutes the offending person is not out of sight and sound of the field, the team will forfeit the game in progress. A player ejected for sportsmanship reasons is suspended from participating in the next game. A coach or parent ejected from a game is suspended for the remainder of the tournament.

#### **Rule 1.2 – Cheering**

Players, coaches and fans can cheer for their players, but may not initiate cheers for the opposing team to perform poorly. For example, the cheer “3-2 what you gonna do, walk him walk him”.

### **Section 2 - Tournament Format:**

#### **Rule 2.1 – Format**

Teams will participate in ‘pool play’ consisting of 2 games Saturday (or 1 game Friday night and 1 game Saturday) followed by a single elimination bracket on Sunday. Depending on the division size and format, some teams will play a consolation game on Sunday.

Home/Away is noted on the schedule for pool play.

The home team is listed on the bottom of the matchup.

The better seeded team will have the option during bracket play.

Dugouts are first come first served.

#### **Rule 2.2 - Seeding**

## Shock the World Baseball Tournament Rules – Spring 2026

Tiebreaker process for seeding:

1. Win / Loss record
2. Head to head record (if two teams are tied; not used if 3 or more are tied)
3. Average least amount of runs allowed
4. Average runs scored
5. Average run differential
6. Lowest runs allowed in a single game
7. Coin flip

Once a team is placed, go back to the top of the tiebreaker list to determine the next seed in the standings. For example. If the following are the pool play results:

Falcons 1-1 with 8 runs allowed

Eagles 1-1 with 10 runs allowed

Cardinals 1-1 with 12 runs allowed

Pigeons 1-1 with 14 runs allowed

And the only H2H matchup was Pigeons defeating Cardinals, then the Falcons are 1 because of lowest runs, Eagles are 2 with next lowest, then Pigeons would earn the 3 seed and Cardinals the 4 seed because of the H2H win the Pigeons have.

### **Rule 2.3 – Game Start Times and Warmup**

Please be prepared to start at the designated start time. No infield use in pre-game is permitted. Be at your field and ready to play 30 minutes before the scheduled start time, we may speed up play to prevent significant down-time between games.

### **Rule 2.4 – Warmups and Pitching Changes**

The fielding team is permitted the lessor of 8 warmup pitches or 90 seconds to warmup between innings after which point the umpire will call for “balls in”. The 90 second clock starts at the end of the previous half inning.

Pitchers entering the game in the middle of an inning will receive 5 warm-up pitches.

### **Rule 2.5 – Courtesy Runners**

A courtesy runner for the pitcher and catcher of record is allowed at any time. The runner must be a player not in the game or the last batted out.

## **Section 3 - Roster / Certificate of Insurance:**

### **Rule 3.1 – Certificate of Insurance**

Please make the COI out to:

Shockers Baseball MoCo

618 Center Point Way

#83993

Gaithersburg, MD 20883

[shockersbaseballmoco@gmail.com](mailto:shockersbaseballmoco@gmail.com)

**Rule 3.2 – Ages**

8U – Born on or after 5/1/2017  
9U – Born on or after 5/1/2016  
10U – Born on or after 5/1/2015  
11U – Born on or after 5/1/2014  
12U – Born on or after 5/1/2013  
13U – Born on or after 5/1/2012  
14U – Born on or after 5/1/2011  
15U – Born on or after 5/1/2010  
16U – Born on or after 5/1/2009

**Rule 3.3 – Rosters & Player Challenges**

Keep a copy of your roster and birth certificates with you at the tournament, prior submission is not required.

Teams should also keep a copy of their roster and insurance on hand during the tournament. In the event of a player's age challenge the challenging team must present a \$100 challenge fee to a tournament representative, then the challenged team must show the player's birth certificate or valid State-issued ID with birth information. If player is found to be ineligible the player will be removed from tournament, the head coach will be ejected from the remainder of the tournament. If the challenge is successful the coach will be refunded his \$100. There will be no forfeits because of an ineligible player. A sub may replace the ineligible player if one is available, otherwise an automatic out will take place in the same manner as an injured player.

A player may appear on only one roster in a given age group. Any player found to be participating with more than one team shall result in the players ejection for the remainder of the tournament.

**Rule 3.4 – Lineup**

A team may start the game with 8 players. Cannot start with 7. Team does not have to take an out in the 9<sup>th</sup> spot in the order if they start with 8.

You must end the game with the same number of batters you started with but for two exceptions. Exception #1 – a team starting with 8 may add a late arriving 9<sup>th</sup> / 10<sup>th</sup> / etc player w/o penalty. A team starting with 9 may add a late arriving 10<sup>th</sup> / 11<sup>th</sup> / etc player w/o penalty. A team starting with 10 may add a late arriving 11<sup>th</sup> player w/o penalty; and so on. Late players come in at the bottom of the batting order. Exception #2: No out will be taken if a player departs the game and cannot return due to injury or illness. Player may not re-enter once his spot in the lineup is missed. For fall (all ages) & 8u Spring & 9u Spring, this rule is expanded to include that no out is taken if a player departs the game for any reason.

You may bat as few as 8 players (if you only have 8) or as many players as you want, and may utilize substitutions. Once a player comes into the lineup as a substitute, they are locked in that spot, and only the sub and original player may bat in that lineup position.

### **Rule 3.4 – Substitutions**

Free defensive substitutions are allowed. Any player on the roster may play in any defensive position at any time, regardless of being in the batting order. You do not have to bat to play in the field. You do not have to play in the field to bat.

If using substitutes, once a player comes into the lineup as a substitute, they are locked in that spot, and only the sub and original player may bat in that lineup position.

Once a pitcher is removed from the game, player may not re-enter at the pitcher position.

### **Section 4 - Game Length & Mercy Rules:**

#### **Rule 4.1 – Game Length**

8u to 12u - Games are 6 innings in length.

13u to 16u – Games are 7 innings in length.

#### All ages:

The official game time clock begins at the conclusion of the plate meeting. Teams are expected to take the field immediately at the conclusion of the plate meeting.

A new inning begins when the final out of the prior inning is made.

In pool play, there is no new inning at 1 hour 40 minutes. There is no drop dead.

If the home team is ahead when the time limit is reached, then the game is over.

Pool play games can end in a tie. There are no extra innings during pool play, even if time has not been reached.

Bracket games must have a winner. If a game is tied after the 6<sup>th</sup> inning (7<sup>th</sup> for 13u+), then all extra innings will start with a runner on second base.

There is no new inning at 1 hour 40 minutes in the Quarterfinals or any First Round Games. There is no drop dead.

There is no new inning at 1 hour 50 minutes in the Semifinals. There is no drop dead.

There is no time limit in the Championship Game.

In the event of an injury where the game is delayed by 5 minutes or more, time will be added to the official game clock. Time will not be added for other stoppages or injuries causing a delay of less than 5 minutes.

#### **Rule 4.2 – Mercy Rules**

15 runs after 3 innings (2 ½ if home team is ahead).

10 runs after 4 innings (3 ½ if home team is ahead).

8 runs after 5 innings (4 ½ if home team is ahead).

Mercy rules apply in pool play and bracket play, including the championship game.

#### **Rule 4.3 – Runs per inning**

8u only

- 5 run limit per inning in the 1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> innings
- There are no “continuation” runs. The maximum a team can score in innings 1 through 4 is 5 runs per inning.
- Unlimited runs allowed in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> innings

**Rule 4.4 - Shortened Games**

Games called before a full inning is complete because of weather or darkness will revert back to the previous inning score. If the game has not reached official game status by reverting back to the previous inning, the coaches will mark their books and the game will be suspended. A game is considered to have reached official status at the completion of 4 innings (3 ½ if home team is leading). A game called due to the time limit is an official game regardless of the number of innings completed. If a game is stopped for any reason (weather, lightning, or darkness) before the game is official, the game is suspended and will be resumed from the point of curtailment at a time scheduled by the Tournament Director. At the discretion of the Tournament Director, if there is not a feasible time to resume the game, the game will be considered complete at the end of the last complete inning and the team that is winning at that point will be declared the winner.

**Section 5 – Defense & Pitching:**

**Rule 5.1 – Pitching Limits**

Managers are expected to manage their pitching staff with player arm safety in mind. There are no other pitching limits.

**Rule 5.2 – Mound Visits**

Second visit to the mound per inning will result in removal of pitcher.

**Rule 5.3 – Dropped Third Strike**

Refer to rules chart in last page

**Rule 5.4 – Balks**

Refer to rules chart in last page

**Rule 5.5 – Infield fly**

Refer to rules chart in last page

**Rule 5.6 – Number of Players**

All age groups - Teams may play a maximum of 9 players in the field (i.e. 3 outfielders).

**Section 6 – Offense:**

**Rule 6.1 – Leading / Stealing**

Refer to rules chart in last page

For divisions that do not allow leading - runner may leave the base after the pitch crosses home plate. Runners leaving early will receive a warning on the first offense by the team (team warning). On the second offense by the team, it is a dead-ball and the umpire will call the runner out.

Stealing home is permitted at all ages except 8u as noted below.

8u stealing rules are as follows:

Stealing is permitted with the following exceptions:

- A runner may not steal home. A run can only be scored on a struck ball put in play, a bases loaded walk, HBP or catchers interference.

### **Rule 6.2 - Sliding**

Refer to rules chart in last page

For divisions with no head-first slides, you can dive back to base head-first. Umpire discretion as to whether the player tripped and fell forward into a base, or slide.

### **Rule 6.3 - Bunting**

No slash bunting at any age group.

No bunting at 8u age group.

### **Rule 6.4 - Avoid Contact**

Players must attempt to avoid contact with other players in tag-out situations. If, in an umpire's judgment, there is intentional contact, that umpire may call the runner out on that play. If the contact is judged as intentional, the player is ejected from the current game and must sit out their team's next game.

On force out situations, if the runner slides, they must slide directly into the base. A slide that is not directly into the base is grounds for an interference call (umpire's judgment) and the runner could be declared out. In this instance, the batter/runner could also be declared out if the fielder was attempting to make a play on that batter/runner. It is important to note that if the runner makes a legal slide directly into the base and contact is made with the fielder, interference will not be called.

### **Rule 6.5 - On Deck Batter**

The on-deck batter must stand behind the back of the hitter, regardless of which dugout their team occupies.

### **Rule 6.6 – Throwing the Bat**

**8u to 10u:** Each player will receive one warning; and If the player throws his bat again, the player is to be called out. No players can be ejected in these age groups for throwing a bat during an official swing.

**11u and up:** If a batter throws his bat during an at bat after his follow through or after contact with a pitched ball, the umpire will provide ONE team warning. If this occurs again, the batter will be called out in each instance it occurs. If the same batter throws his or her bat twice in the same game, the umpire has the right to eject the player from the game. No additional penalties will be incurred in subsequent games.

**Section 7 - Equipment:**

**Rule 7.1 – Bats**

**8u-13u:** All bats must have either the BPF 1.15, USA Bat, USSSA or BBCOR designation displayed on the bat. No other weight or size restrictions. Wood bats also permitted.

**14u and up:** must have BBCOR stamp for all players, including younger players playing up.

**Rule 7.2 – Cleats**

**8u-12u:** No metal cleats.

**13u and up:** Metal cleats allowed.

**Section 8 – Other**

**Rule 8.1 - Refund Policy**

If no games are played due to inclement weather or government mandate, teams will be offered a full refund less \$150 admin fee. If 1 game is played, 50% refund. If 2 games are played, no refund.

**Rule 8.2 - Protests**

No protests. If you believe the umpire has mis-interpreted a rule, call time and discuss with the umpire. Judgement calls are final.

**Rule 8.3 – Forfeits**

If a team chooses to forfeit a pool play game, they are not eligible for the championship or consolation round and will not receive a refund. The tournament director may adjust matchups of other teams so that all remaining teams in the tournament play 2 pool play games. If matchups are not adjusted, the final score of the forfeited game will be 5-0. A forfeited game will count towards the 2 game minimum for the teams under rule 8.1

**Rule 8.4 – Determining the Winner**

All tournaments will have a Championship Game if possible. In the event of cancelation of a tournament due to weather, we will determine a winner and appropriate finishes based on the following procedure:

If Pool Play was concluded and bracket play is canceled, there will be no winner.

In the event that Pool Play has concluded, at least one round of bracket games have been completed and we are unable to finish the tournament (usually rain), the places are determined in the following manner:

All teams eliminated in Single-Elimination are eliminated and we proceed to the highest remaining Seeds left standing. The Tie-Breaker system has already determined seeds from the previous day and that is how we will determine a winner. The games played during Single-Elimination have NO BEARING on the final outcome as far as runs allowed, won-lost record and so forth. Games played during Single-

## Shock the World Baseball Tournament Rules – Spring 2026

Elimination can only eliminate a team. EX. Seed 1 may have played and won while giving up 5 runs and Seed 2 may have played and gave up 0 runs, therefore giving up less runs for the tournament. This IS NOT a factor in determining a winner. The highest seed left standing from Pool Play will be the winner and so forth.

### RULES SUMMARY:

Rule:	8U	9U	10U B	10U A	11U	12U	13U & Older
Base Distance	60'	60'	60'	65'	70'	70'	90'
Pitching Distance	43'	46'	46'	46'	50'	50'	60'
Steals	Yes but no stealing home	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Leads	Crosses plate	Crosses plate	Crosses plate	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Balks	No	No	No	Yes, 1 warning	Yes, 1 warning	Yes	Yes
Cleats	Molded	Molded	Molded	Molded	Molded	Molded	Any
Bunting	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Must Avoid Contact	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sliding	Feet first only	Feet first only	Feet first only	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Infield Fly	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dropped Third Strike	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes