

U16 NATIONAL BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Inaugural Edition – Official Tournament Rule Book

31 October – 1 November 2026

Conduct & Tournament Administration

Sportsmanship. Coaches, players, and spectators are expected to treat umpires, opponents, and officials with respect at all times, including on close or contested calls. The Tournament Director may remove anyone from the venue for poor conduct and repeat offenders may be barred from the remainder of the event or future editions.

Schedule changes. The Tournament Director may adjust the schedule at any time, particularly for weather. Where practical, changes will be discussed with team managers first and applied as fairly as possible across all teams.

Standings points. Win = 3 points, Tie = 2 points, Loss = 1 point, Forfeit = 0 points.

Umpire authority. Umpires may eject any manager, coach, or player for unsportsmanlike conduct, and the home plate umpire may remove disruptive spectators. Only a team's designated Manager may raise a rules-interpretation question with the home plate umpire – judgment calls (balls/strikes, safe/out, etc.) are never appealable. One umpire will not override another's judgment call unless specifically asked to by the umpire who made it.

Protests. Any protest must be raised the same day, in person, by the team Manager, to a member of the Tournament Committee. The Committee member will consult at least one other Committee member and both Managers; agreement between two Committee members resolves the matter with no further appeal.

Ejections. An ejected manager, coach, or player must leave the entire field area (dugout, sidelines, stands, scoring table) for the rest of that game and the next one. Staying in the area risks forfeiture and further removal from the tournament. Teams are encouraged to name at least two coaches in case one is ejected.

Rosters & coaching staff. Each team names one Manager (head coach) and up to two assistant Coaches; only these individuals may be in the dugout. Rosters are capped at 14 players. Uniform numbers should stay consistent throughout the event; any mismatch must be flagged to the opposing manager and umpire before the game starts.

Overage or roster exceptions. Requests to field a player outside the normal age cutoff, or roster changes made close to the event, will be considered case-by-case by the Tournament Committee, whose decision is final.

The Field & Equipment

Item	Specification
Base paths	90 ft
Pitching distance	60 ft 6 in
Balls	Diamond D1-NFHS or equivalent approved ball
Bats	BBCOR-certified only (see below)
Arm guards	Maximum 2.5 cm / 1 inch thick
Spikes	Metal allowed on the field; not permitted on the pitching mound

Bat rule in full: Bats must not exceed 36 inches in length or 2 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches in diameter. Wood bats must be at least 15/16 inch in diameter at the handle (7/8 inch if under 30 inches), and any taped or sleeved section may not exceed 18 inches from the small end. A bat's weight (in ounces) may not be more than 3 less than its length in inches – e.g. a 33-inch bat must weigh at least 30 ounces. Any bat that isn't a single piece of wood must carry a valid BBCOR certification mark.

Illegal bat penalty: first offense – batter is called out and the bat removed from play; second offense by the same player – that game is forfeited; a third offense removes the team from the tournament. Managers, not just umpires, are responsible for making sure their players only use legal bats.

Format & Game Length

- Games run 7 innings or 90 minutes, whichever comes first. Timing starts from the first pitch.
- If the time limit is reached mid-game, the inning in progress is completed. If a team is then ahead by more than the run-limit threshold below, the game ends there; otherwise it stands as played (see Standings & Tiebreakers for how ties factor into round-robin placement).
- The run-limit cutoff for a time-capped final inning applies to round-robin and placement games, but not the Final – the Final is always played to a genuine finish.
- A game cannot start with fewer than 9 players, but may continue with as few as 8 if a team loses a player to injury or illness mid-game.
- All players, coaches, and umpires are expected to keep between-innings changeovers brisk to protect the schedule.

Batting & Lineups

Before each game, both managers agree (and tell the umpire) which lineup approach they'll use for that game:

- **Full lineup:** bat the entire roster (up to 14), with free defensive substitution except at pitcher.
- **9 + DH/EH:** bat 9 starters, with the option to add a Designated Hitter and/or a 10th-spot Extra Hitter, remaining players held as bench substitutes.

Once set, a batting order can't be reordered or resized mid-game except for injury or illness. Players left off the lineup card may sit in the dugout but can't coach bases or otherwise take part.

If using DH/EH: A substitute must complete 3 defensive outs before the player they replaced can re-enter (each starter gets one re-entry, in any lineup slot). A Designated Hitter must be named pre-game for a specific starting player and is locked into that batting-order slot together with them; the DH role ends for the game if either the DH or the player they're batting for takes a defensive position. An Extra Hitter, if used, must be declared pre-game, keeps a fixed batting-order slot all game, but can be freely swapped in and out of defensive positions (a swap, not a substitution) – and once elected, the team must keep using an EH for the rest of the game unless forced down to 9 players.

- On-deck batters must stay in the designated on-deck area behind the hitter.
- A batter hit by a pitch is only awarded first base if they made a genuine attempt to avoid it – leaning in doesn't count, and the umpire will instead call the pitch.
- Bat throwing draws a warning on the first instance; a second results in an automatic out and ejection.
- An intentional walk doesn't require four pitched balls – the batter can be sent straight to first, with four pitches still added to the pitcher's count.

Pitching

Daily and tournament limits. Because this is a compact 2-day event, pitch limits are set as flat caps rather than tiered rest-day rules (a rest-day trigger would effectively end a pitcher's tournament after one outing):

- **Maximum 105 pitches in a single day.** A pitcher may finish the batter they're facing when they hit this number; anything beyond that is a violation.
- **Maximum 180 pitches across the whole tournament.** Same finish-the-batter allowance applies.
- No rest day is required between Day 1 and Day 2 – a pitcher can throw on both days as long as they stay under both caps.

Each field will have a designated pitch-count recorder. They must share a pitcher's current count on request from either manager or any umpire, and must flag the Umpire-in-Chief once

a pitcher nears their limit. That said, it's ultimately each team's own manager who's responsible for pulling their pitcher in time – a missed notification doesn't excuse a violation.

- A pitcher removed from the mound may return to pitch again later in the same inning they started, but only once per game.
- A coach's second mound visit in the same inning requires the pitcher's removal from pitching for the rest of the game (they can still play another position).
- Anyone warming up a pitcher, including between innings, must wear a facemask.

Baserunning & Fielding

- Leads are live at any time, including before the pitch is released, and pick-off attempts are unrestricted.
- Runners may advance from 3rd on a passed ball or wild pitch, and stealing home is permitted.
- The infield fly rule and dropped-third-strike rule are both in effect.
- Balks are called.
- Curveballs are permitted at this age level.
- Head-first slides are allowed both when advancing and when returning to a base.
- On close plays at a base, a runner who doesn't slide or attempt to avoid a fielder actively making or attempting a tag may be called out; a fielder without the ball who blocks a runner's path may instead be called for obstruction. Umpires judge each play on its specifics.
- **Pinch runners** are for injury situations only and must come from the bench rather than the existing lineup.
- **Courtesy runner for the catcher:** optional, coach's call. Must be the player who made the last out, and the catcher must have caught the prior inning. Not available in the top of the 1st.
- Deliberate or dangerous play is grounds for ejection from the game and possibly the tournament, at the discretion of the umpire and Tournament Director.
- The strike zone runs from roughly the armpits to the top of the knees, within the width of home plate.

Run Limits & Mercy Rule

Run limit per half-inning: 7 runs (plus any runs needed to finish a play already underway when the 7th run scores). This cap keeps blowout innings from dragging on and helps manage arm workload across the tournament's 7-inning games.

Mercy rule – round robin games:

- A 15+ run lead after 4 complete innings (3½ if the home team is ahead) ends the game.
- A 10+ run lead after 5 complete innings (4½ if the home team is ahead) ends the game.

Mercy rule — placement games & the Final:

- A 15+ run lead after 5 complete innings (4½ if the home team is ahead) ends the game.
- A 10+ run lead after 6 complete innings (5½ if the home team is ahead) ends the game.

The Tournament Director retains discretion to invoke the mercy rule, or a time limit, in cases of clearly non-competitive or slow play even outside these thresholds.

Standings & Tiebreakers

Tied game, still within the time limit: extra innings are played until a winner emerges. If a round robin game reaches the time limit still tied, it's recorded as a tie in the standings — no tiebreaker procedure is used mid-round-robin.

Tied placement game or Final at the time limit: play the international tiebreaker format — first extra inning starts with a runner on 2nd base and no outs; the second (if needed) starts with runners on 1st and 3rd, no outs; this pattern repeats until a winner is decided. The runner(s) placed are whoever made the last out the previous inning. The batting order carries on as normal, mercy/run-limit rules do not apply during tiebreaker innings, and all pitches/innings still count toward pitch limits.

Ranking tied teams in the standings: 1) head-to-head result between the tied teams; 2) fewest runs allowed across the tournament; 3) most runs scored across the tournament; 4) coin flip.

Home team for semis/Final: the higher round-robin seed. Equal records are broken by head-to-head, then a coin toss if needed.

Forfeited games are recorded as a 7–0 result.

Weather

Lightning: play stops immediately if lightning is judged a danger by the home plate umpire, either team's manager, or the Tournament Director. Play resumes once it's judged safe to continue.

Rain: play continues through light or moderate rain unless the home plate umpire or Tournament Director determines pitchers can't grip the ball or batters can't safely grip the bat, at which point the game is suspended.

- A game that has already reached 7 innings when suspended is final as played.
- **Minimum for a completed result: 4 full innings (or 3½ if the home team is ahead).** A game suspended before reaching this point resumes from the exact point of suspension if the field becomes playable again — same count, same runners, same score.
- **If the tournament schedule doesn't allow time to resume:** once a game has reached at least 4 full innings (3½ if the home team is ahead), it is scored final as played at that point — the result stands, it is not replayed or treated as a tie. This applies to round robin, placement, and Final games alike.

- A game suspended before reaching 4 innings (3½ if the home team is ahead), that the schedule doesn't allow time to resume, is recorded as a tie, using the score and pitch counts as of the last completed inning.

Haze: Guided by the health advisory by the National Environment Agency (NEA), all games will be suspended and postponed if PSI levels are above 200, or if 1-hr PM2.5 is High (Band 3).