



Last Update: 7/1/2025

Cheat Sheet Version (more details below)

- ☐ #happybaseball always - when in doubt, #happybaseball.
- ☐ [Generally USSSA rules](#) - common sense pitching rules due to team randomness. Most teams will have to use anyone and everyone to get through an MSM tournament.
- ☐ 2 pool play games->single elimination bracket. Some divisions may have upper and lower brackets based on size.
- ☐ [100 Minute \(1:40\) games](#) - no new innings with **4:59 or below** left on umpire's time for pool play. Bases loaded/1 out tiebreakers for bracket games.
- ☐ Schedules and scores posted quickly and typically available 5 days before the tourney. You and your parents will get a link.
- ☐ [Fields Sizes](#)
 - ☐ 6th on 50/70
 - ☐ 7th on 54/80
 - ☐ 8th on 54/80 (Fall), 60/90 (Spring)
 - ☐ If combined 7&8th, on 54/80
- ☐ [Practice](#) - most teams just practice once or twice - some not at all.
- ☐ [Playing time](#) - do your best not to sit back to back, bat your line up. Over-communicate with your team/parents.
- ☐ Baseballs - we will have baseballs but **please bring a few extra game balls** just in case and get those foul balls back in, please.
- ☐ Umpires - #happybaseball, please. Because of awesome folks like you...we may be the only tournament that the umpires actually ask to ump at. Let's keep it that way!
- ☐ [Uniforms & Gear](#) - Gear is available for pickup prior to tournament. Players wear their club caps, pick a pant color or don't worry about it.
- ☐ If you don't know what a [Free Agent](#) or [Combo team](#) is please read up so you are not surprised.

#happybaseball

Rules

Generally, we use the **USSSA rules, including bat rules**. The only modifications to these rules is USA bats are allowed and **we do not have pitching limitations**. With that being said, **PLEASE be responsible**. In the history of MSM (1000's of games now), we have not even had one instance of trouble with a pitcher being overused and we are looking to keep it that way.

The reason we don't keep up with pitching is we know these teams are not designed by you and sometimes you have a lot of pitchers, sometimes you don't and since you have no control over that...you will have to get creative. Position players or players that have not pitched in a bit are all fair game :). The USSSA rules do not keep up with actual pitch count, so you might have a pitcher throw three innings on a Saturday and only throw 20 to 25 pitches and should be good to throw Sunday so we have placed this in the coach's hands and they have done an incredible job up to this point.

Communicate with parents, communicate with us and everything should be ok.

Remember that this is #happybaseball. Let the kids enjoy these moments with their pals. If we start to bring up rule 15.5.b paragraph d ... then we are losing sight of what we are trying to do.

Games

The tournament format is **2 pool-play games and a single elimination bracket**. We typically split large divisions (18+) into 2 brackets. This will level the playing field for weaker teams to have a better chance to play a little longer on bracket day.

Game results will be posted online and kept up to date in a very timely fashion through Sports Engine Tourney.

Typically we have **100-minute games**. **Pool games** - no new innings with **4:59 or below** left on umpires time for pool play. Ties can happen in pool play. **Ties during bracket are completed with bases loaded 1 out method**.

Tie Breaker Sequence for Seeding. Teams are seeded by division, not pool.

Record

Head to Head Two Teams Only

Run Diff* (max 8)

Runs Allowed

Runs Scored

Fields

Grade	Spring/Summer	Fall/Winter
6th Grade	50/70	50/70
7th Grade	54/80	54/80
8th Grade	60/90	54/80

We don't do 60/90 in Fall 8th. There are pros/cons but we found that even though there are many that are ready (or already playing) ... most were not, especially the catchers and it just made it to tough.

Practice

Most teams only practice once and it's typically just a 'get to know you' fun practice. However, some teams just show up too. We don't provide practice facilities. Most teams just meet up at a park or a training facility. Another common trick/hack is to show up a couple of hours early to your first game to get in one more session.

You will hear of teams practicing more and practicing less. Remember #happybaseball. We have also seen and received videos of turning these practices into giant block parties! Don't be afraid to embrace #happybaseball and get creative.

SPIRIT OF THE TOURNAMENT #happybaseball

This is the big one. Try to keep in perspective what this tournament is all about. Yes, we want it to be competitive but the core reason this tournament was put together was so that friends from Middle School could get together and play baseball as a team since that is not offered in most school system. **You should strive as coaches to balance playing time as best you can** and I can say the large majority of you do an outstanding job of this as we have had very few complaints in the past concerning this subject. Let's keep that up! **We would like to ask you to not sit players back to back and to bat the lineup.** If your team and parents come up with a different and agreed to plan...that's fine. Just make sure you have talked with parents.

Since MSM teams are formed by school (and who happened to sign up) sometimes you have a class of players that are loaded and sometimes...not so much. However, we have seen that often the players that are Majors level are not as Majors as we think they are and players at the rec level are not as rec as we think they are...and there this happier medium. There are still some interesting matchups, especially on Saturday.

These are GREAT times to pitch position players, change your line up and have fun!

Parents have a chance to review coaches after the tournament and coaches with multiple bad reviews are not asked back (super rare).

Field Directors

We have some very knowledgeable high school/college players working each complex this year. They know what is going on and if they need an answer they can get a hold of MSM HQ at any time. Please respect them and know that they are there to help and heed to our 'Keep Cool Like Fonzie' rule. We LOVE our parents but have zero tolerance for our staff being mistreated.

Gear Pick Up & Uniforms

Remember, we have to get jerseys and gear for all these athletes :) **You will get specific information in an email** regarding gear distribution but it typically goes like:

We have a big package pickup location the week of the tournament where you or a team rep come and pick up and pack your gear for your team. You can expect to spend about 30 minutes

distributing – have someone help. Gear distribution is probably harder than the tournament and you will get very specific instructions via email.

Pants - all baseball players have white and grey pants lying around. So most teams just choose a color, but in the end...it does not matter much. Please don't go out and buy new pants for MSM.

Caps - We ask players to wear their club team cap or an MSM cap. It gives a cool all-star look to the field. Some teams have had caps made. This is completely up to you guys but not needed and in fact, we prefer this not happen to keep costs down for parents.

Coaching

Head coaches are... well, the head coach but please allow others to help out and let everyone get involved. Sometimes we assign assistant coaches, and once a head coach is selected you will get others wanting to help. Just like the players are building community (with your help) do the same with your fellow coaches.

If you are a veteran coach, and you see a newer coach struggling or needing help. Help. Because of the nature of this tourney, we do have quite a few first-time coaches.

Free Agents

What's up with these players in oddball shirts? You will see some players wearing a sublimated MSM shirt. These are Free Agents. A strategy we use to backfill teams that fell a player or two short from injuries or other reasons, or registered late and we had room to place them on a team. Free agents are assigned by MSM HQ and may not always attend the school. They are used solely to keep a team alive.

Typically we only use Free Agents to get you to 9 players and we usually only have a couple of free agents max per team. However, there have been times when a team gets hammered with injuries. You will get info on how to request a free agent if you have an injury or late drop. Don't ask for 'extras'. Again, **free agents are assigned by MSM HQ - not by coaches**. Of the few coaches that we have given the boot too...it has always involved a free agent.

Combo Teams

Why are we playing a team of mixed schools? When we don't have enough to field a full team we will build combo teams from the same area. However, they will still wear their school jersey so they can wear it loud and proud. Sometimes you will even see a really mixed team...we affectionally call these *skittles* teams.

Every player should be wearing either this year's Jersey or a Free Agent Jersey...if something looks odd, a field director can probably answer it for you. Every once in a while we have to put a player in an older jersey because of last-minute sizing mishaps...

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