

**SVAA BASEBALL/SOFTBALL/T-BALL  
COACHES MANUAL  
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**NOTE FROM THE COMMISSIONER:**

**THE LAST PAGE OF THIS MANUAL IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PAGES YOU WILL READ!** BOTH COACHES AND OFFICIALS HAVE THE SAME INFORMATION. I EXPECT GAMES TO PROCEED EXACTLY IN THIS MANNER. FAILURE TO READ AND FOLLOW THESE PROCEDURES IS NO EXCUSE FOR COMMISSIONERS' RULINGS MADE OR SANCTIONS IMPOSED. THIS IS NOT HARD – FOLLOW THE PROCEDURES!

**COACHES** --- You must read and understand the contents of this manual. By doing so, you will eliminate the major difficulties we experience each year. At the end of the season communicate your suggestions for any rule changes or other program improvements to your League President. Thank you for your time and concern for the youth of this area.

**All rules in this book will be enforced by the game officials and the SVAA Board of Directors. Some rules contain penalties and penalty limits. Others do not. For those rules that do not contain a penalty, the Sport Commissioner and/or the Board has full authority to impose whatever penalty they deem appropriate for the violation.**

=====FORWARD=====

As the coach, you are the SVAA representative who is responsible for the success or failure of our program. To the players and parents, **YOU ARE SVAA!** The essence of SVAA is what happens between you and the children. If done with care and concern, it can be one of the finest educational experiences a child can have.

SVAA is a unique organization; it exists only because of many people caring about their children and dedicating their time. Remember, SVAA is a nonprofit, volunteer organization that sponsors baseball, softball, T-ball, basketball, volleyball, and football events for children. Sometimes, in our zeal to see that the best is done, we forget that we are dealing with children. But, the best interest of the children is the most important fact in SVAA life.

**HOW WE PLAY THE GAME** - It is the policy of SVAA that every boy and girl that signs a contract will be assigned to a team and be given a fair opportunity to play in every game. Every youngster will be taught the responsibility that he has to his teammates, to his Mother and Father, to his Country, to his God, and to himself. Every youngster will be treated with kindness and consideration, and at no time will any coach humiliate, embarrass, abuse or mistreat any youngster within the framework of this program. All children will be taught that it is not everything to win . . . nor are you a failure if you lose. The essence and heart of the SVAA program are the simple philosophy that it is better to have tried and failed than not to have tried at all. All coaches are responsible for teaching each boy and girl that

the most important aspect of competitive sports is not to win, but to play with all one's ability. Each coach will accept the challenge that they will honestly and sincerely do the best they can to teach each boy and girl how to have fun playing whatever sport it may be.

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**This program is for the participants, "OUR CHILDREN."  
Please work to keep it this way.**

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## **1.0 LEAGUE ORGANIZATION**

SVAA is operated by an elected, volunteer Board of Directors that serve as the final authority for any decision relating to the sport of Baseball/Softball/T-Ball. The Board has responsibility for appointing one of its members to organize and run each of its sports programs. This individual is called the Sport Commissioner.

**1.1 Sport Commissioner** - The Sport Commissioner has responsibility for operation of the Baseball/ Softball/T-Ball program. Prior to player registration the Sport Commissioner will submit to the Board of Directors the following:

- Budget for the current sport season
- A calendar of season events
- Proposed changes to established rules for the league administration and team play

Prior to the first league game, the Commissioner will submit to the Board for their approval:

- Names of all league officials including commissioners and league presidents

During the season the Sport Commissioner will furnish the Board a monthly written report dealing with the operation of his assigned sport.

**1.2 Deputy Commissioners** - The Sport Commissioner will appoint Deputy Commissioners to govern the boys and girl's leagues and for such other matters as may be necessary for the proper administration of the sport.

**1.3 League Presidents** - League Presidents play a vital role in the administration of the Baseball/Softball/T-Ball program. They provide the link between SVAA and the coaches/players/umpires. A description of the League President's responsibilities is set forth in the League President's Guide.

## 1.4 League Determination

| <b>Baseball Leagues (Boys)</b>  | <b>Grade</b> |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| T-Ball                          | Pre-K *      |
| T-Ball w/ Modified T-Ball rules | K            |
| Pitching machine                | 1-3          |
| Boy's Pitch                     | 4-5          |
| Boy's Pitch                     | 6-12 **      |

  

| <b>Softball Leagues (Girls)</b>    | <b>Grade</b> |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| T-Ball                             | Pre-K*       |
| T-Ball w/Modified T-Ball rules     | K & 1 *      |
| Pitching Machine                   | 2 & 3        |
| Fast Pitch w/ Modified Coach Pitch | 4            |
| Fast Pitch                         | 5-8          |

\* Girls and Boys PK may be combined. Girls K and Girls 1<sup>st</sup> may be combined depending on registration patterns.

\*\* Coaches 6<sup>th</sup> grade and up may register their own team to play in SVAA. Length of season and timing will be determined at the coaches meeting.

**1.5 Disputes/Protests** - Tact, firmness, and diplomacy should be your bywords when you have any problems or disputes. If you have any problems or complaints, first go to your League President. If the situation cannot be resolved to your satisfaction, communicate in writing to the Sport Commissioner. You will receive a written answer within seven (7) days. If you are still not satisfied, forward your complaint, the Sport Commissioner's reply and a \$50.00 appeal fee to the Rules Infraction Committee as discussed in the "Rules Infraction Guideline" attached in the back of this booklet. The decision of the Rules Infraction Committee or the Board of Directors as a whole will be final.

**Note:** Disputes will **not** be arbitrated on the playing field in the presence of our children -- see your League President. The manner in which a dispute is addressed will be considered by the Rules Infraction Committee in addressing any matter brought before it.

**1.6 Division Determination** - Leagues with less than ten (10) teams will be formed into a single division; leagues with ten (10) and less than nineteen (19) teams will be divided into two (2) divisions. Leagues with nineteen (19) or greater teams will be divided into three (3) divisions. Beginning with the third grade, teams may be placed in divisions based on the League President's assessment of the relative abilities of the respective teams (i.e., seeding may be allowed in those grades). For all other grades, divisions shall be assigned randomly (i.e., no seeding will be allowed).

**1.7 Playoffs/Championships** - Division organization and playoff format will be furnished to each coach prior to the first league game. The maximum number of teams eligible to participate in the playoffs from any league will be the lesser of 50% of the total teams in the division or eight (8). The minimum number of teams to participate will be four (4).

At the end of the regular season, teams will advance to the playoffs based on won-loss records. In the event of identical standings of two or more teams, the team selected will be based upon "who-beat-who" during the regular season. If a tie still exists, then "least runs allowed" during the regular season, will be used to determine division representation in the playoffs. If two or more teams are tied for more than one playoff spot, this procedure will be repeated after the team qualifying for the first spot is determined. Any remaining ties will be broken by a coin toss conducted by the League President and/or the Deputy or Sport Commissioner. These methods of breaking a tie will be used for all playoff formats.

**1.8 Awards** - It is the policy of SVAA to present awards based on won-loss standings.

**1.8.1 All Leagues (Except T-Ball)** - Awards will be presented to the regular season division champion(s). For the purpose of awards the division champion will be determined by won-loss record and head-to-head competition **only**. In the event of a tie for division champions, co-champion awards will be presented.

Playoff awards will be presented to: 1) Tournament Winner and 2) Tournament Finalist (runner-up). A regular season "division winner" that becomes a "tournament winner" will receive the "Tournament Winner" award **only**. A regular season "division winner" that does not become a "tournament winner" will receive the "division winner" award. **No team will receive more than one award for competition in an SVAA League.**

**1.8.2 Sportsmanship** - At the discretion of the League President, a sportsmanship award may be given in each league. Determination for this award will be the responsibility of the League President. The League President may solicit opinions from the participating coaches. As an alternative to a team sportsmanship award, the League President may elect to allow each team to select one player to receive a sportsmanship award.

**1.8.3 Other Awards** - No other awards may be given in the name of SVAA.

## **2.0 TEAM FORMATION**

Participants are assigned to teams by the League President from player registration contracts on the basis of grade, school, geographical location of residence (participants must live in 50 mile radius of the Dallas Metroplex), team needs, prior team affiliation, etc. Except in rare circumstances, team assignments may not be

changed once a player is assigned to a team. Any player reassignment requires the approval of the Sport Commissioner.

If a participant is assigned to a team outside his or her normal school nucleus because that school nucleus team is full or the child moves after assignment, he or she may request in the next season to be placed on his school team (if space available). Any such participant will be given priority over new SVAA children from that school for home school team placement. To receive this priority, the participant's contract must be received by the SVAA office prior to the contract deadline. If there is more than one team school, the participant will not be permitted to pick between the two teams. The League President will make the determination based upon space availability.

**2.1 Player Contracts/Eligibility** - All players must have a contract on file (including fee & deposit where applicable) prior to any participation in an SVAA event (including practices, practice games and league games). **COACHES VIOLATING THIS RULE WILL BE SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION.** A game involving an unauthorized player will result in forfeiture of that game by the team playing the unauthorized player.

Player contracts completed prior to the "contract deadline" will receive priority for team placement over contracts received after the deadline date. Players may **not** be added to team rosters after the first regular season game (practice games excluded).

A player may elect to participate in a higher league (grade), space permitting but may not play in a league below his grade.

Players with a medical condition must have a treating physician's medical release on file in the SVAA office prior to participation in any SVAA event and/or practice. Any exception to the player contract/eligibility rules must be approved in advance and in writing by the Sport Commissioner. This written documentation must be on file (attached to the player's contract) in the SVAA office prior to any player participation.

## **2.2 Player Team Assignment**

**2.2.1 Existing SVAA Teams** - Existing SVAA teams will first be assigned all players from their immediate past season roster. Any player who indicates a desire not to continue as part of his immediate prior year team may be removed from that team and reassigned at the discretion of the League President. (A player is not guaranteed assignment to a specific team unless he or she was a member of that team during the immediate past season.) Any player assignment to a team other than his or her immediate past season's team requires the prior approval of the Sport Commissioner.

Because the participants in the Pre-K league have not yet started elementary school, there will be no team integrity from Pre-K into the Kindergarten league. As a

result, all teams entering the Kindergarten league will be treated as if they are new teams under rule 2.2.4.

**2.2.2 Transfer Teams** - An existing team that did not participate with SVAA during the immediate past season (“transfer team”) will furnish the League President with an official roster of players from the immediate past playing association in order to qualify those players as part of that existing team. The composition of this team will initially be limited to a single school area. Players not meeting the single school area criteria will be treated as new players. (The objective of this rule is to offer existing teams entering SVAA league play the same opportunity for players that traditionally is offered teams currently part of the SVAA program.)

**2.2.3 Disbanding Teams** - The League President may disband existing teams only with the prior approval of the Sport Commissioner and under the following conditions: 1) If maintaining existing rosters will create a significant player imbalance (numbers) that cannot be corrected by other means agreeable to all coaches; 2) If there is no returning coach and one cannot be recruited from the roster; or 3) Other circumstances that are mutually agreeable to both the League President and the Sport Commissioner.

**2.2.4 New Players/New Teams** - All remaining players that are not part of an existing team or do not meet the one school area transfer team criterion will be treated as new players. New players will be assigned to teams from the same school or school area to the extent possible. Written requests for team assignment (normally noted at the bottom of the player contract) may be taken into consideration at the League President's discretion. An objective in the assignment of new players is to maintain near equal player numbers per team without assigning players to teams outside of his or her school area and limiting team populations to the maximum prescribed for that league. Players may be assigned outside of school areas if there is no space available on the school area team.

New teams may be formed provided sufficient player contracts are available.

The League President may assign 14 players to any team without a coach's prior approval. These numbers represent maximum team size for adequate player participation and may not be exceeded without the approval of the Deputy or Sport Commissioner. Junior and senior girls' leagues are exempt from these maximum limitations. Team size in those leagues will be at the discretion of the League President, with the approval of the Deputy or Sport Commissioner.

**2.2.5 Playing-Up** - Players requesting to play at a grade above their actual grade level may do so provided space is available, but may not play in a grade below their actual grade level. The League President will defer this decision until just prior to the coaches meeting. All players submitting contracts to play at their normal grade level prior to the contract deadline will have priority over any "playing-up" contract. If the Sport Commissioner determines to permit an entire team to "play -up," then

that team will be required to continue to "play-up" in subsequent years.

**2.3 Late Sign-ups** - Contracts received after the "contract deadline" date will be assigned, space permitting, to teams by the League President after all earlier contracts have been assigned. The basis for this assignment will take into consideration geographical area and team with the least number of players.

**Note:** Coaches **MAY NOT** recruit or promise prospective players a specific team assignment. Team assignment is the sole responsibility of the League President.

### **3.0 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COACH**

**3.1 Coaching Requirements.** To be able to coach in an SVAA league, the head coach must be at least 22 years or older unless an exception is approved in advance by the Sport Commissioner. No exceptions will be made to this rule for any team participating in the 7th grade league or higher. If the Sport Commissioner approves a coach younger than 22 years old for any team, that team must still have an adult at all practices and on the bench during all games. No game may be played unless there is an adult on the bench with the team.

**3.2 Coaches' Meeting** - The coach is required to attend a coach's meeting. SVAA has entered into an agreement with Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) to provide training for all of our head coaches. All head coaches are required to become certified either by attending a training session in person or by performing the session on line.

The objectives of the coaches meeting are:

- Execute coach's contract
- Meet your League President and other coaches
- Fill out coach's roster
- Receive information about player uniforms and team equipment
- Participate in general discussions outlining season calendar, rule changes and interpretation, location and times for practice games, etc.

**3.3 Coach/Team/Parent Relations** - Coaches are required to have a parents meeting prior to the first regular season game. This requirement applies to returning coaches and teams as well as new coaches and teams. It is an important policy of SVAA that the Head Coach meets with the parents of his players. During this meeting the following information should be conveyed:

- Parents are expected to conduct themselves in an adult manner at all times, to set an example of good citizenship and sportsmanship for their children and other participants. No alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs will be allowed at any team function.
- Distribute game and practice information. Explain to them what they may expect of you and what you may expect of them (this will be a good time to solicit parents for any help you may need).



- Explain your basis for team discipline (e.g. If a player misses practice, games or is late for a game - see section 4.1.14). Discipline must be consistent for each team member. While SVAA no longer imposes limits on the maximum amount of practice time during the sport season, players may not be required to attend more than 3 hours of practice a week. As a result, a coach may not discipline any player for failure to attend any practice sessions that the coach may hold in excess of the above limitations and the coach must so inform all players and parents.
- Briefly describe rules of play that are unique to SVAA and your league.
- Make sure parents know their views are welcome -- after a game or practice.
- Emphasize that parents must agree that they will provide, at their own expense, any insurance deemed necessary to cover player for any SVAA related injury. Any injury requiring a doctor's visit must be reported to the SVAA office immediately.

**3.4 Practices** - Practice is defined as a group of five (5) or more players. Practices may **not** be held prior to the coaches meeting. During the school year, SVAA will provide facilities for team practices for no more than 3 hours per week.

Be present at all team practice sessions and games, or be sure that you have a reliable adult assistant coach present at games or practices. Be dependable!

Do not have practice on the day of the game; remember we are working with children, not men and women. However, a one hour warm up period may be utilized.

Please remember to use protective equipment during practice as well as games.

Practices are where a coach shows what he or she is made of. Coaching takes time not only on the practice field, but at the "drawing board."

- Set up a practice schedule and stick to it.
- Plan each practice session.
- Practice sessions should be fast paced, and involve all team members as much as possible.
- Have "skull" sessions with your assistant coaches.

As a coach, you should use the Assistant Coaches as much as possible. If they don't know the sport, you, as the Head Coach, teach them as well. They may want to be a Head Coach someday! Ask for feedback from your Assistant Coaches. You might be surprised how much they can help.

**3.4.1 Rescheduling of Games** - Only the League President may reschedule games and set times and places for make up games. Games may be rescheduled for rain or when scheduled school or church events cause team player numbers to fall below the minimum for league play (8 players) provided 48 hrs advance notice is given.

As a courtesy, League Presidents will attempt to reschedule games at a time convenient to both teams. However, if teams cannot agree on an available time, or if schedule constraints dictate, it will be the final decision by the League President as to when the game will be rescheduled, and it will be counted as official (conditions permitting) at that time. If teams that fail to make the playoffs so desire, and if time and field space permits, any games that have not been rescheduled may be played simultaneously with the league playoffs. (The purpose of this rule is to provide all teams with an opportunity, if possible, to play all scheduled games. Time limitations or space constraints may, in the sole discretion of the Sport Commissioner, make it impossible to accomplish this goal.) In the Fall season, SVAA does not guarantee that rainouts or other game cancellations will be made up.

**3.4.2 Forfeits** - If a team does not have the required "minimum number of players" (8) to start a game at the scheduled start time, the game will be declared a forfeit. A five minute (umpires' watch) grace period will be given for the first game of the day only. No grace period will be given for any other games during the day. Only the umpire can declare a forfeit. If a game is forfeited, the two teams may go ahead and play an unofficial practice game until the last inning start time. Umpires, however, will not stay and officiate, since it is no longer an officially sanctioned SVAA event.

Scores for forfeited games will be calculated at the end of the regular season by totaling the number of runs allowed in all regular season games and dividing that number by the total of regular season games played. That average number will constitute the points allowed for the forfeited game in lieu of a 1-0 score.

SVAA is required to pay its game officials unless it receives sufficient advance notice of any forfeits or other schedule changes. Accordingly, at the discretion of the Sport Commissioner or his/her designee, any team that forfeits a game without having provided their League President with **48** hours advance notice shall be assessed a charge according to the following table to cover the costs of the officials that could have been avoided had proper notice been given:

|                  |      |
|------------------|------|
| T-ball           | \$10 |
| Pitching Machine | \$40 |
| Kid Pitch        | \$70 |

Any team that violates this provision will not be allowed to play any further games until this charge has been paid to the SVAA office.

**3.5 Liability** - It is the duty and responsibility of each parent to provide insurance. The parents agree to hold SVAA blameless against loss due to the participation of their children in the SVAA sports programs, whether any such claim sounds in negligence or any other theory.

**3.6 Conduct on The Field** - As a Head Coach you are responsible for the actions of your assistants, team members and parents. Only the coach, assistant coaches, and

the team members are allowed in the dugout or on the playing field. Unless a child is hurt, parents and other supporters should remain in the stands. **Only the Head Coach may question an official.**

Do not argue with the officials or threaten them in any manner. If you feel that the official(s) does not understand the rules, or "calls" a bad game, see your League President, after the game. A coach placing unnecessary pressure on an official risks ejection from the game after the first warning. In some rare situations, a forfeit may be declared without any warning.

A coach or fan cannot talk or shout at participating players with the intent of distracting a pitcher or batter from the time of the windup until the ball crosses the plate or is hit.

A coach, player or fan ejected from a game will be suspended for a minimum of the next game and must meet with the Sport Commissioner (or designated representative) to reestablish eligibility for further participation in or attendance at any future league games. The Sport Commissioner (or designated representative) will determine whether this meeting will be in person or by phone or other means. The failure of a person ejected from a game to leave the facility immediately shall, at the option of the umpire, lead to a forfeiture of the game and lengthen the suspension as determined by the Deputy Commissioner. It is the responsibility of the coach, player or fan that was ejected to establish contact with this Commissioner. Failure to obtain the appropriate Commissioner's approval for future participation or attendance may result in forfeiture of all games in which the offending player or coach participates or the fan attends.

The use of foul or abusive language, tobacco, alcohol or drugs will not be tolerated by SVAA. Teams that engage in abusive or disruptive behavior shall have the game in which the conduct occurs declared a forfeit with the suspension of the offending players(s) for as long as the League President deems appropriate. A second offense may result in the ouster of the entire team from the league.

#### **4.0 BASEBALL/SOFTBALL/T-BALL RULES**

SVAA Baseball/Softball/T-Ball will be played according to the Official Rules issued at the time of the coaches' meeting.

**4.1 General** - The following Sections of 4.1 apply to **all** leagues.

**4.1.1 Field Usage** - Games and practices will be conducted only if the Dallas Parks Department indicates the diamonds are dry enough to play. Any play on wet diamonds can cause SVAA to lose city maintenance of school diamonds, as well as the use of the city diamonds. A loss will be charged to both teams if a game is played on a diamond declared too wet to play by the city, even if it appears to be dry.

**4.1.2 Equipment** - All players must be in full uniform (including a cap, or a visor for girls' leagues, and with the shirt tucked in) when on the playing field. A Boys team may have their own Major League uniform so long as the SVAA logo is properly affixed to the jersey. Easily readable numbers must be permanently affixed to the back of each player's jersey prior to the first regular season game in order for that player to be eligible to play. Late arriving jerseys must be numbered within eight days of receipt from SVAA. No duplicate numbers will be allowed on a team. While pants are recommended for all players because of the home plate sliding rules, all girls' teams (and boys' teams below the 2nd grade) may elect to wear shorts, so long as all team members wear the same type item. All team members must be in the same uniform (i.e., if a girls team elects to wear visors, the entire team must wear visors). All players must wear the shirt issued by SVAA (or approved by the Commissioner) to be eligible to play. Players warming up a pitcher must wear a mask Protective headgear must be worn by the batter, on deck man, catcher, and all base runners. The home team Head Coach is responsible for placing and picking up the bases for his game and furnishing an unused game ball.

### **Bat Guidelines**

Only official baseball/softball bats (depending upon the league) are permitted.

There is no weight or length restriction on bats for all softball grades.

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Baseball and under.

Bat shall not be more than thirty-three (33) inches in length nor more than two and one-quarter (2¼) inches in diameter. Non-wood bats shall be labeled with a BPF (bat performance factor) of 1.15 or less;

#### 7th Grade Baseball and older.

Wood, metal, ceramic, or graphite bats may be used. A non-wood bat must have an approved coded certification mark on the barrel of the bat signifying the bat is legal for NCAA competition. Maximum diameter is 2 5/8". Maximum length is 36".

Maximum drop is -3: a bat may not weigh numerically more than 3 units less than the length of the bat (e.g. a 34" long bat cannot weigh less than 31 ozs).

#### Cleats

**No** metal cleats or jewelry are permitted for any SVAA-Sponsored event, except metal cleats may be worn in High School 9-12 League.

**4.1.3 Umpires** - Normally official umpires are provided for all league games. If, for some reason, there is no umpire present for the start of a league game, opposing coaches may agree to select umpires from parents present. Both coaches must agree with this procedure and will count as an official game. If there is no such

agreement, any game played will count only as a practice game, and may be played only until the scheduled end-time – an official game will be rescheduled. If during play an official umpire arrives, he will assume his assigned duties at the end of the current inning. Those ground rules in effect will remain in force for the remainder of the game.

Talk to game officials only before the game, during time outs, or after the game. Do not make remarks to officials during the course of a ball game. Talk to the scorer only to elicit pertinent information. An official's decision, based on "judgment," is final . . . it cannot be reversed or appealed. You should talk with an official only when you need clarification of a particular call or decision or the rule upon which it was based.

If disruptive behavior is exhibited by the coaches, players or fans and it interferes with the game, the umpire will issue one warning, unless the umpire determines the conduct to be so outrageous as to not justify a warning. In that case, an umpire may immediately eject a coach, player, or fan. If the disruptive behavior continues, the team will forfeit the game that is associated with the coaches, players or fans causing the disruption.

**4.1.4 Rule Interpretation** – SVAA playing rules are based on official High School Federation Baseball and Softball rules. SVAA details in the SVAA Rule Book modifications to these rules for different grade levels. If a specific situation is not covered by an SVAA rule modification, the Federation rule pertinent to the situation will prevail.

League Presidents and other SVAA officials may, if they notice an error in the application of SVAA's rules, discuss the issue with the head umpire at the end of an inning and in private. On matters of the application of SVAA's rules, the determination of the SVAA League President or other SVAA official shall govern over that of the head umpire.

**4.1.5 Warm up Time** - Each team will be allowed infield practice prior to the start of any game, only if there is sufficient time prior to the game's scheduled start time. Teams are expected to avail themselves of practice off the field while the preceding game is in progress. At the scheduled start, the home team only will take its normal 1/2 (one-half) inning warm up. Then each team will be given the same warm up prior to taking field each inning.

**4.1.6 Length of Game/Start Time** - The length of each game is determined by the time allotted for the "game length" indicated in Tables I, II, III and IV of this book. The game length is measured from the scheduled start time (if a game is scheduled to start at 6:00 and play begins at 6:27, the official game start time is still 6:00). The "new inning start time" is as indicated in Tables I, II, III and IV of this book. See also "Procedures for Coaches and Umpires" on the last page of this manual regarding start times. **IF AN INNING STARTS, IT WILL BE PLAYED TO COMPLETION IF NECESSARY TO DETERMINE THE OUTCOME OF**

**THE GAME.** If the inning is not played to completion, the official score will be recorded as of the completion of the previous inning. A new inning starts when: 1) The home team completes the third out of the current inning and 2) The new inning start time has not passed.

**4.1.7 Line-up and Batting** - At game-time, the coach will finalize the line-up. If any players initially listed are not present, they will be scratched from the final line-up presented to the Scorekeeper and the other Coach. This will then represent the Official starting line-up for the team. Any additional players that report to the dugout after the first batter on that team steps into the batter's box will be added to the end of the line-up (in the order they reported), and will bat in that position for the remainder of the game. There will be no penalties (outs called, etc) if these procedures are followed.

If a player in the Official line-up has to subsequently leave the game, the Head Coach will provide to the Head Umpire an explanation as to why the player needs to leave (illness, injury, etc). The Head Umpire will “excuse” the player, and permit that player to be scratched from the line-up (Scorekeeper and other Head Coach will be notified). That position in the line-up will “vanish”, and the team will suffer no penalty, because there is technically no longer a “hole” in the line-up. **If**, however, a team starts a game with only the minimum number of players, and a player has to leave the game for any reason, that team now has less than the minimum number required to play, and the game will end at that point, and the team falling below the minimum will forfeit the game.

Playing With Less Than The Maximum Defensive Players On The Field

When playing with less than the maximum amount of defensive players (See Table I for Grades 1-5) a team must, at a minimum, have players in the positions of Pitcher and Catcher.

9<sup>th</sup> Position Rule

If at game time, or any other point during the game, the number of available players drops to 8, a 9<sup>th</sup> “empty” batting position will be established at the end of the batting order. When this position “is due to bat,” an automatic out will be recorded. If this represents the third out of the inning, the inning is over. If the first or second out, the next batter will be the first batter in the line-up.

Then, if at any subsequent point during the game, a ninth (or more) roster players join the team, the “empty” position will disappear, and the new players will be placed at the bottom of the line-up in the order in which they joined the team. T-Ball and Softball is excluded from this rule.

**4.1.8 Home Team Responsibility** - The home team will occupy the first base dugout and be responsible for:

- Official scorekeeper: the official scorekeeper will be positioned for easy access to both teams, not in the dugout. The record book will be signed by the home plate umpire.
- Bases and game ball.
- Cleaning up the field and bleachers following the game.

**4.1.9 Reporting Game Scores** - Each League President will determine the method he or she desires to employ to keep track of game scores. For example, the League President may decide to have the winning team, the home team or the visiting team reports the score of the game. The League President will also establish the penalty for failure to comply with his or her game reporting requirements.

**4.1.10 Official Game** - For a game to be counted toward league standings, at least three innings must have been completed for six inning games, and four innings for seven inning games. Games not meeting these criteria as a result of some interruption in play caused by rain or other natural event will be replayed. In all other cases, the expiration of the allocated time limit for a game will constitute a complete game. If 2 1/2 or 3 1/2 innings have been played, and the Home team is leading when play is suspended, this will be considered as three or four innings respectively. Games suspended after the official game minimum of innings will be considered official and the score will revert to the last completed inning. For those games in which a winner is declared prior to the completion of the maximum number of innings, the game may be played to the normal time limit only (the exception where an inning does not have to be finished) with both coaches consent.

After an official start, the Head Umpire has primary responsibility for suspending a game. However, any SVAA official, Commissioner, League President, or Board Member may declare a suspension if conditions dictate.

**4.1.11 Tie Games** - If a game is tied after the assigned number of innings has been played, extra innings may be played to the "new inning start time" rule for that league. If the game is still tied at that time, it will count one half game won and one half game lost for each team. Division standings will be determined by won-loss percentage.

**4.1.12 Practice Games** - Teams are allowed to hold scrimmage games within their respective leagues. However, teams are not allowed to play or practice against teams from older, younger or non-SVAA leagues.

**4.1.13 Playoffs** - The following rules will be in effect **only** during the play-offs:

- For all playoff games prior to semifinal and final games, if the game is tied at the new inning start time limit, the current inning will be completed and the game will then continue until a winner is determined.
- ***All semifinal and final playoff games will be played to completion with no time limits (max innings).***
- Games halted due to weather or other natural causes prior to the fourth

inning will be declared "no contest" and replayed. Games halted after the third inning will be "resumed" (continued with the same playing conditions -- rosters, pitcher eligibility, runs, outs, etc.) at a later date.

- Home team for all playoff games will be the higher seeded team.

**4.1.14 Substitution Rule** - In a four or five inning game, every player must have played at least two innings. In a six or seven inning game every player must have played at least three innings. **In all games, no player may sit out two consecutive innings.** Substitution during an inning for defensive players is not permitted (except for injury). In all kid pitch leagues, the pitcher may be substituted at any time from any position or from the bench, except a catcher may not become the pitcher during an inning except for an injury to the pitcher.

Players will get sick, need to be disciplined, get injured during a game, or arrive late for a game. The only exceptions to the substitution rule will be for illness, disciplinary action, or injury during a game. A player's participation in a game will be determined by the coach if that player arrives after their turn at bat has passed. A player will not have his or her playing time reduced for disciplinary reasons unless the coach has established a consistent discipline program that has been previously explained to the parents at the parents' meeting. Any exception to the normal substitution rules must be reported to the umpire, opposing coach, and the official scorekeeper. Failure to comply with this rule may result in the forfeiture of the game by the team violating the rule. In the event both teams violate this rule, both may receive a loss.

Subject to any coach's disciplinary rules as communicated to parents during the parents' meeting, a player that arrives late for a game and is not listed in the official lineup (scorebook) will be listed on his or her team's roster in the last batting position.

**4.1.15 Courtesy Runner** – In 4<sup>th</sup> grade and up, in both Baseball and Softball, the coach may substitute a courtesy runner for the Pitcher and/or Catcher if either gets on base. The courtesy runner must be the player that made the last recorded out unless the previous out is the current catcher or pitcher of record, then go to the next recorded out. If no outs have been recorded, the courtesy runner will be the last person in the batting order.

**4.1.16 Other Games** - No game may be played under SVAA sponsorship except those specifically identified in this book (i.e., scrimmage, preseason, league, playoff). Games involving teams with select rosters (e.g., All-star teams) are not permitted.

**4.1.17 Rule Changes/Exceptions** - These rules are designed to reflect the general attitudes that prevail within SVAA. However, exceptions do arise that must be addressed. If, during the course of the season, the need arises for rule modification that is beneficial to the league, the League President will document the proposed changes in writing and submit them to the Sport Commissioner. The Sport



Commissioner must gain Board approval prior to enacting any rule change. League presidents do not have the authority to change rules stated in this manual without proper authorization as described above.

# **5.0**

## **Baseball Specific Rules**

### **Grades 1-5**

## 5.1 League Determination

### Baseball Leagues (Boys) Grade

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Pitching machine | 1-3                                    |
| Boy's Pitch      | 4-5                                    |
| Boy's Pitch      | 6-12 (see Coach Formed League Section) |

## 5.2 Baseball Rules (Boys 4th - 5th)

The following rules (5.2) take precedent over the "general rules" of 4.1 in the event of conflict.

**5.2.1 Pitching Rules** - See Table I. Any player having pitched and hence been removed as a pitcher is no longer eligible to pitch in that game. Delivery of a single pitch will constitute a pitcher's having pitched a full inning.

Innings pitched in games declared "no contest" or tie games will be charged against a pitcher's eligibility for that game. If resumed at a later date, a pitcher may pitch to the extent of his remaining eligibility for that game.

The minimum rest required between game appearances is one full calendar day.

Any violation of the pitching rules will result in a forfeiture of the game by the offending team. The League President may waive the pitching rule when scheduling conflicts require, so long as no pitcher pitches more than 6 innings over a 4-day time span.

**5.2.2 Delay of Game** - Intentional delay of a game, when reported to the League President, may result in forfeiture of the game, for the team causing the infraction. The umpire in charge will award proper "ball" and "strike" calls for delay of game and can award a forfeit for repeated delays. If a coach goes to the mound two times in any inning or three times during a game to talk to the same pitcher, that pitcher must be removed at that time. (An interruption of the game to talk to the pitcher from any location on the field will be counted as a trip to the mound.)

**5.2.3 Throwing of Equipment** - In the event of a player throwing equipment while at bat, both teams will be warned by the umpire and any subsequent throwing of equipment may result in an out being charged to the batter. A dead ball out will be called and no base runners can advance.

**5.2.4 Home Plate Slide Rule** - The purpose of this rule is to prevent injury to the catcher or other defensive player. Enforcement of this rule involves umpire judgment. On a play at home plate the base runner is automatically OUT for failing to slide provided ALL of the following conditions are met:

- The catcher or other defensive player is positioned on or within reach of home plate;

- The catcher or other defensive player is making an attempt to catch the ball or tag the base runner with the ball; and
- There is significant contact between the base runner and catcher or other defensive player.

Sliding at home plate may occur at any time, but it **must** occur in the situation described above.

**5.2.5 Hidden Ball Trick** - The hidden ball trick will not be permitted in SVAA competition.

**5.2.6 4th Grade Boys Base Stealing** – This rule applies only to attempts to steal a base. It does not apply in any other situation. A player who has first occupied either first or second base may, once the ball crosses home plate, attempt to steal the next available base. A player may not steal more than one base on any given pitch to home plate. A player may not steal home base under any circumstances. If a player attempts to steal either second or third base and the pitcher, catcher, or any other defensive player makes a throw to either the base occupied prior to the attempted steal or the base to which the runner is attempting to steal, the runner may not advance beyond the base which the player was attempting to steal at the time of the throw. (In other words, a player on first attempting to steal second may not advance beyond second base no matter what happens in the attempt to put that player out until the next pitch to home plate is made.)

**5.2.7 Rule Modification Matrix** - See Table I.

### **5.3 Pitching Machine Rules (Boys 1-3)**

The following rules (5.3) take precedent over the "general rules" of 4.1 in the event of conflict.

1. No base on balls is permitted.
2. No base is taken if a batter is hit by pitched ball.
3. If a batted ball hits the machine and/or the umpire before hitting another player, it is a dead ball. The batter gets one base, and all runners on base advance one base from the base they occupied at the time the ball was pitched.
4. Three strikes constitute an out.
5. For the 1st grade boys league, the umpire will call a no pitch for any pitch not in the strike zone, unless the ball is hit by the batter, regardless of whether the batter swings at the pitch or not. (The purpose of this rule is to provide players in their first year with a pitching machine the opportunity to learn the strike zone and reduce the number of strike outs per game.). Also,

in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade only, if a player fails to swing at a ball that would be a strike (first strike only), the umpire will give a warning. If a player has at least one strike, and fails to swing at any subsequent pitch that's in the strike zone, the umpire will call a strike. This first strike warning applies only to the 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

6. Field umpire will act as the pitching machine feeder.
7. No one may adjust the machine except the umpire. Once the umpire sets the speed no speed adjustment may be made until the inning being played is completed.
8. At any time during an inning, the umpire may adjust the pitching height/direction.
9. The player pitcher must remain within a circle with a 5' radius from the pitching machine, until the ball is hit.

10. When a defensive player gains possession of the ball, is within five feet of the pitching machine, and it appears that the pitcher is not going to make a "play" on any of the runners, the umpire calls "timeout" and play stops. Runners that are more than half way to the next base advance to the next base at NO risk. Runners not half way to the next base must return to the prior base at NO risk. (Note: If the pitcher gains possession within 5' of the pitching machine, and, in the umpire's judgment, appears or makes a play on a runner, the umpire should not call "timeout" until such time as it appears the pitcher will not make a further play on any runner. However, once timeout is called, the play is over and may not be restarted by any attempt by a defensive player to make a play at any base. The game resumes on the next pitch.)

**For 1st Grade Boys, base runners, including the batter, may only advance one base on a batted ball that does not leave the infield, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the overthrow rule below.**

**For 1st Grade Boys, the following overthrow rule applies:**

Overthrow Rule: When a defensive player attempts to make a play at ANY base and the baseman fails to field the ball and the ball continues past the baseman, the throw is considered to be an "overthrow." At the time of the overthrow (the overthrow occurs at the time the ball passes the baseman) base runners must stop at the nearest base with no risk of being put out. (If the umpire calls an overthrow, when the overthrow occurred and the position of the runners with respect to the bases at the time of the overthrow are umpire judgments.) Furthermore, if ANY fielder attempts to create a dead ball situation (within the umpire's judgment) by throwing to the pitcher standing within the 5' radius of the machine and an overthrow

occurs, this, too, should be deemed an overthrow, and a dead ball should result.

- A dropped ball by a baseman is NOT an overthrow.
- An errant throw to players that are not attempting to cover a base is NOT an overthrow.
- The base must be occupied by the runner in order for an overthrow to occur. (i.e., runner either on the base, running to the base or leaving the base). Example: If there is a player on 3rd with no runners on 1st or 2nd and an "overthrow" occurs at 2nd, the "overthrow" at 2nd is not allowed and play does not stop since 2nd base was not occupied and the runner on 3rd may come home at his own risk.

**For 2nd Grade Boys, the following overthrow rule also applies:**

When a defensive player attempts to make a play on a batted ball by throwing to first base, and the covering baseman (1<sup>st</sup> baseman or covering player) is not able to make a play on the ball: a) an errant throw goes past the baseman, or b) the baseman mishandles the ball to the extent that the ball travels outside a 5' radius (an immediately playable area) of the base, the throw should be considered to be an overthrow. At the time of the overthrow, as judged by the umpire, base runners must stop at the nearest base with no risk of being put out. The position of the runners with respect to the bases at the time of the overthrow is exclusively the judgment of the umpire.

- If the baseman retrieves the ball before it travels outside the 5' radius, play will continue until otherwise stopped by the course of the game.
  - If, while trying to play the ball, the baseman kicks the ball outside of the 5' radius, play will continue, and no overthrow will be called as a result of that action.
11. Base coaches must stay in designated areas (coaching box), even if there are no markings (at least 3-feet from the base line).
  12. Bunting is not permitted.
  13. Table I applies to the boys' league.
  14. No player may be removed from the field during an inning, except in case of injury.
  15. Use of pitching machine for pre-game warm-ups is prohibited.

**16. All batters and players on base must wear batting helmets.**

17. Pitching machines are set by the umpire at speeds specified per grade level.

**TABLE I - SVAA MODIFICATIONS TO OFFICIAL BASEBALL RULES**

| <b>Grade</b>                      | <b>1</b>                         | <b>2</b>        | <b>3</b>        | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>        |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Pitching Distance                 | 35'                              | 40'             | 40'             | 45'             | 45'             |
| Pitching Machine Speed            | 32                               | 34              | 37              | n/a             | n/a             |
| Base Length                       | 50'                              | 50'             | 55'             | 65'             | 65'             |
| Bunting                           | no                               | no              | no              | <b>yes</b>      | yes             |
| Balk                              | n/a                              | n/a             | n/a             | n/a             | yes             |
| Infield Fly                       | n/a                              | n/a             | n/a             | yes             | yes             |
| Stealing --Bases                  | no                               | no              | no              | <b>yes</b>      | yes             |
| --Home                            | no                               | no              | no              | <b>yes</b>      | yes             |
| Lead off                          | ....Not until ball crosses plate |                 |                 |                 | yes             |
| Strike Zone                       | ...armpit/knees                  | ...armpit/knees | ...armpit/knees | ...armpit/knees | ...armpit/knees |
| Maximum runs per inning           | 5                                | 5               | 5               | 5               | 5               |
| Pitching Innings (max. per game)  | n/a                              | n/a             | n/a             | 3               | 3               |
| New Inning Start Time (hr:min)(1) | 1:10                             | 1:10            | 1:10            | 1:30            | 1:30            |
| Innings per game                  | 6                                | 6               | 6               | 6               | 6               |
| Official Game (innings)           | 3                                | 3               | 3               | 3               | 3               |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Strike Rule       | No                               | No              | No              | No              | Yes             |
| Bat Restrictions                  | See 4.1.2                        | See 4.1.2       | See 4.1.2       | See 4.1.2       | See 4.1.2       |
| Batting Order                     | roster                           | roster          | roster          | roster          | roster          |
| Defensive Players                 | 10(2)                            | 10(2)           | 10(2)           | 10(2)           | 10(2)           |
| Minimum number of Players (3)     | 8                                | 8               | 8               | 8               | 8               |
| Dead Ball                         | See 5.3 Rule 10                  | See 5.3 Rule 10 | See 5.3 Rule 10 | normal          | normal          |
| Catcher Equipment                 | yes                              | yes             | yes             | yes             | yes             |

**Footnotes:**

- (1) Time shown is measured from the scheduled start time.
- (2) The 10th player must play as an outfielder. All outfielders must play at least 20' behind the baseline. The 10th player may play any location in the outfield.
- (3) Minimum number of players required to start and continue a game. If starting or continuing with 8 players see 4.1.7 for “9<sup>th</sup> Position Rule.”



6.0

# Softball Specific Rules

Grades 2-8

## 6.1 League Determination

| Softball Leagues (girls)           | Grade |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| Pitching Machine                   | 2 & 3 |
| Fast Pitch w/ Modified Coach Pitch | 4     |
| Fast Pitch                         | 5-8   |

## 6.2 SOFTBALL RULES

**6.2.1 Pitchers** A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 3 innings per game in grades 4, 5, & 6 and a maximum of 4 innings per game in grades 7-8. Innings do not have to be consecutive. A pitcher may be substituted for, then return again to pitch in the same game, but not in the same inning. Delivery of a single pitch will constitute a pitcher having pitched a full inning.

There is no required rest period between games – only the Maximum Innings per game rule in any one game. Any violation of the pitching rules will result in the forfeiture of the game by the offending team.

**6.2.2 Modified Coach-Pitch Rules for Girls 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Only** - A coach pitches to their own team **any time** the pitch count on current batter reaches four balls. The batter does not walk. Rather, the coach pitcher replaces the pitcher (**pitcher stays in the game as a fielder in the pitching position**) and pitches to the same batter until the batter puts the ball in play, or strikes out. If the bases are loaded, and the player/pitcher hits the batter, the result is the same as four balls: coach pitcher comes in to replace the pitcher, and no run is scored as a result of the hit batter. If the coach/pitcher then hits his/her own batter, the pitch does not count, and no run scores.

The coach pitcher receives no warm-up pitches when they enter the game. The umpire will continue to call balls and strikes when the coach pitcher pitches. The coach pitcher may not question the strike zone nor instruct or coach while on the field **any players including base runners**. Violation of this rule results in the batter being called out, and the coach pitcher will be removed from the game. **A coach pitcher removed from a game must leave the game and dugout, and is not allowed to coach for the remainder of the game. If a removed coach does not adhere to the removal guidelines, that team will forfeit the game.**

If the batter puts the ball in play, the coach pitcher must allow fielders the opportunity to make the play and eventually return the ball to the player/pitcher to stop play. If a batted ball hits a coach pitcher, the ball is “dead”, and all runners advance one base from where they were at the time the ball was pitched (same rule as hitting a pitching machine). **If a fielder throws a ball and hits the coach pitcher the ball is “dead”, and base runners cannot advance. The base runner(s) will stop at the base they were closest to at the time the coach pitcher is hit by a fielder’s throw. Bases are awarded to base runners at the discretion**

## **of the umpire.**

The coach pitcher remains off the field at all other times.

**6.2.3 Delay of Game** - Intentional delay of a game, when reported to the League President, may result in a forfeiture, for the team causing the infraction. The umpire in charge shall award proper "ball" and "strike" calls for delay of game and can award a forfeit for repeated delays. If a coach goes to the mound two times in any inning or three times during a game to talk to a pitcher, that pitcher must be removed at that time. (An interruption of the game to talk to the pitcher shall be counted as a trip to the mound.)

**6.2.4 Dead Ball** – In the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade leagues, play is stopped when the pitcher gains possession of the ball within 5' of the pitching and the umpire calls "time-out" and directs base runners to the appropriate base. Runners that are more than halfway to the next base advance to the next base at NO risk. Runners not halfway to the next base must return to the prior base at NO risk.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade leagues, if a ball gets under the softball pitching machine, the Umpire will call "timeout" regardless of whether the ball actually hit the machine or not, and will direct runners to the appropriate base in accordance with the paragraph of this rule.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> grade leagues and up, when the pitcher gains possession of the ball within 5' of the pitching rubber, and it appears that the pitcher is not going to make a "play" on any of the runners, the umpire calls "time out" and play stops. Runners that are more than halfway to the next base advance to the next base at NO risk. Runners not halfway to the next base must return to the prior base at NO risk. (Note: If the pitcher gains possession within 5' of the pitching rubber, and, in the umpire's judgment, appears or makes a play on a runner, the umpire should not call "timeout" until such time as it appears the pitcher will not make a further play on any runner. However, once timeout is called, the play is over and may not be restarted by any attempt by a defensive player to make a play at any base. The game resumes on the next pitch.)

**6.2.5 Equipment** - Only official softball bats are permitted. There is no weight or length restriction on bats for all softball grades.

**6.2.5.1 Throwing of Equipment** - In the event of a player throwing equipment while at bat, both teams will be warned by the umpire and any subsequent throwing of equipment may result in an out being charged to the batter. A dead ball out will be called and no base runners can advance.

**6.2.6. Home Plate Slide Rule** - The purpose of this rule is to prevent injury to the catcher or other defensive player. Enforcement of this rule involves umpire judgment. On a play at home plate the base runner is automatically OUT for failing to slide provided ALL of the following conditions are met:

- The catcher or other defensive player is positioned on or within reach of home plate;
- The catcher or other defensive player is making an attempt to catch the ball or tag the base runner with the ball; and
- There is significant contact between the base runner and catcher or other defensive player.

Sliding at home plate may occur at any time, but it **must** occur in the situation described above.

**6.2.7 Rule modification Matrix** - Further modifications to softball rules are given in Table II.

**6.2.8 5th Grade Girls Base Stealing** – This rule applies only to attempts to steal a base. It does not apply in any other situation. A player who has first occupied either first or second base may, once the ball crosses home plate, attempt to steal the next available base. A player may not steal more than one base on any given pitch to home plate. A player may not steal home base under any circumstances. If a player attempts to steal either second or third base and the pitcher, catcher, or any other defensive player makes a throw to either the base occupied prior to the attempted steal or the base to which the runner is attempting to steal, the runner may not advance beyond the base which the player was attempting to steal at the time of the throw. (In other words, a player on first attempting to steal second may not advance beyond second base no matter what happens in the attempt to put that player out until the next pitch to home plate is made.)

### **6.3 Pitching Machine Rules (Girls 2-3)**

The following rules (6.3) take precedent over the "General Rules" of 4.1 in the event of conflict.

1. No base on balls is permitted.
2. No base is taken if a batter is hit by pitched ball.
3. If a batted ball hits the machine and/or the umpire before hitting another player, it is a dead ball. The batter gets one base, and all runners on base advance one base from the base they occupied at the time the ball was pitched.
4. Three strikes constitute an out.
5. For the 2nd grade girls league, the umpire will call a no pitch for any pitch not in the strike zone, unless the ball is hit by the batter, regardless of whether the batter swings at the pitch or not. (The purpose of this rule is to provide players in their first year with a

pitching machine the opportunity to learn the strike zone and reduce the number of strike outs per game.). If a player fails to swing at a ball that would be a strike (first strike only), the umpire will give a warning. If a player has at least one strike, and fails to swing at any subsequent pitch that's in the strike zone, the umpire will call a strike.

6. Field umpire will act as the pitching machine feeder.
7. No one may adjust the machine except the umpire. Once the umpire sets the speed no speed adjustment may be made until the inning being played is completed.
8. At any time during an inning, the umpire may adjust the pitching height/direction.
9. The player pitcher must remain within a circle with a 5' radius from the pitching machine, until the ball is hit.
10. Play is stopped when a defensive player gains possession of the ball, is within five feet of the pitching machine and the umpire calls timeout. Runners that are more than half way to the next base advance to the next base at NO risk. Players not half way to the next base must return to the prior base at NO risk.

**For 2nd Grade Girls, base runners, including the batter, may only advance one base on a batted ball that does not leave the infield, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the overthrow rule below.**

**For 2nd Grade Girls, the following overthrow rule applies:**

Overthrow Rule: When a defensive player attempts to make a play at ANY base and the baseman fails to field the ball and the ball continues past the baseman, the throw is considered to be an "overthrow." At the time of the overthrow (the overthrow occurs at the time the ball passes the baseman) base runners must stop at the nearest base with no risk of being put out. (If the umpire calls an overthrow, when the overthrow occurred and the position of the runners with respect to the bases at the time of the overthrow are umpire judgments.) Furthermore, if ANY fielder attempts to create a dead ball situation (within the umpire's judgment) by throwing to the pitcher standing within the 5' radius of the machine and an overthrow occurs, this, too, should be deemed an overthrow, and a dead ball should result.

- A dropped ball by a baseman is NOT an overthrow.
- An errant throw to players that are not attempting to cover a base is

NOT an overthrow.

- The base must be occupied by the runner in order for an overthrow to occur. (i.e., runner either on the base, running to the base or leaving the base). Example: If there is a player on 3rd with no runners on 1st or 2nd and an "overthrow" occurs at 2nd, the "overthrow" at 2nd is not allowed and play does not stop since 2nd base was not occupied and the runner on 3rd may come home at his own risk

**For 3rd Grade Girls, the following overthrow rule also applies:**

When a defensive player attempts to make a play on a batted ball by throwing to first base, and the covering baseman (1<sup>st</sup> baseman or covering player) is not able to make a play on the ball: a) an errant throw goes past the baseman, or b) the baseman mishandles the ball to the extent that the ball travels outside a 5' radius (an immediately playable area) of the base, the throw should be considered to be an overthrow. At the time of the overthrow, as judged by the umpire, base runners must stop at the nearest base with no risk of being put out. The position of the runners with respect to the bases at the time of the overthrow is exclusively the judgment of the umpire.

If the baseman retrieves the ball before it travels outside the 5' radius, play will continue until otherwise stopped by the course of the game.

If, while trying to play the ball, the baseman kicks the ball outside of the 5' radius, play will continue, and no overthrow will be called as a result of that action.

11. Base coaches must stay in designated areas (coaching box), even if there are no markings (at least 3-feet from the base line).
12. Bunting is not permitted.
13. Table II applies to the girls' league.
14. No player may be removed from the field during an inning, except in case of injury.
15. Use of pitching machine for pre-game warm-ups is prohibited.
- 16. All batters and players on base must wear batting helmets.**
17. Pitching machines are set by the umpire at speeds specified per grade level.



**TABLE II. SVAA MODIFICATION TO OFFICIAL SOFTBALL RULES**

| <b>GRADE</b>                       | <b>2/3</b>                                     | <b>4</b>  | <b>5</b>        | <b>6</b>                             | <b>7/8</b>      |
|------------------------------------|--|-----------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Pitching Distance                  | 31'  | 35'       | 35'             | 40'                                  | 43'             |
| Pitching Machine Speed             | 30 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )<br>32 (3 <sup>rd</sup> ) | n/a       | n/a             | n/a                                  | n/a             |
| Base Length                        | 50'  | 55'       | 55'             | 60'                                  | 60'             |
| Bunting                            | no   | no        | yes             | yes                                  | yes             |
| Infield Fly                        | n/a  | n/a       | n/a             | no                                   | yes             |
| Stealing --Bases                   | no   | no        | yes             | yes                                  | yes             |
| --Home                             | no   | no        | no              | yes                                  | yes             |
| Lead off                           | ...When ball crosses plate                     |           |                 | Yes, when ball leaves pitcher's hand |                 |
| Strike Zone                        | ...armpit/knees                                |           | ...armpit/knees |                                      | ...armpit/knees |
| Maximum Runs Per Inning            | 5  | 5         | 5               | 5                                    | 5               |
| Pitching Innings (max. per game)   | n/a  | 3         | 3               | 3                                    | 4               |
| Base on Balls                      | no   | no        | yes             | yes                                  | yes             |
| New Inning Start Time (hr:min) (1) | 1:10   | 1:20      | 1:20            | 1:20                                 | 1:20            |
| Innings Per Game                   | 6  | 6         | 6               | 6                                    | 7               |
| Official Game(innings)             | 3  | 3         | 3               | 3                                    | 3               |
| 3rd Strike Rule                    | no   | no        | no              | yes                                  | yes             |
| Batting Order                      | roster   | roster    | roster          | roster                               | roster          |
| Defensive Players                  | 10(3)  | 10(3)     | 10(3)           | 10(3)                                | 10(3)           |
| Minimum Number of Players (2)      | 8  | 8         | 8               | 8                                    | 8               |
| Ball Diameter                      | 11"  | 11"       | 11"             | 12"                                  | 12"             |
| Fast Pitch                         | yes  | yes       | yes             | yes                                  | yes             |
| Dead Ball                          | See 6.2.4                                      | See 6.2.4 | See 6.2.4       | normal                               | normal          |
| Catcher Equipment                  | yes  | yes       | yes             | yes                                  | yes             |

**Footnotes:**

- (1) Time shown is measured from the scheduled start time.
- (2) Minimum number of players required to start and to continue a game. If starting or continuing with 8 players see 4.1.7 for “9<sup>th</sup> Position Rule.”
- (3) The 10th player must play as an outfielder. All outfielders must play 20' or more behind the baseline.
- (4) In a semi-final or final playoff game where there is no time limit, the game is tied after six (6) full innings have played, and a team has had two (2) pitchers pitch three (3) innings each, they may pitch more innings, but must alternate innings. They may not pitch two (2) consecutive innings in overtime.



# 7.0

## T-Ball Specific Rules

### Boys PK-K and Girls PK-1

## 7.1 League Determination

### Baseball Leagues (Boys)

T-Ball  
T-Ball w/ Modified T-Ball rules

### Grade

Pre-K \*  
K

### Softball Leagues (Girls)

T-Ball  
T-Ball w/Modified T-Ball rules

### Grade

Pre-K\*  
K & 1 \*

\* Girls & Boys PK may be combined & Girls K & Girls 1<sup>st</sup> may be combined depending on registration patterns.

**7.2 T-Ball** - All players will receive a participation award. There will be no playoffs.

**7.2.1 Pre-K Eligibility** - In order to be eligible to participate in the Pre-K league, a child must have reached their 4th birthday by April 1 of the applicable sport year.

## 7.3 Player Team Assignment

**7.3.1 Existing SVAA Teams** - Because the participants in the Pre-K league have not yet started elementary school, there will be no team integrity from Pre-K into the Kindergarten league. As a result, all teams entering the Kindergarten league will be treated as if they are new teams under rule 2.2.4.

## 7.4 T-Ball Rules (Pre-K Girls, K-Girls, 1-Girls, Pre-K Boys and K-Boys)

Your team consists of very small children. They will make mistakes. Let's laugh with them and not worry about winning. Have fun, teach baseball and sportsmanship, and above all, instill in your players the idea that they should always try to "do their best"!

The following rules take precedence over the "general" rules of 4.1.

1. Without consuming excess time, a designated coach may adjust the tee height and provide assistance to a batter before the first strike.
2. Coaches - On offense a team will be allowed three coaches on the field: one first base coach, one third base coach and a batting coach. The latter will assist with putting the ball on the tee and giving batting instruction. Additionally it is recommended that each team have a bench coach to keep track of the batting order.

On defense each team may have one coach stationed in the outfield.

3. On offense each team will bat the roster. Ten players will play on

defense, the 10th player playing in the outfield at least 10 feet behind the baseline along with the other outfielders. Additionally, infielders must be stationed behind an imaginary line drawn between first base and third base until the ball is hit. Naturally, once the ball is hit they may move to field the ball.

4. The pitcher shall act as an infielder but must remain on the mound with one foot on the pitching rubber until the ball is struck.
5. Umpires will be instructed to move to the site of the play. Umpires will also move the tee when a runner is attempting to score from third base.
6. Five run accumulative rule - Each team will be allowed to score 5 runs average per inning. If a team fails to score 5 runs in a given inning, they carry the balance of that average to subsequent innings on an accumulative basis. EXAMPLE: If a team scores 1 run in the 1st inning, that team may score 9 runs during the second inning. If only two runs are scored in the second inning, they may score 12 in the third inning. A team may score no more than 30 runs during a six inning ball game.
7. Before a ball is considered "fair", it must pass out of the "no hit" circle. This circle shall be a radius of 5' from home plate as determined by the umpire.
8. If, in the umpire's judgment a team is intentionally delaying a game, he can charge the offending team an out. If the offending team is at bat, the batter will not be charged with the out.
9. On a fairly hit ball, the batter and each base runner may advance only one base.
10. There will be no post-season tournament in the T-ball leagues.
11. Length of Games:

New inning start time (hr:min) PK Boys, PK Girls 1:00. Game is over at 1:10.

New inning start time (hr:min) K Boys & K/1 Girls 1:15. Game is over at 1:25.

No new inning may be started after the allotted game time. If a new inning is started, it does not have to be completed (because no scores are kept). These lengths are intended to be measured from the scheduled game start time (regardless of the actual start time).

12. Additional rules – See following Modified Rules for Kindergarten Boys and also see Table III.

Modified T-ball Guidelines for K-BOYS AND K/1 GRADE GIRLS

- Each player (or his coach) may choose Coach Pitch or T-ball for purpose of batting.
- If Coach Pitch is chosen, the batter is allowed 3 pitches (good or bad) before being required to use the tee for batting.
- If T-ball is chosen or if the batter strikes out from the Coach Pitch option, the ball will be hit from the T and normal T-ball rules apply.
- The Coach doing the pitching must be from the team who is at bat and must stand between the pitchers mound and home plate.
- The Coach doing the pitching can choose to pitch either overhand or underhand.
- The defensive team's pitcher may choose to stand off to the side of the other team's Coach Pitcher.
- The Coach Pitcher must try to avoid interfering with the defensive team who is trying to field the ball.
- If the ball hits the Coach Pitcher, it's a "dead ball" and all runners (including the batter) advance one base.
- On a fairly hit ball, the batter and each base runner may advance only one base, unless the ball reaches the outfield grass, in which case the batter and each base runner may advance up to two bases at their own risk.
- The defensive team's catcher must wear a helmet and must be positioned at a safe distance from the batter. If the defensive team chooses, their catcher may field the Coach pitched balls, once they have hit the ground and rolled clear of the batter. Otherwise, the umpire should field the Coach pitched.
- A 10" diameter ball is only used for girls.

**Table III SVAA T-BALL RULES**

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Base Length               | 50'   |
| Pitching Distance         | 40'   |
| Infield Fly               | no  |
| Lead off                  | no  |
| Base Stealing             | no  |
| Base On Balls             | no  |
| Strike Outs               | no  |
| Bunting                   | no  |
| 3rd Strike Rule           | no  |
| Innings Per Game          | 6   |
| Official Game             | 3   |
| Batting Order             | Roster  |
| Batting Helmets           | Yes, required for batters and all base runners  |
| Defensive Players         | 10, the 10th player is to be used as an Outfielder. All outfielders must be positioned 10' or more behind the baseline. |
| Minimum Number of Players | 8   |
| Maximum Number of Players | 14  |

# 8.0

## Coach Formed Leagues

### Specific Rules

#### Baseball Grades 6-12

## 8.1 League Determination

| Baseball Leagues (Boys) | Grade |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Boy's Pitch             | 6     |
| Boy's Pitch             | 7     |
| Boy's Pitch             | 8     |
| Boy's Pitch             | 9-12  |

**8.2 Division Determination** - Leagues with less than ten (10) teams will be formed into a single division; leagues with ten (10) and less than nineteen (19) teams will be divided into two (2) divisions. Leagues with nineteen (19) or greater teams will be divided into three (3) divisions. Divisions shall be assigned randomly (i.e., no seeding will be allowed).

**8.3 Awards** - It is the policy of SVAA to present awards based on won-loss standings.

Awards will be presented to the regular season division champion(s). For the purpose of awards the division champion will be determined by won-loss record and head-to-head competition **only**. In the event of a tie for division champions, co-champion awards will be presented.

Playoff awards will be presented to: 1) Tournament Winner and 2) Tournament Finalist (runner-up).

## 8.4 TEAM FORMATION

Teams will be formed by a coach interested in participating in the program. The coach will assemble a roster of at least ten (10) and not more than (14) players. How the coach decides to form the roster is at the discretion of the coach. Each year it is up to the coach to reform and resubmit a team for participation in the league.

**8.5 Player Contracts/Eligibility** - All players must have a contract on file prior to any participation in an SVAA event (including practices, practice games and league games). **COACHES VIOLATING THIS RULE WILL BE SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION.** A game involving an unauthorized player will result in forfeiture of that game by the team playing the unauthorized player.

Players may **not** be added to team rosters after the first regular Spring season game (practice games excluded). Adding additional players in the Fall is at the discretion of the Sport Commissioner.

**8.6 Player Team Assignment** - All players that are not part of an existing Coach Formed Team but wish to participate in the Coach Formed League may contact the SVAA office to determine which coaches are currently looking for additional

players. It is solely the decision of a coach to take on a new player.

New teams may be formed provided sufficient player contracts are available and a volunteer steps up to coach the formed team.

**8.6.1 Playing-Up** - If the Sport Commissioner determines to permit an entire team to "play -up," then that team will be required to continue to "play-up" in subsequent years within the Coach Formed League.

## **8.7 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COACH**

**8.8 Coaching Requirements.** To be able to coach in an SVAA league, the head coach must be at least 22 years or older unless an exception is approved in advance by the Sport Commissioner. No exceptions will be made to this rule for any team participating in the league. If the Sport Commissioner approves a coach younger than 22 years old for any team, that team must still have an adult at all practices and on the bench during all games. No game may be played unless there is an adult on the bench with the team.

**8.9 Coaches' Meeting** - The coach is required to attend a coach's meeting. SVAA has entered into an agreement with Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) to provide training for all of our head coaches. All head coaches are required to become certified either by attending a training session in person or by performing the session on line.

The objectives of the coaches meeting are:

- Execute coach's contract
- Meet your League President and other coaches
- Fill out coach's roster
- Receive information about player uniforms and team equipment
- Participate in general discussions outlining season calendar, rule changes and interpretation, location and times for practice games, etc.

**8.10 Coach/Team/Parent Relations** - Coaches are required to have a parents meeting prior to the first regular season game. This requirement applies to returning coaches and teams as well as new coaches and teams. It is an important policy of SVAA that the Head Coach meets with the parents of his players. During this meeting the following information should be conveyed:

- Parents are expected to conduct themselves in an adult manner at all times, to set an example of good citizenship and sportsmanship for their children and other participants. No alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs will be allowed at any team function.
- Distribute game and practice information. Explain to them what they may expect of you and what you may expect of them (this will be a good time to solicit parents for any help you may need).



- Explain your basis for team discipline. Discipline must consistent for each team member. While SVAA will not impose limits on the maximum amount of practice time during the sport season, players may not be required to attend more than 3 hours of practice a week. As a result, a coach may not discipline any player for failure to attend any practice sessions that the coach may hold in excess of the above limitations and the coach must so inform all players and parents.
- Briefly describe rules of play that are unique to SVAA and your league.
- Make sure parents know their views are welcome -- after a game or practice.
- Emphasize that parents must agree that they will provide, at their own expense, any insurance deemed necessary to cover player for any SVAA related injury. Any injury requiring a doctor's visit must be reported to the SVAA office immediately.

**8.11 Practices** - Be present at all team practice sessions and games, or be sure that you have a reliable adult assistant coach present at games or practices. Be dependable!

Do not have practice on the day of the game; remember we are working with children, not men and women. However, a one hour warm up period may be utilized.

Please remember to use protective equipment during practice as well as games.

Practices are where a coach shows what he or she is made of. Coaching takes time not only on the practice field, but at the "drawing board."

- Set up a practice schedule and stick to it.
- Plan each practice session.
- Practice sessions should be fast paced, and involve all team members as much as possible.
- Have "skull" sessions with your assistant coaches.

As a coach, you should use the Assistant Coaches as much as possible. If they don't know the sport, you, as the Head Coach, teach them as well. They may want to be a Head Coach someday! Ask for feedback from your Assistant Coaches. You might be surprised how much they can help.

**8.11.1 Rescheduling and Forfeits** - SVAA is required to pay its game officials unless it receives sufficient advance notice of any forfeits or other schedule changes. Accordingly, any team that forfeits a game without having provided their

League President with **48** hours advance notice shall be assessed a charge of \$70.

Any team that violates this provision will not be allowed to play any further games until this charge has been paid to the SVAA office.

## **8.12 GENERAL**

**8.12.1 Equipment** - All players must be in full uniform (including a cap, pants and shirt with the shirt tucked in) when on the playing field. Easily readable numbers must be permanently affixed to the back of each player's jersey prior to the first regular season game in order for that player to be eligible to play. No duplicate numbers will be allowed on a team. All team members must be in the same uniform. Players warming up a pitcher must wear a mask. See 4.1.2 for bat guidelines. Protective headgear must be worn by the batter, on deck man, catcher, and all base runners. The home team Head Coach is responsible for placing and picking up the bases for his game and furnishing an unused game ball and backup balls for the umpire.

- No jewelry is permitted for any SVAA-Sponsored event. Metal cleats will be allowed in the 9-12 High School League.

**8.12.2 Length of Game/Start Time** - The length of each game is determined by the time allotted for the "New Inning Start Time" indicated in Table IV of this book. The time is measured from the scheduled start time (if a game is scheduled to start at 6:00 and play begins at 6:27, the official game start time is still 6:00). See also "Procedures for Coaches and Umpires" on the last page of this manual regarding start times. A new inning starts when: 1) The home team completes the third out of the current inning and 2) The new inning start time has not passed. **IF AN INNING STARTS, IT WILL BE PLAYED TO COMPLETION IF NECESSARY TO DETERMINE THE OUTCOME OF THE GAME.** If the inning is not played to completion, the official score will be recorded as of the completion of the previous inning.

**8.12.3 Line-up and Batting** - At game-time, a coach may elect to bat nine players or the entire roster and must follow that method through the completion of the game. If at any point regardless of the batting method chosen (4.1.7) only 8 players are present, an out will be taken in the open (9<sup>th</sup>) position in the batting order.

**8.12.4 Batting Nine Players** – If any players initially listed are not present, they will be scratched from the final line-up presented to the Scorekeeper and the other Coach. This will then represent the Official starting line-up for the team. Any additional players that report to the dugout after the first batter on that team steps into the batter's box will be added as available substitutes that can enter the game as a replacement player. Any player that is substituted for during the game must reenter the game in the same location in the batting order that they left the game. No two players can be on the field defensively that occupy the same spot in the batting order.

**8.12.5 Batting the Roster** - If any players initially listed are not present, they will be scratched from the final line-up presented to the Scorekeeper and the other Coach. This will then represent the Official starting line-up for the team. Any additional players that report to the dugout after the first batter on that team steps into the batter's box will be added to the end of the line-up (in the order they reported), and will bat in that position for the remainder of the game.

**8.12.6 Minimum Number of Players** - a team starts a game with only the minimum number of players (Table IV), and a player has to leave the game for any reason, that team now has less than the minimum number required to play, and the game will end at that point, and the team falling below the minimum will forfeit the game.

**8.12.7 Substitution Rule** - Substitution during an inning for defensive players is not permitted (except for injury). The pitcher may be substituted at any time from any position (except catcher) or from the bench. A catcher may not become the pitcher and the pitcher may not become the catcher during an inning. The only exceptions to the substitution rule will be for illness, disciplinary action, or injury during a game. A player's participation in a game will be determined by the coach if that player arrives after their turn at bat has passed. A player will not have his or her playing time reduced for disciplinary reasons unless the coach has established a consistent discipline program that has been previously explained to the parents at the parents' meeting. Any exception to the normal substitution rules must be reported to the umpire, opposing coach, and the official scorekeeper. Failure to comply with this rule may result in the forfeiture of the game by the team violating the rule. In the event both teams violate this rule, both may receive a loss.

**8.12.8 Other Games** - No game may be played under SVAA sponsorship except those specifically identified in this book (i.e., scrimmage, preseason, league, playoff).

**8.13 Pitching Rules** - See Table IV.

Any player having delivered a single pitch and been removed as a pitcher cannot reenter the game as a pitcher.

Delivery of a single pitch will constitute a pitcher has pitched a full inning.

Innings pitched in games declared "no contest" or tie games will be charged against a pitcher's eligibility for that game. If resumed at a later date, a pitcher may pitch to the extent of his remaining eligibility for the week in which the game is being rescheduled.

The minimum rest required between game appearances is one full calendar day.

Any violation of the pitching rules will result in a forfeiture of the game by the

offending team.

The League President may waive the pitching rule during playoffs or when scheduling conflicts require.

**8.13.1 Delay of Game** - The umpire in charge will award proper "ball" and "strike" calls for delay of game and can award a forfeit for repeated delays. If a coach goes to the mound two times in any inning to talk to the same pitcher, that pitcher must be removed. (An interruption of the game to talk to the pitcher from any location on the field will be counted as a trip to the mound.)

**8.13.2 Throwing of Equipment** - Any player throwing equipment while at bat, for any reason, may be subject to an "out" being charged against them. No warning is necessary from the umpire.

**8.13.3 Home Plate Slide Rule** - The purpose of this rule is to prevent injury to the catcher or other defensive player. Enforcement of this rule involves umpire judgment. On a play at home plate the base runner is automatically OUT for failing to slide provided ALL of the following conditions are met:

- The catcher or other defensive player is positioned on or within reach of home plate;
- The catcher or other defensive player is making an attempt to catch the ball or tag the base runner with the ball; and
- There is significant contact between the base runner and catcher or other defensive player.

Sliding at home plate may occur at any time, but it **must** occur in the situation described above.

**8.13.4 Rule Modification Matrix** - See Table IV

**TABLE IV - SVAA MODIFICATIONS TO OFFICIAL BASEBALL RULES**

| <b>Grade</b>                      | <b>6</b>              | <b>7</b>              | <b>8</b>              | <b>9-12</b>           |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Pitching Distance                 | 50'                   | 55'                   | 60'6"                 | 60'6"                 |
| Base Length                       | 70'                   | 75'                   | 90                    | 90                    |
| Bunting                           | yes                   | yes                   | yes                   | yes                   |
| Balk (1)                          | yes                   | yes                   | yes                   | yes                   |
| Infield Fly                       | yes                   | yes                   | yes                   | yes                   |
| Lead Off / Stealing               | yes                   | yes                   | yes                   | yes                   |
| Minimum Playing Requirement       | 1 Inning In The Field | 1 Inning In The Field | 1 Inning In The Field | 1 Inning In The Field |
| Bat Restrictions                  | See 4.1.2             | See 4.1.2             | See 4.1.2             | See 4.1.2             |
| Strike Zone                       | Armpit/Knees          | Armpit/Knees          | Armpit/Knees          | Armpit/Knees          |
| Maximum runs per inning           | 5                     | 5                     | 5                     | 5                     |
| Pitching Innings (max. per game)  | 3                     | 3                     | 3                     | 3                     |
| New Inning Start Time (hr:min)(2) | 1:40                  | 1:40                  | 1:40                  | 1:40                  |
| Innings per game                  | 6                     | 6                     | 6                     | 6                     |
| Official Game (innings)           | 3                     | 3                     | 3                     | 3                     |
| Drop 3 <sup>rd</sup> Strike Rule  | yes                   | yes                   | yes                   | yes                   |
| Batting Order                     | Roster                | Roster                | Roster                | Roster                |
| Defensive Players                 | 9                     | 9                     | 9                     | 9                     |
| Minimum Number of Players (3)     | 8                     | 8                     | 8                     | 8                     |
| Dead Ball                         | normal                | normal                | normal                | normal                |
| Catcher Equipment                 | yes                   | yes                   | yes                   | yes                   |

**Footnotes:**

- (1) Slight shoulder movement during stretch while looking at first base is allowed.
- (2) Time shown is measured from the scheduled start time.
- (3) Minimum number of players required to start and continue a game. If starting or continuing with 8 players see 4.1.7 for “9<sup>th</sup> Position Rule.”

# RULES & PROCEDURE GUIDELINES

## APPENDIX A

### SPRING VALLEY ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

#### RULES INFRACTION GUIDELINES

Following several months of study, the Board of Directors of the Spring Valley Athletic Association (“SVAA”) has decided to publish its rules and procedures regarding the punishment for violations of its rules. The Board hopes that this document will inform all coaches and participants of SVAA’s intent to ensure compliance with its rules as well as the policies that SVAA will follow to enforce those rules. SVAA is not a heavy rule oriented organization, but rules must exist in order to ensure the basic fairness of the sports programs SVAA offers. The existence of rules, however, is not enough. SVAA must also ensure that those rules are enforced and enforced uniformly from violation to violation and from sport to sport.

This document, while making every effort to be comprehensive, will fail undoubtedly to address every situation that may arise. In any case not dealt with specifically herein, SVAA reserves the right to issue such punishment as it believes to be appropriate under the circumstances. In addition, this document is not intended to be binding or enforceable against SVAA. It is a general statement of policy and intent, but SVAA reserves the right to alter any procedure set forth in this document in the event it believes such change to be in order.

#### *General Philosophy*

As articulated in the rule book for each sport, SVAA runs its programs for the benefit of the youth participating in those programs. Though many coaches and parents seem to lose track of the basic point, winning and losing are not important. SVAA exists for the purpose of allowing youth to learn about various sports, to learn the team environment, and to learn that “it is better to have tried and failed than not to have tried at all.” All youth should be encouraged to sign up to play and each one should be given equal opportunity to play and learn the sport. Hence, for example, the team formation rules, where everyone should be encouraged to play and coaches are not allowed to form teams, and the substitution rules, where every youth is required to play significant amounts of every game, are both areas that are important to ensuring that the basic philosophy becomes reality. Conduct that interferes with this basic philosophy has always been, and will continue to be dealt with harshly.

## *Basic Procedures*

The SVAA sports rule books provide a uniform procedure regarding the enforcement of SVAA's rules, policies and philosophy applicable to that sport. In general, the rules divide each sport into three separate areas -- team formation, practice, and games. Each area has its own specific set of rules and guidelines. The violation of some rules and guidelines contain set penalties, while others only establish ranges, and some leave the penalty unspecified. Contrary to the general perception, the range of penalties and the degree of specificity associated with the violation of each rule has been the result of SVAA's experience in administrating youth sports programs.

This document will not address the specifics of the rules of the game since the enforcement of those rules is left to the judgment and discretion of the game officials. Rather, this document focuses on those situations which violate SVAA's specific rules. In general, the enforcement of all SVAA rules is the ultimate responsibility of the Board of Directors. In the first instance, however, rules will be enforced and punishments determined by the League President, the Deputy Sport's Commissioner, and the Sport Commissioner. All decisions made by any of these people are appealable to the Rules Infraction Committee.

The purpose of that appeal process is to ensure some consistency from sport-to-sport, from year-to-year and with the guiding purposes of SVAA. SVAA Commissioners and Officers are all volunteers and they spend a tremendous amount of time and effort to try to ensure compliance with SVAA's rules. **To ensure that time is not wasted, SVAA will, impose a \$50 fee for all appeals beyond the Sport Commissioner level.** If in the Rule Infraction Committee's sole discretion an appeal is upheld, the full \$50 fee will be refunded. In all other cases the fee will be applied to SVAA's general financial aid program.

**NOTE:** You cannot appeal an Official's call or interpretation of an SVAA or High School Federation rule.

## *Basic Rule Infractions*

The general range of penalties available to enforce SVAA's rules can basically be divided into two general categories. One, violation of specific SVAA playing rules that result in forfeiture of games. Two, illegal or inappropriate conduct of coaches, players, or fans that result in penalties ranging from no action, to probation, to suspension for some period of time, to expulsion from further participation in any SVAA program.

The specific punishment applied in a particular situation is dependent upon a consideration of the nature of the violation and the surrounding circumstances. Relevant questions for the surrounding circumstances involve the impact on the



youth, the nature of the violation, whether the same or similar conduct had occurred in the past, and whether the offending person has endeavored to rectify the effects of the violation.

Given these variables, a specific penalty for any given violation of an SVAA rule cannot be announced in advance with the exception of expulsion from a game. In the event of an expulsion, an automatic extra game suspension will be imposed. As noted above, those violations that go to the heart of SVAA's philosophy will be dealt with harshly. SVAA does not have a rule that requires a staged enforcement of its penalties. Hence, in the right circumstances and presumably extreme case, the very first violation of an SVAA rule may result in the harshest penalty, expulsion from the league.

SVAA does, however, keep track of its rule enforcement decisions and the fact that a prior violation has occurred may be used as a factor to escalate the punishment for any subsequent violation. Put another way, SVAA will track punishments for particular individuals from sport-to-sport and from year-to-year and additional violations of SVAA rules regardless of sport by the same individual will be dealt with more severely than a first violation by another individual of the same rule.

To help ensure the proper enforcement of its rules across all sports and from year-to-year, SVAA will appoint a standing Rules Infractions Committee. That Committee will be composed of three members at large, the SVAA Administrator, and the Sport Commissioner of the SVAA sport. The Sport Commissioner will not participate in the deliberation of any matter heard by the Committee that arises from the sport in which he/she is the Commissioner.

## *Rule Specific Guidelines*

The table below is designed to highlight some areas of rules violations that SVAA views as potentially serious:

| <b>Team Formation<br/>(Grades K-5)</b>  | <b>Practice</b>  | <b>Games</b>  |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Recruiting youth for a particular team   | 1. Allowing a youth to participate in practice without a signed contract on file with the office | 1. Failing to follow the substitution eligibility rules for that sport                |
| 2. Discouraging or preventing youth from signing up or participating in an SVAA program | 2. Failing to ensure adult supervision at all practices and games                                | 2. Being ejected from a game or otherwise failing to deal with officials with respect |
| 3. Failure by each coach to have a parents' meeting as required by each sport           | 3. Damaging a facility obtained by SVAA  | 3. Allowing fans to engage in inappropriate conduct                                   |
|   |  | 4. Any use of foul or abusive language, use of alcohol, drugs or tobacco              |

Violations of these rules in particular can expect to receive more serious penalties.

### *Summary*

Hopefully this document will provide some insight into the SVAA rule enforcement policy. SVAA hopes that it will never be called upon to enforce any of its rules. If you have any questions about a specific rule, contact your league president or Sports Commissioner in advance. Do not assume that merely because the same conduct has happened before that it will not be subject to punishment. Unfortunately, not all rule violations are brought to the Board's attention, although the Board will always be as consistent as deemed possible in its enforcement of the rules.

The Rules Infraction Committee  
Spring Valley Athletic Association

## ***PROCEDURES FOR COACHES AND UMPIRES***

Prior to the start of each game, the Head Umpire will meet briefly with both Head Coaches. Remember, if either coach has any questions about rule interpretations, how special situations will be handled (weather, darkness, injuries, field conditions, etc.), or any other questions with regard to how the Umpire(s) will conduct the game, this will be the time to ask them so that all three parties will have the same understanding in advance as well as avoid delays during the game. **COMMON COURTESY ALWAYS APPLIES.** However, if a coach still has a question or does not understand a ruling that was not previously anticipated, he/she may briefly ask for time. When acknowledged by the umpire, the coach may ask for a better understanding. Umpires are fully expected to know the rules by which that gender/age group is playing and should not have any difficulty providing a brief explanation. This does NOT mean, however, that the coach may question judgment calls, argue rulings, or repeatedly delay the game. Umpires are still expected to control the game in a firm, but courteous and professional manner, and have the ultimate authority to do whatever is necessary to control a situation. Also, in order to avoid game delays, the Head Coach or the Head Coach designee for that day (one only) is the only person that may ask an Umpire for a ruling or explanation. Any questions from assistant coaches, players, or parents will have to be funneled through the Head Coach. As always, judgment calls are not subject to question.

If a coach honestly feels that there is a persistent problem with some aspect of an Umpire's game, he/she should make it known to the League President, being prepared to furnish information with regard to the nature of the problem and the pattern of circumstances that has occurred to bring it to this level of the coach's attention. We are interested in providing quality, professional and courteous Umpires by listening to constructive suggestions and by identifying and solving any problems, and NOT in just listening to disgruntled coaches. So, beware the Cry-Wolf trap!

The Home Team will be responsible for providing an official scorekeeper. The home-team coach will be responsible for making sure that this scorekeeper understands his/her responsibilities before the game time. This person is not required to maintain a scorebook that would stand the scrutiny of a Major League Official, but should be able to provide at any point during the game, for either team, information with regard to the batting order, outs made, and the current score. The scorekeeper should catch any errors made in the batting order before the batter bats. It is required that the scorekeeper be informed of any substitutions before they occur.

The Umpire's watch (timepiece) will be used for the Official game time, and both coaches should synchronize their watches with the Umpire, and understand what the last-inning start time will be.

The Head Coach is ultimately responsible for maintaining the score sheets for all of his/her home games until the season is completely over. **This is very important.**