

# NXT SPORTS USA

## TOURNAMENT RULES & FORMAT GUIDELINES

### MVPB Summer Classic

#### All-Star Prep Tournament Rules

*Rebranded for NXT Sports USA operations | Updated June 2026*

**Rules are based on PONY Baseball rules unless modified below. Tournament Director decisions on format, scheduling, safety, and rule interpretation are final.**

### 1. Rules Authority and Game Administration

- PONY Baseball rules govern unless specifically modified by this document.
- Home team is determined by a coin flip before the game. The winner of the flip chooses home or visitor.
- Home team provides the official scorekeeper and is responsible for the official score unless otherwise directed by the Tournament Director.
- There is no dugout rule. Teams may use whichever dugout is available.
- Rosters must be submitted through the NXT Sports USA event registration process or directly to the Tournament Director before the team's first game.

*Reference rulebook: 2025 PONY Baseball Rulebook. NXT event-specific rules control where this document differs from PONY rules.*

### 2. Rosters

- Each team must submit a signed/verified roster before the start of its first game.
- Roster maximum is 15 players.
- Players may not play for, or appear on the roster for, two teams in the same division.
- If a team is found to be using an illegal player, the player will be removed immediately and the team will be ineligible to advance in playoff/bracket play for that tournament.
- The team will not automatically be disqualified from completed games because doing so may unfairly affect other teams in the event.

### 3. Field Dimensions

Division	Base Distance	Pitching Distance
6U	50 ft	38 ft
7U	60 ft	38 ft
8U	60 ft	40 ft
9U	60 ft	46 ft
10U	60 ft	46 ft
11U	70 ft	50 ft
12U	70 ft	50 ft
13U	80 ft	54 ft
14U	90 ft	60 ft

## 4. Game Length and Time Limits

- No new inning will begin after 1:30 for 5U-14U unless a division-specific rule states otherwise.
- There is no drop-dead time. Any inning started will be played to completion or until a winner is determined.
- Pool play games are a maximum of 6 innings, except 14U which is a maximum of 7 innings.
- No extra innings are played in pool play even if time remains. Pool play games may end in a tie. An inning officially begins immediately after the final out of the previous half-inning is recorded. If the no-new-inning time has been reached before the next inning begins, a new inning will not start. If the home team is ahead and the visiting team has completed its at-bat when time expires, the game is complete.
- In playoff games, a winner must be determined.
- If a playoff game, other than the championship game, is tied after time expires or the inning limit is reached, up to two extra innings will be played.
- If still tied after two extra innings, the California tiebreaker will be used. The last batted out from the previous inning starts at second base. This repeats until a winner is determined.
- Championship games will be played out without the California tiebreaker unless modified by the Tournament Director due to weather, daylight, safety, or facility constraints.

## 5. Lineups and Substitutions

- Teams may bat 9, 10, or the entire roster unless a division-specific rule requires continuous batting.
- Any player in the batting lineup is considered in the game and may be inserted or removed from any defensive position.
- A player removed from the batting lineup for a substitute may re-enter at any time, but only in the same spot in the batting order.
- If batting the entire lineup and a player is removed due to injury, there is no penalty when that spot comes up; however, that player may not return to the game.
- If the injury occurs during an at-bat and the team is batting the entire lineup, the last out will finish the at-bat.
- If not batting the entire lineup and there is no legal substitute for an injured player, an out will be recorded.
- If the umpire determines that a team is feigning injury to gain an advantage, an out may be called when the injured player's spot comes up.
- If a lineup spot becomes vacant due to ejection and there is no substitute, an out is recorded each time that spot comes up.
- Teams may play short to avoid forfeits; however, outs are recorded for missing players up to nine unless modified by a division-specific rule.
- Players arriving late may enter one of the designated out spots.

## 6. Pitching

- There are no tournament pitching restrictions unless a division-specific rule states otherwise.
- Coaches are expected to use common sense and protect the arms of young players.
- A pitcher cannot be removed from the mound and return to pitch in the same game.
- A pitcher is considered in the game as a pitcher once that player throws one warm-up pitch from the mound.
- NXT recommends following MLB Pitch Smart guidelines.

## 7. Balks

- No balks are called in 6U, 7U, or 8U.
- At 9U and 10U, balks are called only after a warning to that pitcher, except a balk that creates an out or clear advantage for the defense may be called immediately.
- At 11U, umpires may call any balk but are encouraged to issue one warning for balks that do not create a clear advantage.
- At 12U, 13U, and 14U, balk rules are strictly enforced.
- A fake-to-third move by a pitcher who does not first step off the rubber is a balk.

## 8. Protests

- Protests are allowed only for rule interpretation, not judgment calls.
- The protest fee is \$100 and is due at the time of protest.
- Protests will be resolved immediately by the Tournament Director or designated rules official.
- The \$100 protest fee is returned only if the protest is successful.

## 9. Courtesy / Special Pinch Runners

- Special pinch runners are allowed at any time for the pitcher currently in the game or the next inning's catcher.
- Special pinch runners are mandatory for the next inning's catcher with two outs.
- The special pinch runner may be any player not currently in the lineup.
- If batting the entire roster, the special pinch runner must be the last recorded out.

## 10. Intentional Walks

No pitches are required for an intentional walk. The manager must notify the umpire. An intentional walk may be issued at any point during an at-bat.

## 11. Slide and Avoid

- Base runners are expected to slide or avoid collisions when there is a play on the runner.
- If, in the umpire's judgment, a runner does not slide or avoid a collision, the runner will be called out.
- Malicious contact or plowing a defensive player will result in ejection and may result in suspension for the next game or the remainder of the tournament.

## 12. Bat Rules

- Bats must comply with PONY Baseball bat standards unless a division-specific rule is more restrictive.
- Wood, metal, graphite, or ceramic baseball bats are allowed if round, not more than 2-5/8 inches in diameter at the thickest part, and not more than 42 inches in length.
- No bat may be used if dented, cracked, modified, or misshaped.
- USA Baseball stamped bats are required where applicable under PONY rules.
- 2-3/4 inch barrel bats are prohibited in all divisions.
- Any age/player may use a wood bat.
- USSSA bats are not allowed for All-Star Prep divisions where noted by NXT event rules.
- If an illegal bat is discovered during a game, the batter may be ruled out, the manager may be ejected, and further discipline may be issued by the Tournament Director. No completed games are forfeited solely because of this rule unless directed by the Tournament Director.

## 13. Pace of Play and General Game Rules

- Teams have 90 seconds between half innings. Hustle in and hustle out.
- Repeated violation of the 90-second rule may result in balls or strikes being assessed to the first hitter, depending on the offending team.
- Mound visits are limited to two visits for any given pitcher per game without removing the pitcher. On the third visit to the same pitcher, the pitcher must be replaced.
- Stalling is not permitted. If the umpire determines a manager or team is stalling, the umpire may refuse a visit, require the hitter to enter the box, or take other pace-of-play actions.

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- Metal spikes are prohibited in 6U, 7U, 8U, 9U, 10U, and 11U. Metal spikes are allowed in 12U and 14U unless a facility rule or portable mound restriction says otherwise.
- Metal spikes are not allowed on portable mounds at any age.

### 14. 6U Machine Pitch Specific Rules

#### Playing Field

1. Pitching distance is 38 feet using a pitching machine.
2. Base distance is 50 feet.
3. A 2-foot vertical halfway line will be marked between each base to assist the umpire in runner placement when a batted ball is declared dead.

#### Official Scoring

1. Before a new inning begins, both managers are strongly encouraged to confirm the score.
2. The home team is responsible for reporting the final score immediately after the game.

#### Game Duration and Run Rules

1. Games are 5 innings. No new inning after 1 hour 20 minutes. Time is based on the official start time declared by the umpire.
2. No team may score more than 5 runs per inning for the first 4 innings. Once 5 runs score, teams change sides unless an over-the-fence home run scores additional runners.
3. The 5th inning is open, meaning 3 outs must be recorded to change sides and there is no max run limit.
4. Mercy rule: 15 runs after 3 complete innings or 10 runs after 4 complete innings or later. If the home team is ahead by the mercy threshold after the visiting team bats, the game is complete.

#### Equipment and Pitching Machine

1. Louisville Slugger UPM 45 and UPM 50 pitching machines are the approved PONY Baseball pitching machines for Shetland/6U machine pitch play.
2. Safety baseballs are required. Flexi Ball Level 5 and Level 10 are approved for Shetland/6U play, subject to Tournament Director approval.
3. All bats must have the USA Bat licensing stamp unless otherwise permitted by PONY rules. Tee ball bats are permitted where allowed. USSSA bats are illegal and not allowed.
4. Recommended machine settings: Power Lever = 2, Micro Adjust = 3, Release Block = 4. Settings may be adjusted by the Tournament Director to achieve a good strike pitch at a reasonable speed.
5. The offensive team may adjust the Micro Adjust screw for height and the base arm for inside/outside unless the machine base is permanently mounted.

#### Pitching Position and Machine Contact

1. The player fielding the pitcher position must start 5 feet behind the pitching machine and 3 feet to the left or right.
2. If a batted ball strikes the coach feeding the machine, the ball is dead, the pitch counts as a foul strike, and no runners advance.
3. If a batted ball strikes the pitching machine and remains in fair territory, the ball is live and in play.
4. If a deflected ball from the machine hits a runner in fair territory, the runner is not out and the ball remains live.

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5. If a batted ball strikes the pitching machine and goes into foul territory, the ball is dead, the batter is awarded first base, and all runners advance one base.
6. The coach feeding the machine may coach batters and baserunners but may not interfere with defensive players.
7. If a live ball hits the coach operating the machine, or if the umpire judges that coach interference occurred, the ball is dead and the lead runner is out. If the ball was intentionally thrown at the coach, the ball is dead and all runners advance one base.

### Batters

1. Bunting is not permitted. Penalty: batter returns to the plate, the swing is a foul strike, the ball is dead, and no runners advance.
2. Players waiting to bat must remain in the dugout. No on-deck circle is permitted.
3. The batter is out after 6 pitches or 3 strikes. The batter is not out on a foul ball on the 6th pitch or any subsequent foul ball.
4. A foul tip that is the 3rd strike is an out regardless of pitch number. A foul tip on the 6th pitch or later is also an out.
5. If a batter unintentionally throws the bat and interferes with fielders, interference is called and the batter is out. A warning may be issued for unintentionally throwing a bat in fair or foul territory. A second offense after warning may result in the batter being ruled out and removed from the game.
6. If a batter intentionally throws the bat, the batter is removed from the game for unsportsmanlike conduct.

### Runners

1. No stealing or leading off. Runners must remain in contact with the base until the ball is put in play.
2. On a batted ball, runners may advance until an infielder has control of the ball in the infield or at a base and holds the ball up within fair territory.
3. When the ball is declared dead, runner placement is determined by the halfway line. If the runner has not gone entirely beyond halfway, the runner returns. If both feet are beyond halfway, the runner is awarded the next base.
4. Baserunners may advance on an overthrow at their own risk.

### 6U Game Management

1. Ten minutes before game time, managers and umpires will conduct a plate meeting to confirm player count, official start time, illegal bat checks, and questions.
2. Only the coach who attended the plate meeting may speak to the umpire unless the umpire allows otherwise.
3. A minimum team consists of 8 players. No out is recorded in the ninth batting position if only 8 players are present.
4. Teams without 8 players by 10 minutes after scheduled start time forfeit with a score of 5-0.
5. If a team playing with 8 players loses a player to injury or illness and drops below 8, that team forfeits with a score of 5-0.
6. If a player is permanently removed due to injury, sickness, or other reason, that spot is an out one time, then the batting order may collapse. The player may not return. Ejection remains an automatic out every time.
7. If a player is temporarily removed, that spot is an out each time until the player returns or is permanently removed.
8. Batting is continuous from all players present at the game.
9. A batted ball becomes dead when an infielder has possession and control in the infield or at a base and holds the ball overhead in fair territory and the umpire calls time.

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10. Offensive coaches must be in the coach boxes or operating the machine. The fourth coach must be in the dugout or designated area.
11. One defensive coach may be behind the catcher or in a designated area as directed by the umpire in consultation with the Tournament Director. Other defensive coaches must remain in the dugout or designated area, not along the foul lines.
12. Defensive alignment includes pitcher, catcher, first base, second base, shortstop, and third base. Teams must have a pitcher and catcher. Outfielders must play at least 10 feet from the infield.
13. Coach interference is prohibited, including stopping the ball, rolling or throwing the ball to a player, swinging the bat for a player, or otherwise interfering with play.

### 15. 7U and 8U Machine Pitch Summary Pitching Machine is set to 40mph

- Games are 6 innings or 1:30 no-new-inning, no drop dead, unless a division-specific format says otherwise.
- Run limit is 5 runs per half inning for the first 5 innings. The 6th inning is open.
- Mercy rule: 15 after 3 innings or 10 after 4 innings.
- Only USA stamped bats are allowed.
- Teams bat the roster and use free defensive substitutions.
- Six pitches or three strikes equals an out. If the sixth pitch is fouled off, the batter receives another pitch. A foul tip on the third strike or sixth pitch is an out. The pitching machine will be set at approximately 40 mph, or as adjusted by the Tournament Director to create a consistent, playable strike pitch.
- No lead-offs or stealing.
- The offensive coach feeds the pitching machine and may coach batters and baserunners but may not interfere with defensive players.
- Pitching machine adjustments may only be made at the top of an inning and both pitching coaches must agree. First offense is a warning; additional offenses result in the batter being called out.
- Play stops when the defense controls both the ball and runners, and the umpire calls time. The pitching coach must not receive the ball until time has been called.
- Infield fly rule is not in effect.

### 16. 7U and 8U Kid Pitch Specific Rules

- No leading off. Runners must remain in contact with the base until the pitcher releases the ball.
- Runners may steal after the pitcher releases the ball.
- Penalty for leaving early: once the pitcher has stepped on the rubber with possession of the ball, runners leaving early are out if the pitch is hit and the ball remains in play. If the pitch is not hit, the runner must return and the ball is dead; however, if the runner is put out trying to steal, that out supersedes the dead ball.
- Mercy rule: 13 after 3 innings, 10 after 4 innings, and 8 after 5 innings.

### 17. Tournament Format

The format may vary based on the number of teams in each division. The following formats are based on 2-day, 3-game guarantee events:

## 18. Tie-Breaking Procedure

1. Head-to-head record among all tied teams.
2. Runs allowed for all games.
3. Run differential for all games, maximum of 7 in any one game.
4. Coin flip.

*For ties among more than two teams, once a winner is determined, the remaining tied teams return to tiebreaker #1 to determine the next place.*

## 19. Ejections and Sportsmanship

- If a coach or player is ejected, they must immediately leave the area for the remainder of that game.
- The ejected coach or player may return for the following game unless the infraction is deemed severe enough to warrant suspension for the next game or the remainder of the tournament.
- Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their parents and spectators.
- If a parent or spectator is ejected, that person must leave the complex for the remainder of the day. The coach may also be ejected depending on the circumstances.
- The Tournament Director cannot overrule an umpire ejection.

## 20. Facility Rules and Prohibited Items

- Absolutely no alcohol is allowed at MVPB tournament locations. Drinking or possessing alcohol at any tournament location may result in immediate team ejection.
- No dogs or animals are allowed at MVPB facilities, except service animals as required by law.
- No grilling or cooking is allowed on MVPB property, including the parking lot.
- Teams and spectators must follow posted facility rules and all directions from NXT Sports USA, MVPB, city/facility staff, and tournament personnel.

## 21. Alterations to Tournament Format / Weather / Refunds

If weather, field conditions, facility closures, safety concerns, or other circumstances beyond the control of NXT Sports USA or MVPB require changes, the Tournament Director may modify schedules, game lengths, bracket formats, field assignments, or tournament procedures in order to complete the event safely and efficiently.

NXT Sports USA does not issue cash refunds for games canceled due to weather, field closures, acts of God, or circumstances outside tournament control. If the event cannot be completed as scheduled, NXT Sports USA may reschedule the event or issue tournament credits at its discretion.

If cancellation occurs after the tournament has started, credits may be issued based on the number of guaranteed games not played, at a rate of \$75.00 per unplayed guaranteed game.

**NXT SPORTS USA - ALL GAS. NO WASTED TIME.**