

Bethesda Chevy Chase Baseball, Inc.

Softball
Rules and Regulations

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1. General and Administrative

A. General Objectives and Version

Summary

This revision of the rules, prepared for the Fall 2019 season, features significant changes from those of prior seasons. The primary objectives of these changes are to:

- I. Strengthen the development of players' foundational skills, through the BCC Division structure, to better prepare the players for continued participation in the sport (high school and potentially beyond)
- II. Standardize/Formalize/Document practices that are commonly agreed to during pre-game coaches' meetings.
- III. Improve parity with BCC baseball rules, while better aligning the BCC softball rules with those of other similar softball leagues.

B. Guiding Rule Book: NFHS

The guiding rule book for all matters not specifically referenced in this document shall be the NFHS rules. A version of this rule book is available on the BCC website. Consider the BCC Girls Softball Rules (this document) to describe exceptions to the NFHS rules to promote game efficiency, player safety, and development of younger players. When there is a conflict, the BCC Girls Softball Rules will guide.

C. Age/Grade Division Explanation

Rookie Division: Grades 2 & 3

Minors Division: Grades 4 & 5

Majors Divisions: Grades 6 & up

D. Official Players

All players must be officially registered and assigned by the League management. No one who is not registered, and whose name does not appear on the official league roster,

may ever play in a league game or practice with a team. Use of a non-registered/non-officially rostered player in a game will cause a forfeit and suspension of the manager. Reach out to the league office if you need additional players.

E. Minimum Number of Players

Each team must have at least eight official players and if the team cannot field such eight players within ten minutes after the scheduled start of the game it will be considered a forfeit. (If agreeable to both teams, a forfeited game may be played on an unofficial basis to allow for some practice.) If at any time during a game, a team can only field seven (7) players for any reason (e.g., injuries, players having to leave, ejection of player) the game shall be deemed a forfeit by that team.

F. Official Game/Time Limits

All regular season games will be six (6) innings or a 2-hour time limit rule; no new inning shall start after 1 hour 45-minutes past the scheduled starting time of the game. Games will be considered official after the 1 hour 45-minute time limit regardless of the number of innings played.

If the game is tied after 6 innings and the time limit rule has NOT been reached, the game will be decided using the "one-pitch" format. The "one pitch" format means the pitcher will throw one pitch to each batter. A strike is an out, a ball is a walk; and a fair ball is whatever the batter gets.

Games will be considered official after five innings (four and one-half innings if the home team is ahead) if rain, darkness or other causes place the patron or players in peril. Games that are not considered regulation, shall be resumed at the exact point where they were stopped with the lineups and pitching remaining the same. All

players that were not present originally must be added to the bottom of the lineup.

G. Official Schedule

The League expects that all managers, players, and parents should be entitled to rely upon the official schedule of games. As a result, managers are expected to have their teams prepared to play at the time/date/place indicated on the official League schedule. Therefore, it is generally NOT appropriate for a manager to rearrange games in derogation of the official League schedule. Where games must be postponed due to adverse weather, managers are expected to make best efforts to arrange suitable time/date/place to make the game up.

2. Pre-game:

A. Line-Ups and Ground Rules

Prior to the game, the managers shall: (i) exchange written batting orders, complete with player numbers and (ii) agree to necessary and reasonable ground rules not inconsistent with these rules, including agreement as to areas that are "out of play". The ability to set ground rules does not permit agreement to waive or modify these "rules and regulations". Managers shall be responsible for keeping spectators, players, equipment and other objects behind protective fencing or the backstop and out of areas that are deemed to be "in play" in order to prevent interference with players, thrown balls, etc.

B. Scoring the Game

Each team manager will be responsible for scoring the game and maintaining appropriate scorebook records.

C. Team Representative

Prior to every game, each team must identify an adult (likely a parent) as that team's "Team Representative" for that game. The Team Representative will be responsible for

enforcing player safety rules, with an emphasis on compliance with the Bat Safety Rule. The Team Representative shall be involved in the pregame meeting at home plate with the coaches and umpires (in leagues that use umpires). Unless no other adult is available, the head coach and assistant coach should not be deemed the Team Representative. It is strongly advised by BCC Baseball that the Team Representative be someone other than one of the base coaches, due to their duties as Coach.

D. Field Setup

Managers shall ensure that the basepaths are 60 feet in length. The pitching distance differentiates by league.

Rookie Softball 2/3 – 35 feet from rubber to front of home plate.

Minor Softball 4/5 – 35 feet from rubber to front of home plate.

Major Softball 6/7 – 43 feet from rubber to front of home plate.

Bases, provided by the league, shall be placed by the home team. For fields lacking a permanent pitcher's plate at the appropriate distance, the pitcher's plate shall be spiked into the ground if possible (i.e., if the field surface is soft enough to receive the spike).

Whenever possible, a 'safety base' should be used adjacent to first base. This base, provided by the away team, should be placed outside of the baseline so it is fully in foul territory. Bases need not be spiked into place.

E. Run Limit

To allow for full games to be played and to minimize lopsided uncompetitive games, the team at bat will be limited to scoring 5 runs

each inning. There are two exceptions to this rule: (i.) “Finish-the-Play” exception: A team may “finish a play,” even if a 6th, 7th, or 8th run scores. For example, if a team, after scoring 4 runs, has a runner on 2nd and 3rd base, both runners may attempt to score on a base hit. If successful, both runs would count, resulting in 6 runs in that inning. Coaches are asked to apply this exception conservatively and only send runners home in obvious run-scoring situations (i.e., do not advance runners out of a lack of meaningful consequence of an out.) And (ii.) “Catching up” exception: However, a team that begins any at-bat behind by more than 5 runs will be allowed to score as many runs as necessary in order to tie the score only, or go ahead, under the “Finish-the-Play” exception. This five-run rule is in effect for the entire game, including the sixth inning. If the game is tied after six innings, extra innings will be played, time permitting.

3. During the Game (Player Requirements):

In BCC Rec Softball, there are certain requirements for offense and defense that need to be met for fair play. Managers are strongly encouraged to allow players to play more than one infield position over the course of a game or throughout the season.

A. Batting Order

All players must bat in the predetermined order of the line-up which consists of every player in attendance.

B. Offense

Each team shall use a “continuous” batting order rather than a nine-player batting order. As a result, each player is in the offense at all times, batting in accordance with the manager's written pre-game line-up consisting of every player available for the game. A player who must miss a time at bat because of injury or illness sustained once

the game begins is passed over to the next scheduled batter. A player arriving after the start of a game shall be inserted at the end of the batting order.

C. Defense

In the *Rookie* and *Minors Divisions*: There are 10 players on the field each inning – 4 outfielders, first base, second base, third base, shortstop, catcher, and pitcher. In coach pitch, there will be a pitcher's helper position. During a six-inning game, each player in the *Rookie* and *Minor Divisions* must play at least two (2) defensive innings in an infield position **AND** at least four (4) defensive innings during the game. Outfielders must be positioned for every pitch no closer than 10 feet behind the baselines. Outfielders are allowed to enter the infield to back-up plays or to return the ball to the infield (e.g., “run the ball in”) in the normal course of play but should not cover bases or otherwise play as extra infielders.

In the *Majors Division*: There are 9 players on the field each inning – 3 outfielders, first base, second base, third base, shortstop, catcher and pitcher. Each player must play at least three (3) defensive innings in the field (either infield OR outfield positions) during the first five (5) innings of each game. Defensively, a player may be removed from the game and be reinserted any number of times thereafter for another defensive player in order to accumulate his/her three innings in the field (all players retain their original spot in the batting order at all times).

D. Time between Innings

Teams are encouraged to take no longer than 2 minutes between half-innings, measured from the final out of the preceding half-inning to the first live pitch of the current half-inning. The umpire may enforce this timing with a warning (first infraction), abbreviated warm-up time

(second infraction), or by issuing a ball (if fielding team is causing delay) or strike (if batting team is causing delay on the first batter. To expedite the time between innings, coaches are highly encouraged to:

I. Create and post line-ups in advance.

II. Have catchers start putting catcher's equipment on when there are two outs or when the next run will end an inning (per Run Limit rule). Catchers should be replaced as baserunners under these scenarios.

III. Encourage players to run to and from fielding positions.

4. During the Game (Gameplay)

A. Play Termination

Rookie and Minors Divisions: The play has ended (dead ball) when the ball is returned to the infield (within baselines). If runners are not advancing, the ball does not need to be controlled by an infielder. If a runner/runners are advancing between bases when the ball returns to the infield, the runner(s) may continue in an attempt to reach the next base or return to their prior base, but may not advance further (even if the ball is not controlled).

Majors Division: The play has ended when the ball is returned to the infield (within baselines) and controlled by a defensive player. Note that any player in possession of the ball, and not merely the pitcher in the pitcher's circle will end the play if runners are not attempting to advance. If a runner/runners are attempting to advance before possession of the ball in the infield is secured, the runner(s) may continue in an attempt to reach the next base or return to their prior base.

B. Stealing

There is no stealing in the Rookie Division.

Stealing is only permitted in the Majors and Minors Divisions.

Minors Division can only steal when a player is pitching.

C. Leading

This only applies to Minors and Majors.

Minors Division: A base must stay in contact with the base until the pitched ball reaches the plate. Thereafter, the runner may steal second or third base on any ball that gets past the catcher (wild pitch or passed ball). Runners may not advance more than one base at a time (no advancing on over-throws) and may not steal home.

Majors Division: A base runner must stay in contact with the base until the pitched ball reaches the plate. Thereafter the runner may steal any base (including home)). Runners successfully stealing second or third base may continue (if next base is unoccupied) upon an overthrow, however if no throwing attempt is made, the runner may not advance a second base.

If a runner leaves the base early (i.e., before the ball reaches the plate), the following rules apply:

I. When a base runner leaves the base before the pitched ball has reached home plate and the batter does not hit the ball, the runner is permitted to continue. If a play is made on the runner and the runner is tagged out, the out stands. If said runner safely reaches the base to which the runner is advancing, that runner must be returned to the base occupied before the pitch was made, and no out results.

II. When a base runner leaves the base before the pitched ball has reached the batter and the batter hits the ball, but it is not caught on the fly by a fielder, the ball is dead (no pitch) and the base runner or runners must return to their original bases. The batter shall return to the plate with the count as it was prior to the previous pitch.

III. When a base runner leaves the base before the pitched ball has reached the batter and the batter hits the ball, whether in fair or foul territory, the defensive team may catch the ball in the air before it hits the ground, and the batter is out. The base runner must return to the original base at his/her own risk and may be doubled up for an out if he/she has not yet returned to the base. If the defensive team attempts to pick off the runner after the catch is made for the out, once the runner returns to the original base safely, the runner may "tag up" and advance to the next base at his/her risk just as is the case with any ball caught for an out.

D. Overthrows

Rookie Division: Overthrows at any base are treated as dead balls with runners not permitted to advance. The intent of this rule is to encourage fielders to complete the play without penalty.

Minors Division: Overthrows resulting in the ball going out of play will cause the runner(s) to be awarded one base in addition to the base on which they were standing, or to which they were already running. If the ball does not go out of play, runners may advance at their own risk, but may only advance one additional base (e.g., a runner may advance only to second base on an overthrow at first base).

Majors Division: Overthrows resulting in the ball going out of play will cause the runner(s) to be awarded one base in addition to the base on which they were standing, or

to which they were already running. If the ball does not go out of play, runners may advance at their own risk, and there is no limit on the number of bases they may advance. This rule applies to all baserunning situations, including throws to second to stop an attempted stolen base.

Runners may advance on an overthrow by the catcher on a ball thrown back to the pitcher.

E. Infield Fly Rule

Rookies and Minors Divisions: The Infield Fly rule will not be applied.

Major Division: The Infield Fly rule, as described in Section 30 of the NFHS rules, is in use.

F. Bunting

Rookies and Minors Divisions: Bunting is not allowed. Attempted bunts shall result in a dead ball/no-pitch.

Majors Division: Bunting is permitted. The batter will be out following an attempted bunt with two strikes resulting in a foul ball.

G. Passed Ball/Wild Pitch, Dropped Third Strike

Minors and Rookie Divisions: Batters may not attempt to reach first base on a dropped third strike. The batter is out, though rules regarding base stealing apply (Minors Division) (Section 3C).

Majors Division: Batters may attempt to reach first base on a third strike resulting in a passed ball or wild pitch if first base is unoccupied. Section 3C on stealing still apply.

H. Sliding and Contested Plays

In all divisions, priority will be given to avoiding dangerous contact at the bases. If a fielder without the ball is obstructing access

to a base (or home plate)—whether accidental or intentional—the runner will be deemed safe if a reasonable attempt is made to reach the base while avoiding contact. For example, if a runner attempting to score reaches home before the catcher receives the ball but is unable to contact home plate because the catcher is blocking the plate, the runner will be deemed safe whether the runner touches the plate.

Rookie and Minors Divisions: No sliding is permitted. While fielders should execute plays at the bases (i.e., force-outs and tagging), umpires have discretion to call batters safe or out if the play is not executed to avoid a collision. Example: A fielder at second base receives the ball before the runner arrives and the runner peels off to avoid contact. In this situation, the umpire may call the runner out if the fielder attempts to make a tag or safe if the fielder does not, regardless of whether the runner touches the base or not. Note, that this is solely to avoid dangerous contact and does make a runner safe who overruns the base. There is no penalty for incidental contact, however umpires may issue warnings or remove players who initiate contact in a manner that places that player or others at risk.

Majors Division: Sliding is encouraged at contested plays at second base, third base, and home plate. Players should only slide feet-first, and with one extended foot (no two-foot slides). Players are responsible for keeping their lead foot at ground level.

I. Team coaches should be warned by the umpire when runners on either team do not slide on contested plays, when sliding may prevent a collision. On subsequent infractions, the umpire has the discretion to call the runner out.

II. Runners who slide head-first will be called out (without warning).

III. By agreement by both coaches and umpire, this rule may be relaxed (i.e., only applied at home) or reverted to the Rookie and Minors Divisions rule, but only if the field conditions would make sliding inherently dangerous (rocky or unusually hard surface around bases or home plate).

J. Advancing to Additional Bases

Rookie and Minors Divisions: Runners may only advance to first base on hits that do not reach the outfielders. On hits that reach the outfielders, runners may advance beyond first at their own risk (“all you can get”), until the end of the play, as mentioned in Section 4A.

Exception: By agreement of the coaches, if both teams are only fielding 8 players, batters may be limited to second base on balls hit to the outfield. Under this amendment, runners on first base at the start of the at-bat should stop at third base.

Majors Division: There is no comparable rule. Per and subject to the NFHS rules, runners may advance at their own risk on any ball in play.

K. Bat Safety Violations

On-Deck Batters: Where there is no safe (fenced-off) on-deck batting location, the on-deck batter shall only be permitted to swing a bat while standing on the field between the dugout (or the bench) and home plate on the side of the field facing the back side of the batter at the plate (e.g., with a right-handed batter at the plate, the on-deck batter will stand on the third-base side of the field). The current batter and the on-deck batter are the only players permitted to hold or swing a bat during any period of game play.

Rookie Division: The Team Representative, Coach and other adults are encouraged to carefully monitor the team for compliance with this rule.

Minors and Majors Divisions: If an umpire is present, if any player on a team violates the bat safety rule (where the only player permitted to swing a bat is the on-deck batter per the rule), the team violating the rule shall be issued one team warning by the umpire. Following the team warning, any player on the team that has been warned who violates the Bat Safety Rule, will be ejected for the remainder of the game. The Bat Safety Rule and this penalty system will be strictly enforced and thus compliance with the rule shall be the primary responsibility of the Team Representative.

L. Throwing Bats

Players throwing or otherwise releasing a bat in a dangerous manner, at the sole discretion of the umpire, is a violation and shall be addressed as follows:

I. First Violation: The player shall be called out, no matter the ball/strike count. If the ball is put in play with less than two outs, the umpire shall call a dead ball, baserunners shall return to their previously occupied base.

II. Second Violation: The sanction for the First Violation shall be enforced AND the player shall be removed from the game (offense and defense). In this instance, that player's spot in the lineup during subsequent at-bats should be skipped (no out taken). If the team can no longer field 8 players, the team will be required to forfeit the game unless the opposing manager agrees to continue playing.

M. Catcher Readiness

To facilitate game efficiency, teams should pinch run for their catcher in the next

half-inning if there are two outs or if the next run scored would end the inning (subject to Run Limit rule, above). The catcher should use this time to put on the catcher's equipment for the next half-inning. Under all circumstances, the catcher shall hit in their normal spot on the lineup and, if needed, the catcher may be substituted on base at the conclusion of the play.

5. During the Game (Pitching) (See NFHS Rule 6)

A. Rookie Division - Coach Pitch

The coach/pitcher must pitch the ball from the 35-foot distance, maintaining contact with the pitcher's rubber with one foot throughout the pitch. The coach/pitcher must not interfere with a ball in play unless such interference is required for safety reasons. Accidental contact of a ball in play by the coach will result in a dead-ball/no-pitch, with all runners returning to their original bases. The pitch will count toward the maximum allowed (see next rule).

Only strikes will be counted (swinging or called) unless no umpire is present. If no umpire is present, only swinging strikes will be called. A maximum of 7 pitches per batter will be allowed. Foul tips will not be counted as a pitch and as one of the first two strikes (e.g., a foul ball cannot be the third strike). strike but will be counted as a pitch. After seven pitches, the batter will be declared out. There will be no walks and batters hit by pitch will not be awarded first base.

B. Minors Division

A Minor League pitcher may pitch a maximum of two (2) innings per game. If a pitcher delivers at least one (1) pitch in an inning and is then removed (or if the inning ends) that pitcher shall have been charged for one (1) inning pitched.

Pitchers may elect to throw Windmill or Slingshot (underhand). In either style, NFHS rules apply. In particular, pitchers must maintain contact with the pitcher's plate throughout the motion (e.g., no extra steps toward home or 'crow hops').

The following are exceptions from the NFHS rules that apply in the Minors Division:

I. Illegal pitches will result in a warning. At the umpire's discretion, the result may be a dead-ball/no-pitch or continuation with the play; the latter is reserved for when no material competitive advantage is gained from the violation. Continued use of an illegal pitch that results in a competitive advantage may result in a pitcher being removed/replaced (pitcher may move to another position in the field). Example: A pitcher breaks contact with the pitcher's plate, "quick pitches" without pausing with separated hands, or the pitcher inserts a 'pause,' that disrupts the forward motion of the windup. Again, determination of "continued use" and "competitive advantage" is at the discretion of the umpire. No further penalty is awarded (i.e., baserunners do not advance, pitch is not called a ball).

II. Warm-up pitches: Pitchers may take up to seven (7) warm-up pitches, whether to a coach or catcher, at the start of any inning or upon entry into the game. The number of pitches may be reduced in the interest of time at the umpire's discretion.

III Hit Batter: Per NFHS rules (Section 3, Art. 2) batters struck by pitches thrown within the batter's box will be granted first base, unless they obviously try to get hit by the pitch. No attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch is required. It is each coach's responsibility to ensure pitchers are capable of pitching without excessively endangering

the safety of the batters. At the umpire's sole discretion, when batter safety is at risk (e.g., pitcher unable to control pitches thrown at velocity), pitchers may be given a warning for the second struck batter in a game and removed/replaced for the third struck batter in a game. Additionally, for the purposes of this rule, throwing behind a batter may be counted despite the ball not making contact with the batter (batter would NOT be awarded first base in this scenario). Per NFHS rules, a fourth ball that also hits a batter will count as a hit batter toward this count.

There will be no walks in Minor League. Once a pitcher throws four balls, the coach from the batting team will get four pitches to the batter.

Any strikes on the batter will remain when the Coach comes in.

A maximum of 4 pitches should be delivered by the coach unless there is a foul tip on the fourth pitch which continues the at-bat at 1-pitch intervals. The batter is out if they have received four pitches or strikeout.

C. Majors Division

A Major Division pitcher may pitch a maximum of three (3) innings per game. If a pitcher delivers at least one (1) pitch in an inning and is then removed (or if the inning ends) that pitcher shall have been charged for one (1) inning pitched.

Pitchers may elect to throw Windmill or Slingshot (underhand). In either style, NFHS rules apply (see Section I, Art. 1). In particular, pitchers must maintain contact with the pitcher's plate throughout the motion (e.g., no extra steps toward home or 'crow hops'). The following are exceptions from the NFHS rules that apply in the Majors Division:

I. Illegal pitches will result in a warning. At the umpire's discretion, the result may be called a ball, or the play may be allowed to continue if it is reasonably in the offensive team's advantage (in which case, the umpire may confer with the coach of the offensive team if there is any doubt as to whether the offensive team benefited from the play). Runners will not advance on an illegal pitch unless the ball results in a walk or the play is permitted to continue.

II. Warm-up pitches: Pitchers may take up to 7 warm-up pitches, whether to a coach or catcher, at the start of any inning or upon entry into the game. An additional pitch may be permitted at the umpire's discretion to permit the catcher a warm-up throw to second base or back to the pitcher in instances when a coach has received all of the warmup pitches while the catcher was getting ready. The number of pitches may be reduced in the interest of time at the umpire's discretion.

III. Hit Batters: Per NFHS rules (Section 3, Art. 2) batters struck by pitches thrown within the batter's box will be granted first base, unless they obviously try to get hit by the pitch. No attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch is required. It is each coach's responsibility to ensure pitchers are capable of pitching without excessively endangering the safety of the batters. At the umpire's sole discretion, when batter safety is at risk (e.g., pitcher unable to control pitches thrown at velocity), pitchers may be given a warning for the second struck batter in a game and removed/replaced for the third struck batter in a game. Additionally, for the purposes of this rule, throwing behind a batter may be counted despite the ball not making contact with the batter (batter would NOT be awarded first base in this scenario). Per NFHS rules, a fourth ball that also hits a batter will count as a hit batter toward this count. If replaced in accordance this rule,

the pitcher is unable to return to pitch in that game. Any ball striking a batter is a dead-ball and no runners may advance.

6. During the Game (Coaching):

Teams are encouraged to provide offensive base coaches at first and third bases. Base coaches must not interfere with a player or ball in play (including overthrows). All defensive coaching must be conducted from the vicinity of the respective team's bench/dugout; defensive coaching is prohibited from the opposing team's side of the field.

Rookie Division: Coaches who are pitching may give instruction to batters, but they may not leave the pitching area to help position hitters (stance, hands, bat, etc.) unless the player's safety is at issue. The pitching coach shall not coach baserunners unless no base coaches are available. Additionally, the pitching coach may not help the batter with identification of balls and strikes mid-pitch (e.g., no live instruction to 'swing' or 'don't swing' at a pitch in-flight).

Rookie and Minors Division: Offensive base coaches must be adults. Coaches shall be positioned behind the catchers and assist with returning passed balls/wild pitches to the pitcher to speed up the game. These coaches may provide fielding and pitching instruction, subject to the following limitations:

I. Coaches shall not distract the hitters. All coaching should be conducted before the ball is pitched or after the pitch is completed (e.g., ball is put in play or retrieved by catcher/coach).

II. Coaches shall not "call" individual pitches (e.g., fastball vs. off-speed or location). Coaches may provide limited correction of pitching form (not requiring a conference with the pitcher).

Majors Division: Defensive coaches shall not be on the field except to visit the pitcher (e.g., “conference visit”) and to attend to an injured player. Players may serve as base coaches but must wear a batting helmet.

7. Mandatory and Prohibited Equipment:

A. Helmets

Protective helmets shall be worn by all players on deck, at bat, while base running and in the coach’s boxes, during practice and at games. Players may wear helmets with facemasks.

B. Catcher Equipment

Any player playing catcher or warming up a pitcher at home plate shall wear a catcher's mask/helmet. In games, catchers are required to wear leg protectors and chest protectors. Both team’s coaches and the umpire(s) should proactively monitor the catcher’s equipment for proper fit (e.g., leg protector straps fastened). Coaches and umpire(s) should instruct catchers at all levels to properly crouch (not on knees) to ensure shin guards provide appropriate protection from pitched and foul balls. Catcher’s masks/helmet are highly encouraged as part of any pitching practice.

C. Footwear

All players are encouraged to wear plastic/rubber studded cleats, though smooth-bottom shoes are permitted. Under no circumstances should players wear metal cleats/spikes or shoes with metal toe plates.

D. Uniform

While on the field, players are required to wear the official League uniform, which at a minimum consists of League-issued shirt. Long baseball pants are encouraged.

E. Balls

Game balls are supplied by the home team.

Rookie and Minor Divisions: The official ball is an 11-inch safety (soft) ball.

Major Division: The official ball is a regulation 12-inch softball.

F. Bats

All bats should conform to NFHS guidelines. Players may use weights or second bats to warm up from the designated on-deck position, however any accessories should not be left on the field if not in use.

8. Thunder and Lightning:

At the first instance of lightning or thunder managers shall halt the game and remove their teams from the field to the security of cars or buildings that offer appropriate protection. If field conditions permit and where otherwise reasonable, consistent with protection of the players and others in attendance, the game may resume 15 minutes after the last instance of lightning or thunder.

9. Cheering

While cheering, singing and other chanting is permit-*ted*, coaches should ensure that it:

- A. Is consistent with good sportsmanship and is not directed at the opposing team or its players.
- B. Does not include music (including percussion beyond handclapping).
- C. Is orchestrated by the team and/or coaches and not by spectators (including older siblings)
- D. Does not contain any offensive, derogatory, or inflammatory language.

Umpires have broad discretion to ensure that all cheering adheres to the letter and spirit of this guidance and may warn teams for violations. Repeated violations may result in forfeiting the game.

associated with his/her team to comply or to leave the vicinity of the field.

10. Familiarity with Rules

All managers are expected to be fully familiar with these Rules and to carefully instruct their coaches and players on these Rules. Managers are also expected to bring the Rules to the game and to go over them with the umpires before the game to maximize efficient and orderly administration of the game.

11. Disputes

Any disputes over the Rules or judgment calls by the umpires shall be conducted in a brief, calm and dignified manner. If satisfaction is not obtained after such effort, the manager should simply note an Appeal of the situation to the umpire and continue the game in a sportsmanlike manner. Appeals shall be filed after the game with the League Commissioner. Incorrect interpretation of rules is a basis for protesting a game. Judgement of umpires regarding “safe/out” or “ball/strike” calls or any other judgement calls are not a basis for protesting the result of a game.

12. Criticizing Umpires

Managers and coaches shall refrain from criticizing an umpire and from making anticipatory ball/strike, safe/out or fair/foul "calls" of plays to intimidate or influence the umpire, and shall take reasonable action with their players, parents and fans of the team to secure their cooperation with this rule. Upon receipt of a complaint from an umpire or from an opposing manager regarding compliance with this rule by coaches, players, parents or fans, a manager shall ask the offending individual