



2024

Baseball/Softball

SFBI RULEBOOK

Important Numbers / Contacts

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EMERGENCY DIAL 911

GENERAL RULES FOR SFBI

1. Game Time and Arrival:
 - Both teams are required to be at the field no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of the game (Teeball no later than 20 minutes prior). Coaches are to share the infield either taking turns or using their half of the field.
 - Home team is responsible for set-up and tear-down of the bases and pitcher's mound and should be completed before the teams arrive. The Home team is responsible to lock-up the box after the game.
 - Home team takes the first base dugout.
 - All umpires are REQUIRED to be at fields 15 minutes before game time, they are to be ready and dressed to meet with managers at home plate 5 minutes before game time.
2. Game Lengths:
 - Games will last 6 innings –OR– the inning that starts after the game time has passed 1 hr and 40 min will automatically become the last inning.
 - Example: at 1hr and 39 min a new inning begins, which means two more innings will be played – In another game a new inning begins at 1hr and 42min – this will be the last inning.
 - Last inning rules automatically come into effect once it has been determined the last inning is played.
 - *7-9 Baseball and 7-9 Softball may have slightly different interleague rules.
 - * Teeball games are always 3 innings.
 - The game time will start after the first pitch has been thrown, the umpire is to record the time and tell both coaches. When determining the start time of a new inning, the time of the last recorded out in the BOTTOM of the inning is used as the official time. This is when the umpire will determine which inning is the final inning.
3. Last Inning Rule:
 - If the **visiting team** is **WINNING**, they will be limited to the capped number of runs the division allows or 3 outs, whichever occurs first. The home team will then bat to win the game and score as many runs needed to win the game.
 - If the **home team** is **WINNING** by 4 or more runs, the visiting team will be allowed to score only as many runs to tie the game plus 1 run or 3 outs. If the visiting team has tied or taken the lead, the home team then bats to win the game.
 - If the game is **TIED**, both teams are limited to the capped number of runs during their at bats, with the home team allowed to score plus one in order to win the game. If the game ends up tied, no extra innings will be played, except for playoff games.
4. Bats – In baseball divisions, USA or USSSA bats are both acceptable for all divisions. In 7-9 baseball BBCOR is also acceptable. In softball divisions, bats must be 2 ¼ inch softball bats and not baseball bats.
5. Helmets, Fielding Facemasks, and cleats:
 - For all Baseball divisions: batters and runners, must always wear a helmet. Facemasks or cheek guards are required for all divisions.
 - For all Softball divisions: batters and runners, must always wear a helmet with a facemask. Additionally, fielding facemasks must be used by all infielders.

- Rubber cleats are required for all divisions, except 7-9 baseball, rubber cleats are encouraged.
6. Sliding:
- Players must slide on all close plays beginning in 3rd grade. Sliding should be done when necessary to avoid collisions during a play. Only feet first sliding is allowed on advancing bases.
 - If the player DID NOT SLIDE, resulting in either a collision or the threat of a collision, the player will be called out for violating the rule. This is a JUDGEMENT CALL by the umpire.
7. Weather:
- If SFBI cancels a game due to weather, it will be announced by 5 PM on weekday games, and 9 AM on Saturday mornings. If the game is not cancelled by SFBI, you are expected to be at the fields to play. If the fields are not suitable for play, due to weather, the umpire will confer with the 2 managers and after agreement, will decide to cancel or play the game.
 - The home team has the discretion to start the game in case of questionable weather. After the start of the game, only the umpire can stop the game due to lightning, darkness, snow or severe weather.
 - If a game is called because of darkness, the score will revert to the last complete inning played. The umpire will have the sole discretion to stop a game after it has started.
 - Complete games are those that reach 4 innings. Games called shorter than 4 innings are suspended games and may or may not be rescheduled.
 - **When lightning is seen OR thunder is heard, all games are IMMEDIATELY suspended.** All managers, coaches, players, fans and umpires are to take shelter in a building or vehicle. **Under no circumstances are the players to be outside of vehicles.** Do not take shelter in unsafe areas including picnic shelters, canopies or under trees. All activities shall be suspended for 30 minutes after the last observed lightning or thunder is heard. If the lightning lasts 30 minutes, the game is cancelled.
 - **If a tornado siren sounds, all games are to be suspended IMMEDIATELY.** Leave equipment and find shelter in the nearest substantial building. Games will be suspended until the “all clear” has been issued by the National Weather Service.
8. If a player is injured and cannot continue with the game or practice a SFBI Incident report must be completed by the coach and given to the **Safety Officer or President** within 48 hours of the incident.
9. Score Reporting: For all leagues above Tee-Ball, scores will be reported and recorded by the division director. The winning team’s head coach is required to report the scores within 24 hours of the completion of the game so that standing can be kept up to date.

DEFINITIONS

Infield Fly Rule – The infield fly rule applies only when there is fewer than two outs and there is a force play at third (runners on first and second, or bases loaded). If a fair, fly ball is hit that in the umpire’s judgment could be caught by an infielder with **ordinary** effort, the batter is out regardless if the ball is caught or not. The runners may run at their own risk, but if the ball is caught, they must tag up.

Intentional Walk – An intentional walk is when the pitcher deliberately pitches the ball away from the batter in order to issue a walk. If in the umpire’s judgment a pitcher is deliberately trying to walk a batter, a warning will be issued for an “unintentional-intentional” walk. If the pitcher continues this action, the umpire will award two bases for the first occurrence with all runners on base moving up the same amount. After the first incident, a home run will be awarded each time the same team attempts an intentional walk in the same game. This call is **NOT SUBJECT** to Discussion.

Hit by Pitch – Batters must attempt to get out of the way of a pitched ball. Batters that are hit by a called strike are not considered hit by a pitch. If a batter is swinging at a pitched ball and is hit by a pitch, it is not considered “Hit by pitch.” Beginning in 3-4 baseball and in 7-9 softball, a pitched ball that hits the ground then hits the batter is considered hit by pitch, but only if an attempt is made to get out of the way.

Home Plate – Home plate is in fair territory. Balls that hit the plate and bounce into fair territory are fair balls. A ball is fair or foul based on where it comes to rest, not where it initially hits the ground, unless it is beyond the first or third bases or when touched.

Balk Rule – The pitcher must come set by coming to a complete stop before he throws a pitch home. Once the pitcher is set he can't move his shoulders or move around unless they step off the back of the rubber. If the pitcher stops a balk will be called. As a result, any men on base are awarded the next base, and the pitch (if it was thrown in the first place) is waved off for a dead ball.

Interference/Obstruction – It is the runner’s responsibility to avoid defensive players when involved in a play. Defensive players that are not involved in a play must not obstruct the base runner. There is no blocking of a base.

Dropped third strike – A dropped third strike occurs when the catcher fails to cleanly catch a pitch for the third strike. A pitch is considered uncaught if the ball touches the ground, or the ball is dropped after being caught. A dropped third strike does not exist if first base is occupied with less than two outs. If there are two outs, it does not matter if first base is occupied or not. The batter becomes a runner and must be tagged or thrown out at first base. If the play is not made, the runner is safe at first and becomes an active base runner.

PENALTIES:

- The penalty for the illegal use of a pitcher, either age or inning count rule is an automatic forfeiture of any game(s) the player was involved in.
- Interference by the runner in the umpire's judgment will result in the runner being called out.
- Interference by the defensive player in the umpire's judgment was intentional will result in the runner being awarded as many base(s) as the umpire deems necessary.
- Any manager or coach ejected from a game will result in an automatic one game suspension and forfeiture of the game. See Umpires section for a more detailed description of this rule.
- Batting out of turn will not result in a penalty. But a team will not gain an advantage from batting out of order. Cordial discussions over this issue will take place between managers and umpire if it should arise.
 - For 7-9 Baseball ONLY – if a player bats out of order – it is recorded as an out. The out will stand and play will continue. If batting out of order results in a hit, walk or hit by pitch, the play will not count and the order will be reset. This must be caught in the inning it occurs in and cannot be more than 1 batter past the out of order, otherwise the lineup continues.
- Leaving a base early when stealing will result in an out after one warning per team per game.
- **Throwing a bat while batting will result in one warning per game for both teams.** After the warning, any bat thrown will result in an out. For clarification, bat throwing is the intentional or accidental throwing of a bat by the batter which, in the judgment of the umpire, constitutes a dangerous situation, or in the judgment of the Umpire the bat hit a player, Umpire or fence.

UMPIRES

- Umpires should arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled game time. You should have your meeting at the plate 5 minutes before game time. If an umpire is not present, both teams should ask for volunteers from the bystanders or coaches. Substitute umpires will be paid. Please report the name and phone number to the league director. The director will pass the information on to the Umpire Director.
- Questions regarding a clarification of the rules must involve the other manager. A manager should ask the umpire for a time out and call the other manager over for a consultation. All conversations with the umpire will be in a normal tone of voice and controlled emotion.
- If a manager believes the umpire has misinterpreted a rule or otherwise erred in the application of a rule, the manager can confer with the umpire to clarify the ruling. If the ruling is to be overturned, the opposing manager is to be informed. Judgment calls are not to be changed. Sometimes it is best to let the umpire's decision stand during the game, and then talk to the umpire after the game.
- You are NOT to question balls and strikes, nor make comments regarding these calls. Please share this philosophy with your fans as well. It is the managers responsibility to control the conduct of the players, parents and fans. The umpire has the right to call a forfeit after a warning (first step) to the manager for unruly behavior.
- DO NOT intimidate, disrespect or argue with an umpire. No verbal abuse or physical contact in any form will be tolerated. Umpires are instructed to eject all violators of this rule, whether it is a manager, coach, player or spectator. Fans (parents and friends) that are seated behind the backstop must refrain from calling balls and strikes and from trying to persuade the umpire. Umpires may ask the manager to clear the area behind the backstop if there is a problem.
- If an umpire ejects a manager or coach for any reason, that manager or coach's team will forfeit the game. A manager will be given one warning prior to ejection. It is the manager's responsibility to control the behavior of all coaches, players and themselves. A coach will be anyone who assists in the dugout or on the field regardless if in uniform or not. In addition to the team, TEAMS' spectators will be given one warning if their behavior is unacceptable to the umpire. If a second warning is given, the team associated with the spectator(s) will forfeit the game.
- If ejected, a manager or coach will be suspended for the next game. If a second violation occurs, the manager will be suspended for the remainder of the season. The league director will investigate all complaints involving managers, coaches and umpires. If the investigation finds any of the rules were violated, the manager or coach could be suspended for the remainder of the season, depending on the severity of the incident.
- The umpire has the right to speed up the game if he feels a manager is deliberately slowing down a game.

1st – 3rd Grade Softball

Base length: 60 Feet

Home to 2nd Base: 84 Feet 10 Inches

Pitching Mound: 30 Feet

Ball Size: 11 inches

Game Length: 6 Innings OR the inning starting after 1hr 40min will automatically be the last inning.

Official Game: Maximum 4 runs per inning. Scores will be recorded at completion of game and standings will be kept if more than 2 teams. See league rules for more information.

Bat Restrictions: 2 ¼ barrel max, no longer than 33 inches. See League rules for more information.

Safety:

- Cages are required on batting helmets.
- All infielders must wear protective face masks or helmets.
- Helmets required at all times while batting and running bases. See league rules for more information.
- No on deck hitters allowed. Player comes from dugout to plate. NO Batting warm-ups allowed (including outside the fence area) once game starts, all practice swings will occur when player approaches plate.
- Only managers, coaches and players are allowed in the dugout.
- No head-first sliding.

GENERAL RULES:

- An inning is 3 outs or 4 runs. And last inning rules are in effect.
- All players in attendance shall bat throughout the game.
- Catchers on base with 2 outs are eligible to have a pinch runner in order to get ready for the next inning. The runner shall be the player that made the last recorded out.
- Teams must have at least 7 players to start a game and up to 10 will play defense, with 4 outfielders and 4 infielders, plus pitcher and catcher. Teams may borrow a player from the other team to play OF only. The player borrowed will be the last recorded out from the previous inning.
- Coaches will make an effort to keep the game moving by having catchers ready quickly and limiting warm-up pitches to 5-7 (Umpire watches warm-up pitches as well), and ensuring batters are on-deck.
- To speed up the game, please have an offensive coach behind the catcher to retrieve pitched balls.
- As a standard, the umpires will be standing behind the plate / catcher in this division, like our older divisions.

PITCHING RULES:

Coach Pitch:

- Coaches will pitch innings 2, 4, & 6.
- When Coach pitches the pitcher will play on either side but must be placed behind the coach.
- When Coach pitches, batter will get 5 pitches with only swinging strikes called by umpire, there will be no called strikes. Batter will be called out after 3 strikes or 5 pitches (They do not get to swing 5 times). A foul ball on last pitch will result in another pitch. An unhittable pitch on the last pitch also will give one bonus pitch. An unhittable pitch should be obviously outside of the strike zone, but is up to the umpires discretion. There is no hit by pitch called.
- The coach must pitch underhand from the mound.
- The coach chosen to pitch must be signed up as a volunteer in the SFBI system.

Kid Pitch:

- Players will pitch Innings 1, 3, & 5.

- There will be no walks. After 4 balls are called, the coach comes in to finish the count, throwing the number of remaining strikes. Example, kid throws 1 strike, coach would have 2 pitches to finish count. Kid throws 0 strikes, coach would have 3 pitches to finish count.
- Hit by pitch is called when it hits a batter in the air, NOT on the ground or on a bounce. However, the batter must attempt to get out of the way for this and will be called at the umpire's discretion.
- If a kid pitcher hits 2 batters in her inning, she must be relieved of pitching for the remainder of that game.
- Relief pitchers will be given a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 7 pitches for warm-up. Pitchers will get 7 warm-up throws to start each inning.
- Players can pitch 2 innings per game. However, they do not have to be consecutive innings.
- Either windmill style or underhand style of pitching is acceptable in this division.
- FOR SPRING ONLY: Every player is required to pitch 1 inning within the first 4 games. Pitchers can pitch only one inning per game in the spring season. If a player is determined not to pitch, even with encouragement, exception can be made.
- As a coaching opportunity, encourage one foot to start on the pitching rubber and remaining in contact with the rubber when the ball is released. No leaping.

BASE RUNNING RULES:

- No leadoffs, no stealing bases, no headfirst sliding. No leaving early allowed – One warning per player. The second warning result in being called out.
- Secondary leads allowed after ball crosses plate, but runners cannot advance until the ball is hit in play (even on overthrows or throw downs from the catcher).
- Runners must attempt to slide to avoid contact (except 1st base) – if the runner does not slide, use this as a coaching moment only.
- On a ball hit to the outfield (grass), continue taking bases until the outfielder gets control of the ball, all runners will be available to advance to the base they are headed to at that point.
- When a hit ball remains in the infield, runners may only attempt to advance one base.
- Infielders cannot block base paths – if the fielder blocks the path, use this as a coaching moment only.

FIELDING and HITTING RULES:

- There will be no advancements on overthrows. We want our defense to learn to try to make a play.
- Maximum of four outfielders are used in the game. All Outfielders MUST start play on the grass.
- All players must play two innings in the infield, before the end of the 4th inning.
- Two coaches are allowed in the field for defensive coaching, along with one at the mound during kid pitch.
- There is no minimum distance a hit ball must land from home plate to be fair. (T-ball and baseball play with a semi-circle at home plate that creates a minimum distance the ball must be hit to be considered fair, 1-3 softball does not.)
- Please teach your fielders to cover their bases appropriately. Standing with 2 feet on the bag is a safety concern. Use this as a coaching moment only.
- Please remind your players to play in front of or behind the baselines, not on the baselines. This is for safety. Continue to remind them during the games. This is a coaching opportunity, not a penalty.

SOFTBALL RULES ALLOWED:

- Bunting

SOFTBALL RULES NOT USED:

- Infield Fly, Dropped 3rd strike, Intentional walk, Balks

CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

The South Farmington Little League has adopted the following policies for the safety and well-being of its members. These policies primarily protect youth members; however, they also serve to protect adult leaders. Parents and youth using these safeguards outside the Little League program further increase the safety of their youth. Little League leaders in positions of youth leadership and supervision outside the Little League programs will find these policies help protect youth in those situations as well.

One-on-one contact between adults and youth members is prohibited. In situations requiring a personal conference, discipline or corrective behaviors, the meeting is to be conducted with the knowledge and in view of other adults and/or youth.

Discipline must be constructive. Discipline used in SFLL must be constructive and reflect the Little League values. Corporal punishment is never permitted. Disciplinary activities involving isolation, humiliation, or ridicule are prohibited. Examples of positive discipline include verbal praise and high fives.

Two-deep leadership and no one-on-one contact between adults and youth members includes digital communication. Leaders may not have one-on-one private online communications or engage one-on-one in other digital activities (games, social media, etc.) with youth members. Leaders should copy a parent and another leader in digital and online communication, ensuring no one-on-one contact exists in text, social media, or other forms of online or digital communication.

The buddy system should be used at all times. The buddy system is a safety measure for all Little League activities. Buddies should know and be comfortable with each other. Self-selection with no more than two years age or significant differences in maturity should be strongly encouraged. When necessary, a buddy team may consist of three players. No youth should be forced into or made to feel uncomfortable by a buddy assignment

Privacy of youth is respected. Adult leaders and youth must respect each other's privacy, especially in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers at Tournaments. Adults may enter youth changing or showering areas only to the extent that health and safety requires. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.

No secret organizations. South Farmington Little League does not recognize any secret organizations as part of its program. All aspects of our programs are open to observation by parents and leaders.

No hazing. Hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any Scouting activity.

No bullying. Verbal, physical, and cyberbullying are prohibited in South Farmington Little League. Incidents requiring an immediate report to the South Farmington Executive Board. The following must be reported to the council Scout executive for action immediately:

- Any threat or use of a weapon
- Any negative behavior associated with race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability
- Any abuse of a child that meets state reporting mandates for bullying or harassment
- Any mention or threats of suicide