



**JP Sports**  
**2024 Baseball Rules**  
**Revised: March 18, 2024**  
**Subject to Change**

**Policies and Procedures**

1. JP Sports tournament management will strive to make this tournament the best of your season. If questions or disputes arise about policies or procedures, coaches shall bring them to the attention of the Tournament Director and/or JP Sports Director of Operations, Heath Smith. Any interpretation and decision of the Tournament Director and/or Director of Operations shall be final.
2. Please check-in 45 minutes prior to your first game. Documents for check-in can be found at the bottom of this document. All coaches at TBK must go through the Main North gate to get their wristband for coaching for the weekend. Teams failing to check-in are subject to forfeiting all games until properly checking in.
3. JP Sports will provide an Official Representative of JP Sports for each tournament location. The representative shall be either the Director of Operations, Tournament Director or Site Director.
4. Official brackets and game times are posted on our website ([www.playjpsports.com](http://www.playjpsports.com)) and the JP Sports App. JP Sports will use the JP Sports App for posting tournament schedules, scores and weather updates. It's highly recommended that coaches share the JP Sports App link with their team's players, parents and fans.
5. Any tournament fees that are paid at check-in will be assessed a \$50.00 late charge fee and promotional discounts shall not apply.
6. JP Sports may charge spectator admission or parking fees for some events. Once admission or parking fees are paid, there will be no refunds or rain checks. Please do NOT enter a park if there is any chance of weather-related cancellations. Specific spectator information for each event can be found online at [www.playjpsports.com](http://www.playjpsports.com) under Tournament Information for that specific event.
7. All teams must be USSSA sanctioned for USSSA tournaments, please refer to [www.playjpsports.com](http://www.playjpsports.com) to find out if a tournament is sanctioned. For USSSA Sanctioned tournaments teams must have their official roster loaded to the USSSA website. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in removal from the tournament without a refund.
8. Team and Individual awards for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Some events may have additional awards. In the event of rain and cancellations, awards are only awarded if Championship Game teams have been established. Awards are only awarded at the park. Under no circumstances will awards be shipped.
9. Teams may start and finish games with eight (8) uniformed and rostered players. If a team plays with eight (8) players, the ninth spot in the batting order is an automatic out. If the ninth uniformed and rostered player arrives, that player may be inserted in the ninth spot of the batting order and the automatic out shall stop. If a team has seven (7) or less uniformed and rostered players to start a game, or at any point during the game, the game shall be declared a forfeit and scored in accordance with the USSSA rules.
10. Teams should fill first and third base dugouts on a first come, first served basis, irrespective of home and away designation.

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11. The home team for pool games shall be determined by a coin flip, and will keep the official scorebook. Either an umpire or a member of the tournament staff must be present for the flip. For bracket play the higher seeded team will be the home team.
12. No infield practice will be allowed. Teams are allowed to play catch in the outfield and take ground balls in foul territory, if time allows. No team shall do hitting warm up/practice into the fences.
13. Both coaches must sign the official scorecard. It is the responsibility of the home team to return the scorecard to the umpires prior to the umpires leaving the field of play. If the umpires leave the field of play prior to receiving the scorecard, the home team MUST return the scorecard to the JP Sports tournament representative.
14. The Tournament Director may modify the number or length of games when necessary due to weather, field conditions, or scheduling issues. This includes modifying the time limit if games get backed up.
15. If a tiebreaker is needed to determine playoff teams (wildcards, etc.) the following criteria shall be used:
  - a. Overall win-loss record (for the tournament)
  - b. Head-to-head (only applies when two teams are involved)
  - c. Runs Allowed – Fewest to Most
  - d. Run Differential (max of +8 or -8)
  - e. Runs Scored – Most to Fewest
  - f. Coin Flip
16. If using Pool Play, meaning all teams within a grouping play each other. The 1<sup>st</sup> Place teams from each pool will be given the first set of seeds based on the criteria in Policy and Procedure #15 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> place teams from each pool will be given the second set of seeds based, and so forth.
17. Any team that forfeits in pool play may result in the team not advancing to the championship bracket.
18. Forfeits - If a team forfeits for any reason other than pitching, they are removed from the event and placed in last place. If a team forfeits in a winner's bracket game, they will be moved to the loser's bracket.
19. If using preliminary play, we will just seed the teams that are advancing using the criteria in Policy and Procedure #15.
20. All teams are required to adhere to local park policies, rules and ordinances. Alcohol, tobacco, and coolers shall not be brought into the confines of the tournament venue. Personal water jugs for players is acceptable. The Head Coach shall be ultimately responsible and accountable for the conduct of the team's players, assistant coaches and spectators.

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**Roster and Birth Date**

21. A player may only be on one roster in any given tournament, regardless of the age division.
22. For USSSA sanctioned tournaments, teams MUST comply with USSSA roster rules and regulations, unless otherwise stated within this document.
23. Team rosters contain personal information such as player date of birth and full name, etc. In the interest of protecting player and coach privacy, rosters can only be viewed by JP Sports staff. Only a Head Coach may ask the Tournament Director about players listed and if they meet the age and/or roster qualification. To protest a player's eligibility, see the policy below.
24. Any Head Coach that would like to formally challenge the eligibility of a player shall make it known to the Tournament Director. Only the Head Coach of a team can formally challenge the age of the player. Each Head Coach is allowed ONE (1) Age Challenge per tournament, if that Challenge is won they will receive another and so on. Penalty will be enforced in accordance to USSSA Rules
25. It is recommended that Head Coaches have all player's birth certificates available at all times. If a player's birth certificate cannot be produced to the tournament director upon request the player will be ruled ineligible.
26. The birthday age cutoff is May 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Playing Rules**

Unless otherwise noted herein, the playing rules for JP Sports Tournament will follow in accordance with USSSA National Rules first, then the Official Major League Baseball Rules as published by the Sporting News.

27. Length of Game
  - a. Ages 8U-12U will be six (6) innings.
  - b. Ages 13u-14u will be six (6) innings. However, if 20 minutes or more is remaining on the game clock a seventh (7) inning will be played.
  - c. Ages 15U and above will be seven (7) innings.
  - d. GOLD CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES AT 13U AND ABOVE WILL BE 7 INNINGS (WEATHER AND TIME PERMITTING).
  - e. Non Gold Bracket Championships are 1 hour 40 minutes.
28. Batting Order
  - a. Straight Nine: Nine (9) players in the batting order and listed on the lineup card with or without a DH. All player substitutes, subject to NFHS substitution rules (Starter can re-enter into his original spot once, etc.)
  - b. Extra Hitter: Ten (10) players in the batting order and listed on the lineup card. A DH can be used. Free substitution (defensive players) among the ten (10) players listed on the batting order. All player substitutes, subject to NFHS substitution rules (Starter can re-enter into his original spot once, etc.)

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- c. Continuous batting order: All players in uniform (unless injured) in the batting order and listed on the lineup card. If a late player arrives after the lineup cards are exchanged, the player must be entered into the last spot in the batting order (The player must be listed on the official tournament roster). Free defensive substitution for all players throughout the game.
- d. The Head Coach shall declare his lineup choice to the opposing coach and the umpire(s) during the plate meeting prior to each game. Once a declaration is made, it cannot be changed for that game.
- e. If a team drops below the number of players in the batting order as determined by the Head Coach and no substitution is available, that spot in the batting order will be determined an out. (Example: Injury, ejection, player having to leave, etc).

29. Pitching Rules and Limitations

- a. Tournament management will not be involved in counting pitches or innings for pitchers.
- b. JP Sports endorses the Pitch Smart Program, developed by USA Baseball and Major League Baseball. This program is a series of practical, age appropriate guidelines to help parents, players and coaches avoid overuse injuries and foster long, healthy careers for young pitchers.

<b>Recommended Pitch Count and Recommended Rest</b>						
<b>Age</b>	<b>Daily Max Pitching</b>	<b>0 Days Rest</b>	<b>1 Day Rest</b>	<b>2 Days Rest</b>	<b>3 Days Rest</b>	<b>4 Days Rest</b>
7-8	50	1-20	21-35	36-50	-	-
9-10	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
11-12	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
13-14	95	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
15-16	95	1-20	31-45	46-60	61-75	66+
17-18	105	1-20	31-45	46-60	61-75	66+

- c. A pitcher removed from a game may not re-enter the same game as a pitcher.
- d. Balks:
  - i. 8U - No balks, if an out occurs on the balk, it will result in a dead ball and the base runner will return to the base of origin prior to the balk.
  - ii. 9U - One balk warning per pitcher (which results in a dead ball), per inning
  - iii. 10U and 11U - One balk warning per pitcher per game (which results in a dead ball).
  - iv. 12U - and above no balk warnings.

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30. Bat Restrictions:

- a. Ages 8u-14u: Bats must be stamped 1.15 BPF. 8u-12u will have no weight drop restriction. All bats must have the USA or USSSA stamp. BBCOR and Wood bats are allowed. 13u players must use a drop 3,5, or 8 but anything over that is not allowed. 14u Players must use a -5 in accordance with USSSA Rules.
- b. Age 15u and above: Bats must be BBCOR certified and all aluminum bats are limited to -3 drop and must be stamped BBCOR Certified per NFHS rule. Wood bats are allowed.
- c. Penalty for illegal bats: A batter is in violation of the rule when said batter steps into the batter's box with an illegal bat. An illegal bat must be pointed out to the umpire prior to the first pitch of the next batter, or before all defensive players leave fair territory. Penalty: The batter is out. All outs recorded during the at bat count. Runner(s) will not be allowed to advance on a batted ball. If there are two (2) infractions by the same team during a game, the team's Head Coach will be ejected.

31. Time Limits:

- a. The game start time shall begin at the plate meeting. The home plate umpire or base umpire will be the official game time. If the game time is not announced, it is recommended that the Head Coach ask for the official start time.
- b. Official Time Limits
  - i. 8U Coach Pitch will be 1:10
  - ii. 8U Player Pitch will be 1:30
  - iii. 9U-14U will be 1:40
  - iv. 15U and Up will be 1:50
  - v. Championship Games will have a time limit of 2:00 if the game falls at the end of the day. All Championship Games in the middle of the Sunday schedule will be 1:40.
- c. Expiration of the time limit shall be ruled upon at the moment the final out in a half inning is recorded.
- d. An inning may be finished, but a new inning cannot be started after the time limit expires. If the home team is ahead when the time limit is reached, the game is over (a) immediately after the top half of the inning is finished or (b) at the moment the time limit is reached and the home team is ahead in the bottom half of the inning.
- e. Games may start up to 30 minutes early. Please have your team ready to play 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start time. Please check in to see where your field is at.
- f. The Tournament Director reserves the right to modify the time limits in the event of weather or other unforeseen circumstances.

32. Mercy Rules:

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Mercy Rules shall be twelve (12) runs after 3 innings and eight (8) runs after 4 innings.  
Mercy rules shall be in effect for all games, including championship games.

33. Base Distances and Field Dimensions

Age	Pitching (Ft)	Bases (Ft)
8	40	60
9-10	46	65
11-12	50	70
13	54	80
14 and up**	60	90

34. Game Balls

JP Sports will provide 4 game balls to start each game, but will not be replenished throughout the game. Teams are expected to retrieve foul balls and home run balls. Teams should always have tournament quality used baseball on hand to toss in if the original game balls are lost or not returned to the umpires.

35. Metal Spikes and Footwear

Metal spikes are not allowed for 8U-12U. Metal spikes are NOT allowed for Synthetic Turf Events, nor are they allowed on portable pitching mounds for any ages. Any athlete that may play on a synthetic turf field and/or be called to pitch on a portable pitching mound must be prepared with non-metal footwear.

JP Sports will use portable mounds for almost every tournament. Acceptable footwear in these cases includes turf shoes, plastic cleats, molded cleats, or gym shoes.

36. 8U and 9U Only

8U Division: There will be no leadoffs and stealing will be permitted only after the ball crosses the plate. There will be no dropped third strike, and a runner may only score from third base on a) a batted ball, b) a walk, c) a hit by pitch, or d) if played upon by the pitcher or catcher. No balks will be called.

9U Division: Leadoffs are permitted. There will be no dropped third strike. Umpires shall issue one balk warning per pitcher per inning before enforcing any balk penalty. No infield fly at 8u and 9u.

37. Extra Inning and Tie Games

Pool/Preliminary Play: If a game is tied after the time limit expires or when the regulation innings have been completed the game will be scored as a tie.

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Bracket Play: If a game is tied after the time limit expires or when the regulation innings have been completed the following JP Sports tiebreaker will be used. The batter previous to the batter due up will be placed at 2<sup>nd</sup> base with one out. (Example: The #5 batter in the

lineup is due up, the #4 batter will be placed at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. Regardless if the #4 batter scored the previous inning or was not the last out). The game will follow this rule until a winner can be determined. Every batter will start with a 2-1 count.

38. Intentional Walks

There will be no pitches thrown to intentionally walk a batter. Notify the umpire, and the batter will be awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base.

39. Courtesy Runners

Courtesy runners are optional any time for pitcher and catcher with less than two outs. The courtesy runner shall be a player not currently in the lineup. If hitting everyone the last batted out is used. The pitcher or catcher for this rule is the pitcher or catcher of record (previous inning). If the situation arises in the first inning and no outs have been recorded, the last batter in the lineup can run. No out given if a runner on base comes up to hit.

40. Ejections

If a coach is ejected from a game, he/she will be suspended for the remainder of the game. If a player is ejected during the game, he/she will be suspended for the remainder of the game. Note: If a team is batting their entire lineup and/or no substitutes are available, the name of the ejected player will remain in the batting order and count as an out when the batting order reaches that player.

Any fan that is ejected must leave the park immediately for the remainder of the day and is subject to being banned for the tournament. Head Coaches are ultimately responsible for their fans and can face ejections for fan behavior.

Suspensions: If a coach/player is ejected, they're subject to a suspension. Suspensions will be determined by the Tournament Director and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The Tournament Directors ruling is final.

41. Game Protest

Formal protests are not allowed. However, Head Coaches are allowed to request a rules interpretation by the Tournament and/or Site Director. The procedure for getting a rules interpretation is to ask for time, prior to another pitch being thrown and informing the Home Plate Umpire that you would like a rules interpretation by the Tournament and/or Site Director. The Tournament and/or Site Director will come to the field to discuss the ruling. The game clock will NOT be stopped for rule interpretation. Head Coaches may NOT request to stop play for judgment calls. Our primary goal is to make sure that rules are enforced properly, if you have a question please ask a JP Sports Director.

42. Game Called Due to Weather or Field Conditions

A 6-inning game is considered completed after 3 innings or 2.5 if the home team is leading. A 7-inning game is considered completed after 4 innings or 3.5 if the home team is leading.

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If the game is not official as described above, the Tournament Director will either (a) suspend the game and arrange to have it resumed where it left off, or (b) cancel the game

such that it does not count toward tournament standings. Should a Championship game be interrupted by weather, darkness, or unplayable field conditions, and is not an official game per the above Rule, then the Championship team will be determined by the score at the end of the last full completed inning. If the score was tied at the end of the last completed inning or if the first inning of the game is not completed, the higher seed shall be named Champion.

43. Game Schedules

JP Sports will release the tournament schedule on Tuesday the week of the tournament by 8pm. It is the responsibility of the Head Coach to double check their teams schedule throughout the week for any changes.

44. Respect the Game and Sportsmanship

JP Sports management team emphasizes that our tournaments are about providing high quality tournaments in a positive environment. All adults (coaches, parents and officials) should conduct themselves with this fundamental notion in mind. All teams (coaches, players and fans) should be respectful of the game and their opponents. Unsportsmanlike conduct by anyone will be terms for removal from the tournament facility.

45. Refund Policy

a. Tournament Withdrawal Policy

- i. JP Sports will provide a full refund minus a \$150 withdrawal fee for any team withdrawing from tournaments up to 14 days prior to the scheduled start of the event.
- ii. Tournament withdrawals within two weeks from the start date forfeit all tournament fees.
- iii. No withdrawal refunds are eligible for JP Sports Turf Tournaments. These tournaments sell out quickly and space is limited.
- iv. No withdrawal refunds once a tournament is sold out.

b. Rainout Policy

- i. 0 games started = Full refund minus \$100 administrative fee.
- ii. 1 game started = 50% refund of tournament entry and 50% refund of prepaid gate (if tournament has prepaid gate). No refund of spectator admission if taken at the park.
- iii. 2 games started = No refunds.
- iv. JP Sports will do their best to issue refunds within 90 days. It may take up to 180 days in some instances.
- v. Teams may transfer to another tournament with no money lost. In the event the tournament they are transferring to costs more the team will be responsible for the extra cost.

c. Act of God/ Illness Policy

- i. Any Act of God or Illness Cancellation will result in a \$100 administrative fee kept by JP Sports. This goes for any tournaments canceled due to local or national government rules and guidelines.
- ii. Teams can transfer to another event during the calendar year.

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- iii. The fee is subject to change without notice.
- d. Lack of participation by teams will result in a full credit in future JP Sports tournaments.

46. Hotels

Travel teams that require overnight stays for JP Sports tournaments are required to use one of our approved 2024 Hotel Partners, JP Sports has a great working relationship with each of our listed hotel partners and each is blocking rooms at competitive rates. JP Sports travel teams who choose not to work through this process and utilize JP Sports Hotel Partners will be assessed an additional \$250 fee upon tournament check-in.

47. Weather Information

A weather hotline number is 309-429-3331. We highly encourage all teams to have their parents and fans follow JP Sports on Facebook for weather updates will be available there, as well as signing up for notifications via JP Sports App.

48. Indoor Specific Rules

- A. Time Limits for tournaments being played 100% indoors is subject to change based on field availability. The time limit will be assigned/released with the tournament schedule – in an email. Games may utilize a drop dead time limit.
- B. Batted balls off the ceiling will result in a dead ball strike. However, if the ball carries over the outfield fence in the air, then it will be ruled a home run.

**JP Sports MVP Program, All-Star Weekend and All-American Team**

**MVP Program:** Coaches will receive, at check-in, MVP tags for their games. Following each game, the Head Coach (or his designee Assistant Coach) shall award an MVP tag to the MVP of the game from the opposing team. It would be best if teams would gather around home plate after each game for an informal MVP ceremony. This gesture will allow coaches to model good sportsmanship to their young athletes, and the round of applause from the spectators will be a special moment for the players involved. If a coach has extra MVP tags upon the elimination of their team from the tournament, the Head Coach shall award the additional MVP tags to players on their teams. Players that receive MVP tags are encouraged to go to the [www.playjpsports.com/MVP](http://www.playjpsports.com/MVP) to register for the JP Sports All-Star Weekend.

**Nominations:** Coaches can nominate their best players for postseason All-Star Weekend. The nomination process is quick and easy online at [www.playjpsports.com/MVP](http://www.playjpsports.com/MVP). Nominees will receive an email with an invitation to JP Sports All-Star Weekend. The All-Star weekend is expected to fill quickly and space is limited, it's recommended that coaches nominate their best players immediately, and interested nominees should accept and enroll immediately.

**All-Star Weekend:** The 2024 All-Star weekend will take place July 26-28, 2024 in Arlington Heights and Wheeling, IL, August 2-4, 2024 in the Quad Cities, and August 9-11 in Peoria, IL. This event is a celebration of the hard work and dedication of these young athletes. The All-Star weekend will have an Opening Ceremony, Skills Competition, Special Guest will be in

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attendance, and 3 Game Guarantee Tournament. The tournament will be played at the best facilities in the Chicagoland Area, Heritage Park (Wheeling, IL) which features 100% synthetic turf field and Melas Park (Arlington Heights, IL), which features synthetic turf infields and beautiful

grass outfields for the Chicagoland event, TBK Complex (Bettendorf, IA) which feature 100% turf fields, and the Louisville Slugger Sports Complex (Peoria, IL) which feature 100% turf fields. Please come take part in this great weekend! We have so many great things in store for this weekend! Players must attend All-Star Weekend to be eligible for the JP Sports All-American Team.

**JP Sports All-American Team:** The 2024 All-American team will be made up of players from the 2024 All-Star Weekend. JP Sports will be forming All-American teams for the Baseball Fest in Panama City Beach, Florida, which is played at the Panama City Beach Sports Complex. The tournament will be played December 28-January 1, 2024/25. However, JP Sports All-American Team check-in will start on December 27<sup>th</sup> in Florida. JP Sports has some of the best coaches in baseball on board to coach our teams, High School Coaches, NCAA All-Americans and many other highly qualified coaches. The JP Sports All-American Team will be a MUST participate event!

**Questions:** Please contact John, [john@playjpsports.com](mailto:john@playjpsports.com), Heath, [heath@playjpsports.com](mailto:heath@playjpsports.com), or Nick, [nick@playjpsports.com](mailto:nick@playjpsports.com) with questions regarding the MVP Program, Nominations, All-Star Weekend or JP Sports All-American Team.

**JP Sports – Management Team**

John Pieritz – Founder and President  
Heath Smith – Director of Operations  
Nick Roessler – Tournament Director  
Justin Roessler – Director of Merchandise

**JP Sports – Social Media**

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Follow us on Twitter - @Playjpsports  
Tag us on Instagram



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