

NCS INTERNATIONAL BASEBALL

OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT RULEBOOK

AND REQUIRED TEAM CHECKLIST

Guide for managers, coaches, players, and parents

CURRENT SEASON: 2026

Event updates and game schedules: www.playncsintl.com

Revised and reorganized edition

IMPORTANT NOTICE: This rulebook contains the general rules of NCS International. Rules published for a specific event, division, or venue take precedence when they state a modification. The Tournament Director retains final authority to interpret the rules and make operational decisions.

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1. Rule Hierarchy and Authority

- This rulebook and the official NCS International modifications govern all tournament games.
- Specific rules published on the event page, game schedule, or by the host venue take precedence over the general rules when a difference exists.
- For 14U-18U divisions, NFHS rules apply when this rulebook does not contain a specific NCS modification.
- The Tournament Director or Site Director has final authority to interpret these rules and resolve situations not specifically covered.

2. Required Team Checklist

2.1 Official roster. The team roster must be entered and kept current online in the team's NCS account before the team participates.

2.2 Current insurance. The team must have a current policy showing the team name as the insured and National Championship Sports as an additional insured. The policy must be uploaded to the online system.

2.3 Proof of age. The manager must have proof of age available for every player throughout the tournament. Birth certificates, passports, school identification cards, or state-issued identification are accepted in original, paper-copy, or digital form.

2.4 Waivers. A parent or legal guardian authorization or waiver must be completed online for every player before participation, either at the team or event level, as applicable.

2.5 Registered coaches. The manager and all assistants who remain in the dugout must appear on the online roster.

ELIGIBILITY: A player without approved proof of age or a completed waiver is not eligible until the documentation is presented and approved by the Tournament Director.

3. Age Divisions and Eligibility

- Divisions through 18U use May 1 as the age cutoff date. Playing age is determined by the player's age on April 30 of the current season.
- The team's division is determined by the oldest player listed on its roster.
- A player may participate in an older division, up to a maximum of two divisions above the player's proper division, but may never play in a younger division.
- Example: a player eligible for 10U may not have turned 11 before May 1 of the current season; otherwise, the player must participate in 11U or another permitted older division.

4. Basic Game Rules and Logistics

4.1 Home team. In pool-play games, home-team status is determined by a coin toss. In playoffs, the higher-seeded team is the home team but may choose to be the visiting team.

4.2 Dugouts. The home team uses the third-base dugout unless both teams mutually agree otherwise. Any change must be communicated to the plate umpire before the game.

4.3 Official scorekeeping. The scorekeeper may sit in the stands or backstop area and must use a scorebook or scoring application, such as GameChanger.

4.4 Start of the clock. Official game time begins immediately after the plate meeting is completed.

4.5 Metal spikes. Metal spikes are permitted in 13U and older unless prohibited by the venue. They are not permitted in 12U and younger or on any portable pitching mound.

4.6 Electronic communication. One-way devices may be used to transmit signs or prerecorded plays. The pitcher must continue to simulate receiving signs. Live headset communication is limited to the defensive catcher and the manager unless restricted by the event or venue.

4.7 Field dimensions. Standard dimensions appear in Appendix A. Dimensions may vary when a facility has permanent mounds or fixed base anchors.

5. Time Limits, Official Games, and Tiebreakers

5.1 Standard time limit. Division time limits appear in Appendix B. Unless an event states otherwise, the standard format is "no new inning": when time expires, the inning in progress is completed unless the home team is already ahead after the top half.

5.2 Pool-play games. Pool-play games may end in a tie when the time limit or regulation innings have been completed.

5.3 Playoffs and championship games. Elimination and championship games must produce a winner. If the game remains tied, the tiebreaker format in this section applies.

5.4 Tiebreaker format. Each extra inning begins with one out and the bases loaded. The final three batters from the previous inning occupy the bases in reverse order: the last batter on third, the next-to-last batter on second, and the third-to-last batter on first.

5.5 Time between innings. The maximum is 90 seconds or five warm-up pitches, whichever occurs first. The umpire controls the time and may assess automatic balls or strikes when a team is not ready to resume play.

5.6 Drop-dead rule. Drop-dead is not the standard format and is used only when announced by the Tournament Director. When time expires, the play in progress is completed and the game is stopped. The score reverts to the last completed inning unless the home team tied the game or took the lead in the bottom of the incomplete inning; in that case, the result at the time play was stopped is recognized.

5.7 Official game. In 7U-8U Player Pitch, a game is official after three complete innings, or two and one-half innings when the home team is ahead. For all other divisions, the official-game rule established by the applicable playing code or event modification applies.

6. Scores, Results, and Seeding Criteria

6.1 Score verification. Managers must review and sign the score immediately after every pool-play game. Any discrepancy must be reported to the Site Director before leaving the field.

6.2 Seeding order. Teams are seeded according to the criteria in Appendix C, applied in the order listed.

6.3 Intentional forfeit. No team may intentionally forfeit a game to gain a seeding advantage. Penalties may include a score adjustment, seeding modification, or tournament disqualification.

7. Lineups, Batting, and Substitutions

7.1 Official lineup. Before the game, the manager must provide the plate umpire with the complete lineup and identify any players who will arrive late.

7.2 Minimum number of players. A team may start with eight players and may not continue with fewer than eight. While playing with eight, the ninth batting position is recorded as an automatic out until the position is legally filled.

7.3 Batting options. Unless a special division rule states otherwise, eligible divisions may use nine players, ten players with an extra hitter (EH), or bat the entire roster.

7.4 Re-entry. Starters may re-enter once and must return to their original position in the batting order.

7.5 Designated hitter. The designated hitter (DH) is not permitted in 13U and younger. In 14U-18U, the DH is permitted under the NFHS exceptions and Section 14.

7.6 Extra hitter. The extra hitter (EH) is permitted as allowed by the division. When a ten-player lineup is declared, it must be maintained throughout the game. In high-school divisions, the EH and DH may not be used at the same time.

8. Pitching Rules

- NCS International does not impose pitching limits, innings-pitched limits, or mandatory rest days in any division.
- All divisions are open with respect to pitcher use unless the event page publishes a specific modification.

- Managers, coaches, and parents are responsible for monitoring workload and protecting the health of their pitchers.

9. Protests and Appeals

- Only the manager or head coach may file a rules protest or request a review.
- The manager must request time and address the umpire calmly and professionally.
- A protest must be made at the time of the alleged violation and before the next pitch or play.
- The protest is submitted through the plate umpire to the Site Director or Tournament Director.
- Judgment calls are not subject to protest.
- The Tournament Director's decision is final.

10. Game Management, Dugouts, and Forfeits

10.1 Coaches in the dugout. A maximum of three adults is permitted: one manager and two assistants. All must be listed on the online roster.

10.2 Defensive coach outside the dugout. While the team is on defense, only one coach may be outside the dugout at a time and only when the game situation or umpire permits it.

10.3 Ball buckets. Ball buckets must remain at the dugout entrance. If a live ball contacts a bucket, the ball is considered to have entered the dugout and is declared dead.

10.4 Forfeit score. Games scheduled for six innings are recorded as 6-0; games scheduled for seven innings are recorded as 7-0.

10.5 Effect on seeding. A team that forfeits may be declared ineligible to advance when the result creates a classification advantage or unfairly affects other teams.

11. Conduct, Ejections, and Venue Policies

11.1 Ejection. An ejected coach, player, or spectator must leave the facility and remain out of sight and sound of the game. The Director may also impose a suspension for the next game.

11.2 Refusal to leave. Refusing to leave the facility after an ejection may result in an immediate forfeit.

11.3 Postgame conduct. Inappropriate conduct after a game has ended may result in additional ejections or suspensions.

11.4 Alcohol and tobacco. Alcohol is prohibited at the parks. Tobacco products, including smoking and chewing tobacco, are prohibited within the facility.

11.5 Jewelry. Jewelry is prohibited except for medical identification. After a team warning, an additional violation may result in the ejection of the involved player.

11.6 Venue personnel. All city, county, league, facility, and tournament personnel must be treated respectfully. Inappropriate conduct toward staff may result in immediate removal without warning.

11.7 Fees. The venue may charge admission or parking fees according to its own policies.

12. Run Rules and Safety

12.1 Run rule. The game ends when the following lead exists after the listed inning is completed, or one-half inning earlier when the home team has the lead:

Point in Game	Lead
After 1 inning	20 runs
After 2 innings	15 runs
After 3 innings	12 runs
After 4 innings	10 runs
After 5 innings	8 runs

12.2 Slide or avoid. A runner must slide or make a clear effort to avoid a collision with a fielder who has possession of the ball or is in the immediate act of receiving it.

12.3 Malicious contact. Malicious contact results in an out, ejection, and possible additional suspension. The ball is declared dead, and all other runners return to the last base legally reached unless the umpire makes a different award.

12.4 Attempt to dislodge the ball. If, in the umpire's judgment, a runner deliberately attempts to make a fielder drop the ball through flagrant contact, the runner is out, the ball is dead, and an ejection and suspension may be imposed.

12.5 Slash bunt. A slash bunt is permitted only in divisions where bunting is allowed. Special Coach Pitch rules prohibiting bunting take precedence.

13. Bats and Equipment

13.1 13U 54/80 and younger. Metal bats must carry a 1.15 BPF or BBCOR certification. In 13U, bats lighter than drop -8 are not permitted; the bat must be drop -8 or heavier.

13.2 13U 60/90 and 14U-18U. Only BBCOR -3 or wood bats are permitted.

13.3 Wood bats. Wood bats are permitted in all divisions.

13.4 Illegal bat. First violation: the batter is declared out. Second violation by the same player: ejection. Repeated violations may result in additional suspensions for the player and manager, with no right of appeal.

13.5 Catcher's equipment. The catcher must wear complete, properly fitted equipment, including a helmet that covers both ears and a protective cup. Skull-cap style helmets are not permitted.

14. Expanded Rules for 14U-18U

- NFHS rules apply with the NCS modifications established in this document.
- NCS does not impose pitching limits; teams must use responsible judgment to protect players.
- A courtesy runner is permitted for the pitcher and catcher at any time. With two outs, a courtesy runner for the catcher is mandatory. The same runner may not run for both positions in the same inning.
- The DH is permitted with a nine-batter lineup. The EH is permitted with a ten-batter lineup. The DH and EH may not be used at the same time.
- In 14U, batting the entire lineup is permitted.
- The standard limit is seven innings or two hours, with no new inning beginning after the two-hour limit expires.
- Only BBCOR -3 or wood bats are permitted.

15. Special Rules: 5U-6U Modified T-Ball / Coach Pitch

15.1 Field and duration. Pitching distance is 40 feet and bases are 60 feet. Games are six innings or 1:30, whichever occurs first, with no new inning unless modified for the event.

15.2 Roster and batting. Maximum roster size is 20 players. The entire lineup bats and free substitutions are permitted. A team may start with eight players; automatic outs apply when required.

15.3 At-bat. The batter receives up to three pitches from the coach. If the ball is not put in play, the batter receives one additional swing from the tee. Swings and foul balls count. If the batter does not put a fair ball in play from the tee, the batter is out.

15.4 Fair ball. The ball must travel beyond a ten-foot semicircle to be fair. When the arc is not marked, the umpire uses judgment.

15.5 Coach pitcher. The coach pitcher must stand on or straddle the pitching rubber and may not give instructions while delivering the pitch. Interference may result in the coach pitcher's ejection.

15.6 Defense. Ten players are permitted: four outfielders on the grass, infielders behind the 30-foot arc, a catcher in the proper position, and the player pitcher within three feet of the mound.

15.7 Playing rules. The infield-fly rule does not apply. Bunting, leads, and stolen bases are not permitted. A runner who leaves early is out; when multiple runners leave early, the most advanced runner is declared out.

15.8 Courtesy runner. Courtesy runners are not permitted.

15.9 Run limit. Maximum of five runs per inning.

15.10 End of the play. The umpire calls "time" after every play. Defensive coaches are not permitted in the outfield. Offensive coaches are limited to the first-base and third-base coach's boxes.

16. Special Rules: 7U-8U Coach Pitch

16.1 Field and duration. Pitching distance is 40 feet and bases are 60 feet. Games are six innings or 1:30, whichever occurs first, with no new inning unless modified for the event.

16.2 Roster and batting. Maximum roster size is 20 players. The entire lineup bats and free substitutions are permitted. A team may start with eight players; automatic outs apply when required.

16.3 At-bat. The batter receives a maximum of six pitches or three strikes. An at-bat may not end on a foul ball; if the sixth pitch is fouled, the at-bat continues until the ball is put in play, the batter swings and misses, or the batter takes a pitch.

16.4 Coach pitcher. The coach pitcher must stand on or straddle the pitching rubber and may not give instructions while pitching. Interference may result in ejection.

16.5 Defense. Ten players are permitted: four outfielders on the grass, infielders behind the 30-foot arc, a catcher in the proper position, and the player pitcher within three feet of the mound.

16.6 Playing rules. The infield-fly rule does not apply. Bunting, leads, stolen bases, and walks are not permitted. A runner who leaves early is out; when multiple runners leave early, the most advanced runner is declared out.

16.7 Courtesy runner. A courtesy runner is permitted for the catcher who will play defense in the next inning, using the player who made the most recent out.

16.8 Run limit. Maximum of seven runs per inning.

16.9 End of the play. The umpire calls "time" after every play. Defensive coaches are not permitted in the outfield. Offensive coaches are limited to the first-base and third-base coach's boxes.

17. Special Rules: 7U-8U Player Pitch

17.1 Field. Pitching distance is 40 feet and bases are 60 feet. Bases may be set at 65 feet when the facility has base anchors only at that distance.

17.2 Duration. Games are six innings or 1:30, with no new inning. The inning in progress is completed unless the home team is already ahead after the top half.

17.3 Pool-play games. Ties remain in effect when the time limit or regulation innings are completed.

17.4 Playoffs and championship. If the game remains tied, the bases-loaded, one-out tiebreaker is used until a winner is determined.

17.5 Official game. A game is official after three complete innings, or two and one-half innings when the home team is ahead.

17.6 Run limit. Maximum of seven runs per inning.

17.7 Bunting and balks. Bunting is permitted. Balks are not called.

17.8 Runners. Leads are not permitted. The pitcher may not attempt a pickoff. Stolen bases are permitted only after the pitch reaches home plate.

17.9 Closed home plate. A runner may advance from third to home only on a hit or a bases-loaded walk that forces the runner home. A runner may not score on a steal, wild pitch, passed ball, or defensive throw.

17.10 Third strike. The batter may not advance on an uncaught third strike.

17.11 Defensive throws. Runners advance at their own risk on catcher throws or other permitted defensive plays.

17.12 Courtesy runner. A courtesy runner is permitted for the pitcher and catcher. With two outs, a courtesy runner for the catcher is mandatory.

17.13 Lineup. A team may use nine players, ten players with an EH, or bat the entire roster. Starters may re-enter once in their original batting position.

17.14 Minimum. A team must start and finish with at least eight players.

Appendix A. Field Dimensions

Division	Pitching Distance	Bases	Notes
5U-8U	40 ft	60 ft	7U-8U Player Pitch may use 65 ft when the venue has base anchors only at that distance.
9U-10U	46 ft	65 ft	60 ft may be used when the facility has base anchors only at 60 ft.
11U-12U	50 ft	70 ft	
13U (54/80)	54 ft	80 ft	Some 14U divisions may be scheduled on 54/80 fields.
13U 60/90 and 14U+	60 ft 6 in	90 ft	Subject to the dimensions available at the venue.

NOTE: Pitching and base distances may vary at facilities with permanent mounds or fixed base anchors. Dimensions published for the event take precedence.

Appendix B. Time Limits by Division

Division	Innings	Time	Standard Format
5U-6U Modified T-Ball / Coach Pitch	6	1:30	No new inning
7U-8U Coach Pitch	6	1:30	No new inning
7U-8U Player Pitch	6	1:30	No new inning
9U-12U	6	1:45	No new inning
13U	7	1:45	No new inning
14U-18U	7	2:00	No new inning

- Pool-play games may end in a tie.
- Playoff and championship games continue under the tiebreaker format until a winner is determined.
- The Director may use a drop-dead time limit only when it is announced for operational, weather, or venue-related reasons.

Appendix C. Seeding Criteria

Order	Criterion
1	Overall record / winning percentage
2	Head-to-head result, only when exactly two teams are tied

Order	Criterion
3	Fewest runs allowed
4	Best run differential, with a maximum of 10 per game
5	Most runs scored
6	NCS ranking
7	Automated coin toss

This document summarizes the general NCS International tournament rules and venue policies. Modifications published for each event take precedence. Tournament Directors retain final authority.