

SCVAA Youth Baseball Rules (Updated March 2018)

The St. Croix Valley Athletic Association (SCVAA) is a nonprofit, volunteer organization promoting and providing youth athletic programs throughout the #834 School District Area. The purpose of SCVAA Baseball is to give the youth of the area the opportunity to learn fundamental baseball skills, practice good sportsmanship, and *have fun*. Coaches and parents should at all times remember these objectives and remain positive.

All 8th – 12th Grade will follow the St Croix Valley Athletic Association (SCVAA) rules which can be found on the website <http://scvaa.org/SCVAAB/vaa-juniors-and-seniors-league>

THE FIELD AND EQUIPMENT

...BASES...

T-Ball (Kindergarten) - 5th Grade: Base distance will be 60' - 65'

6th - 7th Grade: Base distance will be 75'

...PITCHING DISTANCE...

T-Ball (Kindergarten) - 2nd Grade: Coach should pitch from approx. 42' from home plate

3rd Grade Machine Pitch: Pitching machine will be 42' from home plate

4th - 5th Grade: *Player Pitch* Rubber will be 45' from home plate

6th - 7th Grade: Rubber will be 54' from home plate

...ARC...

T-Ball (Kindergarten): A 10' arc will be drawn in front of home plate. Any hit ball not traveling beyond the arc will be considered a foul ball.

...BALLS...

T-Ball (Kindergarten) - 2nd Grade: Safety balls

3rd - 7th Grade: Regulation baseballs

...BATS...

T-ball through 5th Grade:

No limit on weight, length or drop. Max 2 ¾ inch barrel diameter.

6th- 7th Grade:

No limit on weight or length. Max 2 ¾ inch barrel diameter. Minus (-10) drop Maximum.

...CATCHERS...

Catchers are required to wear a catcher's mask, helmet (covers both ears), chest protector, and shin guards. Protective cups are **mandatory** for male catchers and recommended for female catchers.

...SHOES...

Shoes with any type of metal cleats/spikes will not be allowed in Kindergarten -7th Grade.

...UNIFORMS...

All players are expected to wear uniforms provided by VAA when playing in games.

...PROTECTIVE CUPS...

All players **MUST** wear protective cups.

THE GAME

...FREE SUBSTITUTION...

Every player on the team who is present at the game will be placed in the batting order and take their turn at bat. Free substitution in the field will be permitted.

...INNINGS...

A half inning will end when one of the following has occurred:

T-Ball:

All players have batted.

1st & 2nd Grade:

3 outs have occurred, or all players have batted.

3rd - 5th Grade:

3 outs have occurred, or 8 runs have scored, except for last inning

6th -7th Grade:

3 outs have occurred, or 12 runs have scored, except for last inning

...10-RUN RULE...

There is **NOT** a 10-run rule in any SCVAA league. All games are played according to innings or time limit.
(There are 8-run and 12-run rules for ending *innings*, but this is different. See ...INNINGS...)

Note: The rules for ending an inning do not apply to the final inning of a game.

...NUMBER OF PLAYERS...

T-Ball - 3rd Grade: Each team may field 10 players, of which 6 must be infielders and 4 outfielders.

4th- 7th Grade: Each team may field 9 players.

...START TIME...

Games should start at their scheduled times. However, there will be a 5-minute grace period if one team does not have enough players to start the game.

...TOO FEW PLAYERS...

A team showing up for a game with fewer than 8 players should pool their players and scrimmage. Coaches are encouraged to attempt to re-schedule games in advance if they are aware that a team will not have enough players. If a team has 8 players, the game will be played.

“Teams may not field players who are not registered for SCVAA baseball.”

...BASE COACHES...

Each team must have first and third base coaches while at bat. Parents or other adults are encouraged to fill these positions. SCVAA Players may base coach at the 6th/7th grade level but must wear helmets.

...COACHES ON THE FIELD...

T-ball - 3rd Grade: No more than 2 coaches (from the fielding team) may be on the field during a game. They must be positioned to not interfere with play. A person/coach should also be positioned behind the plate to help the catcher.

4th - 7th Grade: No coaches are allowed on the field during a game.

...LENGTH OF GAME...

T-ball: 1 hour; both teams bat the same number of times. No inning may start after 50 minutes.

1st- 3rd Grade: 6 innings or 1 hour and 15 minutes. No inning may start after 65 minutes.

4th/5th Grade: 6 innings or 2 hours. No inning may start after an hour and 45 minutes.

6th/7th Grade: 7 innings or 2 hours. No inning may start after an hour and 50 minutes.

... Trick Plays...

All Levels: Hidden Ball or other "Trick Plays" are **NOT** Allowed at any grade level.

...UMPIRES...

T-ball - 3rd Grade Machine pitch. Coaches will umpire or find volunteer parents.

4th – 5th Grade: **(A)** A VAA umpire will be used. If umpires do not show, coaches should select neutral Volunteer adult umpires.
(B) If no neutral volunteer umpires can be found, each team shall provide a home plate umpire for 3 innings and a base umpire for 3 innings. The volunteer home-plate umpire must call balls and strikes from behind the pitcher to avoid the chances of injury.

6th - 7th Grade: Umpires will be used. If umpires do not show, coaches should select neutral adult volunteer umpire. If no neutral volunteer umpires can be found each team shall provide a home plate umpire for 6 innings and a base umpire for 6 innings. The volunteer Homeplate umpire must call balls and strikes from behind the pitcher to avoid the chances of injury.

3rd - 7th Grade: Umpires will be used at the end-of-year tournaments.

...INFIELD FLY RULE...

An **infield fly** is a ball that is hit when **all** the following are true:

- The ball is a fair fly.
- It is **not** a line drive or attempted bunt.
- There are fewer than 2 outs.
- The hit is made when first **and** second bases are already occupied (third may also be occupied).
- It can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort.

The rule does **not** preclude outfielders from being allowed to make the catch.

T-ball – 3rd Grade: The infield fly rule will **NOT** be enforced.

4th – 7th Grade: When, in the umpire's judgment, it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire immediately announces it for the benefit of the runner. The batter is automatically out and runners may advance at their own risk.

...LIGHTNING & RAIN ...

If lightning is present in the area, the game shall be immediately cancelled. NO EXCEPTIONS!!! Coaches are encouraged to reschedule games. See SCVAA weather policy on the website at www.scvaa.org. In the event of rain, the coaches and umpires will mutually decide if the game should be delayed or cancelled. Coaches are encouraged to reschedule games.

4th - 7th Grade: Umpired Games: Games called due to rain prior to game-time; coaches need to contact the umpire coordinator to cancel umpires for the game and arrange for umpires at rescheduled games. The current Umpire Coordinator contact information can be found on the website at www.scvaa.org, under the Baseball Commission Tab.

PITCHING

All Levels:

- Pitchers shall be allowed 5 warm-up pitches between innings.
- Coaches may visit the mound 3 times during a game to confer with the pitcher (or other defensive player). Removal of a pitcher does not constitute a conference. The second time a coach visits the pitching mound with the same pitcher, the pitcher must be replaced.
- 1 pitch thrown in an inning constitutes an inning pitched.
- A 'week' is defined as starting on Saturday and ending on Friday.

1st & 2nd Grade: Coaches are allowed a Maximum of 6 pitches then the player receives a walk.

3rd grade: Player will get 6 pitches from the machine, unless the 6th pitch is fouled off. After the 6th pitch, the player sits down and is out, but this will not count as one of the teams 3 outs.

4th/5th Grade: Only fastballs and change-ups are allowed. NO curve balls are allowed.

6th/7th Grade: Fastballs, change-ups, and curve balls are allowed.

...LIMITS...

Pitchers shall be limited to:

4th - 7th Grade: 3 innings per game and 6 innings per week.

End of year Tournament: 3 innings per game and 9 innings for entire tournament.

...RE-ENTRY...

4th - 7th Grade: Once a pitcher is **removed** from the pitching position the player may not return as a pitcher for the duration of the game.

...STRIKE ZONE...

4th/5th Grade only: The strike zone should be expanded slightly. I.E. - From the top of the shoulder to the bottom of the knee cap at the point that the ball crosses the plate. If any part of the ball crosses over the plate (including the black outline), the pitch is considered a STRIKE.

...HIT BATTERS...

4th - 7th Grade: Purposely throwing at a batter will NOT be tolerated in any SCVAA games. A pitcher who intentionally throws at a batter (even if he does not hit the batter), will be ejected from the game. "Intent" will be at the discretion of the umpire. If a pitcher unintentionally hits two or more batters, and the umpire feels that the pitcher does not have adequate pitch control, he may direct the coach to remove the pitcher.

BATTING

...HELMETS...

All batters must wear protective helmets. If a helmet is intentionally removed, the runner shall receive a warning and the next time shall be declared out.

...THROWING THE BAT...

A team shall be warned the first time for throwing the bat (intentionally or not). The second team violation will result in the batter being called out.

...BATTING ROTATION...

Teams are to bat the entire roster. Late arrivals must be placed at the end of the lineup.

...THE FIELD OF PLAY...

Only the batter and the on-deck player are allowed on the field. On-deck batters should be on the pull side of the Player batting. All other players must be on or behind the bench. All helmets, bats, etc. not being used by the batter or on-deck player must be on or behind the bench. If equipment interferes with a play, the batter shall be automatically out.

...BATTER...

T-ball: All players will hit off the tee.

1st and 2nd Grade: The coach will decide whether to use a tee or pitch the ball, based upon the skill level of the player. Coaches will pitch to their own players. The pitch shall be thrown overhand from near the pitching rubber. Each batter will be given a maximum of Six (6) pitches or Tee placements to hit the ball before the batter is declared out. **If the batter has been declared out, the Tee should be encouraged for the player's remaining at bats in the game.** Such strikeouts do NOT count as outs in the inning. If the Tee is knocked over when the ball is hit, the ball shall be considered foul.

3rd Grade

Machine Pitch: Each batter will be given a maximum of Six (6) good pitches to hit the ball before the batter is declared out. A foul ball on the last pitch earns another pitch. The out will **NOT** count as an out in the inning. The speed of the pitch is to be agreed upon by the coaches. Machine operator determines if the pitch is good. Emphasis should be on the ability to hit the ball. Each team should provide an adult pitching machine operator.

Note: Batted balls that hit the machine are considered foul balls.

...DROPPED THIRD STRIKE...

On a wild pitch, passed ball, or dropped ball on the third strike:

4th/5th Grade: Batter is out. Base runners on first and second base may advance at their own risk.

6th/7th Grade: A Batter is not out, and all base runners may advance at their own risk. Batter may attempt to steal first base if there is no runner on first base. The batter must be tagged or thrown out to be called out.

...BUNTING...

T-ball - 2nd Grade: Bunting is not allowed. All batted balls must travel past the arc.

3rd Grade: Bunting **NOT** allowed.

4th – 7th Grade: Bunting is allowed.

...INTERFERENCE ...

T-Ball – 3rd Grade: If a coach on the field or pitching machine operator interferes with the hit ball, the ball is dead, and the player continues hitting with the pitch count prior to the hit.

BASE RUNNING

T-ball - 2nd Grade: Base runners may not advance after a batted ball to the outfield is thrown to any infielder, including the catcher.

All Levels: No head first sliding into home, runner will be called out.

...OVERTHROW...

T-ball - 2nd Grade: Base runners may not advance on any ball which is thrown outside the foul lines. Only one base may be advanced, at runner's risk, on an overthrow that remains inside the foul lines.

3rd Grade: An overthrow to first base shall be a "dead ball." No base runners will advance. Overthrows to first base that also then go out of bounds is also a dead ball and no runners may advance. Any other throw is live and base runners may advance at their own risk. If the ball is out of play, runners may advance one base only.

4th – 7th Grades: If the ball goes out of play runners will be awarded one base. If the ball remains in play, runners may advance at their own risk.

NOTE: "Awarded" or "advance" one base means the base they were running to plus the next base.

...BASE STEALING & LEADING OFF...

T-ball- 3rd Grade: Leading off and base stealing are **not** permitted. Runners may advance only on a batted ball.

4th/5th Grade: A runner may not leave the base until the ball crosses the plate. Each team is allowed one warning for "leaving early." After that, the runner will be declared out. A runner may steal any base, except home, at any time. **NO STEALING HOME!**

6th /7th Grade: A runner may lead off. A runner may steal any base at any time. A runner may now steal home.

...NO CONTACT RULE...

ALL LEVELS:

- A runner cannot "bowl" over a catcher or fielder trying to make a tag.
- A runner is out if they fail to slide or safely get around a fielder who has the ball at the base or who is attempting to field a batted ball or catch a thrown ball.
- A fielder may not be in the baseline except when fielding a ball.

...COURTESY RUNNERS...

ALL LEVELS:

- A courtesy runner is allowed for a runner who will be the catcher. This rule should be utilized to speed up play.
- A courtesy runner shall be allowed to replace an injured player. If used once during the game, runner substituted for must have a courtesy runner the remainder of the game.
- The courtesy runner MUST be the last player to have made an out.

PLAYERS, COACHES, & PARENTS

...HUSTLE...

ALL LEVELS: All players are expected to hustle on and off the field.

...PLAYER ROTATION...

ALL LEVELS: All players should receive equal playing time, except for special disciplinary reasons.

T-ball – 3rd Grade: No player shall play the same position more than 2 innings per game. Each player must alternate between infield and outfield positions. Note: catcher is considered an outfield position and completely voluntary - do not force a player behind the plate! No player should sit out two innings until every player has sat out one inning.

4th - 7^h Grade: Players may play the same position more than 2 innings; however, coaches are encouraged to rotate players to the positions of their choice whenever possible.

NOTE: A Player Rotation Sheet is provided on the SCVAA web-site to facilitate a random and equitable player rotation schedule.

...EQUIPMENT CARE...

Players are expected to care for and respect all equipment. Players should never kick, hit, or throw batting helmets, bats, gloves, or catcher's equipment.

If there is any faulty equipment, the coach should call the equipment or Grade Level Coordinator to get it replaced. Please do not drag the equipment bags!

The current rules will be posted on the website. Changes or corrections made after publication of this manual will supersede this manual. See the Rules Update tab on the web site. Calendars, commission contacts, registration, and other miscellaneous information will be posted on the SCVAA website.

Web Site: www.scvaa.org