**SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA BASEBALL/SOFTBALL LEAGUE**

**(Updated 3/8/2022)**

 **Wythe County (276)223-4518 Grayson County (276)773-3841**

 **City of Galax (276)236-3218 Town of Wytheville (276)223-3378**

 **Fries Recreation Dept. (276)773-2531 Alleghany County (336)372-2942**



***2022 S.W.V.A. BASEBALL/SOFTBALL RULES***

All N.F.H.S. Association rules will apply except for the local league rules as listed below.

The primary objective of the **Southwest Virginia Baseball/Softball League** is for **all players** to have the opportunity to participate in practice, games, receive instructions, skills and have the experience of getting to play in the season-ending tournaments. All player’s will have fun, play their required time in all games, and be taught the sport of baseball. The goal of the league is to have kids play baseball/softball with an emphasis on the youth’s enjoyment of the game. Getting all kids on the field each game as much as possible is the #1 priority of Southwest Va. Baseball/Softball League. League directors are responsible for assigning players to teams as equally as possible to ensure quality games and experiences on the field. For the championship games, leagues will be responsible for providing 1st place medals and a baseball to the winner of the tournament and 2nd place medals for the runner-up.

***Coaches are reminded that they are expected to represent themselves in a professional manner toward the youth at all times. Abusive behavior towards umpires, staff, coaches, parents, or kids will not be tolerated during games or practices******. Providing kids a positive baseball experience is most important aspect for coaches.***

**Teams may start practice any time after April 1. Games will begin around the first week of May.**

**SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL LEAGUE**

**The following rules apply to ALL LEAGUE AGE GROUPS.**

1. All players must play a minimum of 3 outs in the field and have at least one at-bat in each game. If playing a double header game, kids who don’t start first game must start the second game of the day in all age groups.
2. During the regular season, all players will be in the batting rotation for each team for the entirety of the game, no matter how many players each team has. There will be no change in the batting order when players are substituted into the game in a defensive position.
3. No Intentional walks are allowed. Players are to be encouraged to pitch and hit each at bat.
4. All local games will be 6 innings with a 1 hour and 45-minute time limit. No new inning may begin after 1 hour and 45 minutes from the start of the game. A new inning starts immediately after the 3rd out is made. If an inning has started before the time limit is up, the inning will be completed if the visiting team has a chance of scoring enough runs to win. All Saturday double-header games will be 6 innings or a 1 hour and 30-minute time limit, whichever comes first. No extra inning games will be played during the regular season regardless of the time limit. The home plate umpire is the official timekeeper during the games.
5. A 6-run limit is in effect each inning. After a team has reached their sixth run during an inning, all plays are dead, and the inning is ended. If a team is leading by more than 6 runs going into the last inning the game is over and the inning will not be played. Ex.: If a team is leading by more than 12 runs with 2 innings to play the game is over.
6. A 13-run rule is in effect after the 4th inning of a 6 inning game.
7. Bunting is allowed. If a player shows bunt, they must attempt bunt. If player swings, this will result in player being called out.
8. No headfirst sliding will be allowed. Penalty will be an automatic out. Players may dive back into an unoccupied base.
9. If a fielder is making a play on the ball or a runner, the runner must slide or attempt to avoid contact with the fielder. No aggressive contact will be allowed. If a runner does not attempt to slide or avoid contact the runner shall be declared out. Aggressive contact can result in an ejection from the game. This call is by umpire discretion.
10. Teams must have 8 players to start a game. If a team starts with 8 players, the 8 players will bat with no outs given to the 9th spot during the game or until a 9th player arrives. If a team starts with 9 players and one player gets hurt and cannot play or has to leave the game, their spot WILL be an out. If a team starts with 8 players and loses a player and is down to 7 players, then the game is over.
11. Noise makers are not allowed in team’s dugouts or on the field. Any object that is used by players in the dugout as an intentional distraction to the opposing team will not be allowed. This also goes for players in the dugout trying to intentionally distract a batter or pitcher before a pitch is thrown. If the umpire deems a noise as distracting to the batter or pitcher then the umpire will ask the coach to remove the noisemakers before the game will continue.
12. Only 3 coaches are allowed in the dugout and inside the fenced area during games. Coaches may not go past the 1st and/or 3rd base coaches’ box while their team is at-bat. When on defense, coaches must remain inside the dugout.
13. During the game, players must stay in the dugout unless they are at-bat or on deck.
14. On weekday and weekend games, a coin flip will determine the home team. The home team for post-season tournament games will be determined by seed. The home team will serve as the official book in any controversy
15. Tournament players must be on regular season rosters approved by local league director before season begins and play in 50% of games during the regular season to be eligible for tournament play. Any kids added off waiting lists must be approved by league directors. Players with injuries limiting regular season play must be approved by their local league director. Only players who played during regular season on their team may compete on that team during the tournament. If a team discontinues or cannot play during the tournament those players on that team are not allowed to play in the tournament on any other team. You must also have at least 8 eligible players before a game can be played.



**SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA BASEBALL LEAGUE**

* **League Ages: (**3rd-5th grade) & (6th-7th grade) League age groups will be determined by grade.
**Players cannot play down**. The league will schedule games with each other for the 3rd-5th and 6th-7th grade groups.
* **3rd – 5th Grade League:** Any player in the 3rd-5th grade may participate unless he/she is 12 years old as of September 30th of the current school year, in which he/she will play in the next division.
* **6th - 7th Grade League:** Any player in the 6th or 7th grade may participate; however, if he/she is 14 years old as of September 30th of the current school year, he/she is ineligible.

**Playing Field, Starting times and Equipment:**

1. Batting helmets must have a **face guard and chinstrap**. If batting helmet style has snaps for them, they must be worn at all times when batting or running the bases in age groups 3rd-7th. No metal spikes are allowed to be worn.
2. Age Group 3rd-5th Grade - Legal bats will be 2 ¼ inch in barrel diameter or 2 5/8 inch in barrel diameter and have “USA Baseball” stamped on them. Bats cannot exceed 2 5/8-inch barrel diameter.
3. Age Group 6th-7th Grade Legal bats will be 2 5/8 inch in barrel diameter and have “USA Baseball” stamped on them.
4. Bases will be 60 ft. for 3rd-5th grade age groups, 70ft. 6th-7th grade age groups.
5. Pitching will be 43 ft. for 3rd-5th grade age groups, 50 ft. for 6th-7th grade age groups.
6. Personal protective equipment is recommended and encouraged at participants’ expense.

**Umpires-** Localities that are playing in the SWVA baseball/softball league will be responsible for training/certifying umpires.

**Rules Representative-** Each year there will be a representative from one locality in the SWVA baseball league that will handle rules disputes.

* 2022 season Wythe County Parks and Recreation.
* 2023 season Alleghany County Parks and Recreation.
* 2024 season Galax Parks and Recreation.
* 2025 season Town of Wytheville Parks and Recreation.
* 2026 season Fries Parks and Recreation.
* 2027 season Grayson County Parks and Recreation.

**SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA BASEBALL LEAGUE**

**The following rules are specific only to the 3rd-5th grade baseball division.**

1. An Official Youth baseball approved by any national baseball organization will be used during games. Only USA certified bats may be used. The first offense for using an illegal bat will result in an out after the first pitch of the at bat. The second offense will result in an ejection of the head coach.
2. Pitching rubber will be 43 feet from the rear of home plate.
3. All illegal pitches will be dead. No balks allowed.
4. Pitchers must be in contact with the pitching rubber to start their wind up.
5. All starters, including the pitcher, may re-enter the game one time. Pitchers will not be allowed to re-enter as a pitcher or a catcher but may re-enter in any other position.
6. There is no infield fly rule in this division.
7. Any pitched ball that hits the playing field prior to reaching home plate and then hits the batter shall be declared a dead ball. The batter does not get first base and runners may not advance.
8. If a batter is walked, they may only take first base. They cannot go to second until the next pitch is thrown to the next batter.
9. Stealing is allowed after the ball has crossed home plate. If player leaves the base early the play is stopped once the ball is returned to the pitcher’s mound. The team will get a warning from the umpires and the runner will go back to the base they came from. If a runner leaves the base early again, that runner will be called out. Only 1 stolen base may be taken at a time during a live play which includes a stealing play or catcher to pitcher exchange onlyfrom each base occupied after that the ball becomes dead and must return to the pitcher and they take the mound before the next live play. If the ball is misplayed by the fielder on the play the runner will stay at the base that was stolen. Examples: Runner stealing 2nd base throw goes into the outfield the runner must stay at 2nd base until the next live play. Same also applies to runner stealing 3rd base if the catcher throws the ball into left field or mishandles the ball the runner must stay at 3rduntil the next live play. Misplayed balls that occur during a hit by the batter don’t apply. Rule is only for steal attempts; if ball is hit, the runner can advance more than one base.
10. Batters cannot advance on a dropped third strike call. Base runners may advance after a third strike and the ball has crossed home plate.
11. Teams will play with 4 outfielders. All outfielders must be positioned at a minimum of 10 yards behind the baselines and may not move beyond this line toward the infield until the ball is hit.
12. Number of Pitches (3rd-5th). Days of Required Rest

 1-20 0

 21-40 1

 41-60 2

 61-75 3

 **Exception**: If a pitcher reaches the limit imposed in his/her league while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until any one of the following conditions occurs:

1. That batter reaches base.

2. That batter is put out.

3. The third out is made to complete the half-inning.

* A player may not pitch in more than one game per day.
* The pitch count recorder must provide the current pitch count for any pitcher when requested by either manager or any umpire and notify the umpire-in-chief when a pitcher has reached the pitch limit, who will, in turn notify the pitcher’s manager that the pitcher must be removed.

**SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA BASEBALL LEAGUE**

**The following rules are specific only to the 6th-7th grade baseball division.**

1. An Official Youth baseball approved by any national baseball organization will be used during all games. Only USA certified bats may be used. The first offense for using an illegal bat will result in an out after the first pitch of the at bat. The second offense will result in an ejection of the head coach.
2. The front edge of the pitching rubber will be 50 feet from the rear of home plate. Bases will be at 70ft.
3. All illegal pitches will be dead ball plays. Balks will be called.
4. Pitchers must be in contact with the pitching rubber to start their wind up.
5. All starters, including the pitcher, may re-enter the game one time. Pitchers will not be allowed to re-enter the game as a pitcher or a catcher but may re-enter in any other position.
6. The infield fly rule will be in effect in this division.
7. Stealing is allowed. Players can lead off bases.
8. Batters may advance after a dropped third strike.
9. Teams will play with 3 outfielders. All outfielders must be positioned at a minimum of 10 yards behind the baselines and may not move beyond this line toward the infield until the ball is hit or a pick-off attempt has been initiated.
10. Number of Pitches (6th-7th). Days of Rest Required

 1-25 0

 26-45 1

 46-60 2

 61-85 3

**Exception**: If a pitcher reaches the limit imposed in his/her league while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until any one of the following conditions occurs:

 1. That batter reaches base.

 2. That batter is put out.

 3. The third out is made to complete the half-inning.

* A player may not pitch in more than one game per day.
* The pitch count recorder must provide the current pitch count for any pitcher when requested by either manager or any umpire and notify the umpire-in-chief when a pitcher has reached the pitch limit, who will, in turn notify the pitcher’s manager that the pitcher must be removed.



**SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA SOFTBALL LEAGUE**

**League Ages:** (3rd-5th grade) & (6th-8th grade) League age groups will be determined by grade.
**Players cannot play down.** The league will schedule games with each other for the 3rd-5th and 6th-8th grade groups.

* **3rd–5th Grade League**: Any player in the 3rd-5th grade may participate unless he/she is 12 years old as of September 30th of the current school year, in which he/she will play in the next division.
* **6th - 8th Grade League:** Any player in the 6th–8th grade may participate; however, if he/she is 15 years old as of September 30th of the current school year, he/she is ineligible.

**Playing Field and Equipment:**

1. **Batting helmets must have a face guard and chinstrap** and be worn at all times when batting or running the bases in the 3rd-8th grade groups.
2. No metal spikes are allowed to be worn.
3. All bats will be legal as long as they have “Official Softball” stamped on them.
4. Bases will be 60 feet for all age groups.
5. Pitchers must wear a protective facemask during games.

**Umpires**- Localities that are playing in the SWVA baseball/softball league will be responsible for training/certifying umpires.

**Rules Representative**- Each year there will be a representative from one locality in the SWVA softball league that will handle rules disputes.

* 2022 season Galax Parks and Recreation Department.
* 2023 season Town of Wytheville Parks and Recreation.
* 2024 season Fries Parks and Recreation.
* 2025 season Grayson County Parks and Recreation.
* 2026 season Wythe County Parks and Recreation.
* 2027 season Alleghany County Parks and Recreation.

**SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA SOFTBALL LEAGUE**

**The following rules are specific only to the 3rd-5th grade softball division.**

1. 11” Reduced Injury Factor (R.I.F. Level 10) softball will be used during games.
2. Pitching rubber will be 33 feet from home plate.
3. All illegal pitches will be dead. No balks allowed.
4. Pitchers must have one foot in contact with the pitching rubber. The pitcher’s hands are apart at the start of the pitch and must come together for the start of the wind-up. Crow hopping will result in a dead ball.
5. All starters, including the pitcher, may re-enter the game one time. Only the starting pitcher may re-enter as a pitcher.
6. There is no infield fly rule in this division.
7. Any pitched ball that hits the playing field prior to reaching home plate and then hits the batter shall be declared a dead ball. The batter does not get first base and runners may not advance.
8. If a batter is walked, they may only take first base. They cannot go to second until the next pitch is thrown to the next batter.
9. Stealing is allowed after the ball has crossed home plate. If player leaves the base early the play is stopped once the ball is returned to the pitcher’s mound. The team will get a warning from the umpires and the runner will go back to the base they came from. If a runner leaves the base early again, that runner will be called out. Only 1 stolen base may be taken at a time during a live play which includes a stealing play or catcher to pitcher exchange onlyfrom each base occupied after that the ball becomes dead and must return to the pitcher and they take the mound before the next live play. If the ball is misplayed by the fielder on the play the runner will stay at the base that was stolen. Examples: Runner stealing 2nd base throw goes into the outfield the runner must stay at 2nd base until the next live play. Same also applies to runner stealing 3rd base if the catcher throws the ball into left field or mishandles the ball the runner must stay at 3rduntil the next live play. Misplayed balls that occur during a hit by the batter don’t apply. Rule is only for steal attempts; if ball is hit, the runner can advance more than one base.
10. Batters cannot advance on a third strike call. Base runners may advance after a third strike and the ball has crossed home plate.
11. Teams will play with 4 outfielders. All outfielders must be positioned at a minimum of 10 yards behind the baselines and may not move beyond this line toward the infield until the ball is hit.
12. Pitchers may pitch a total of 12 innings a week (Mon-Sun). They may start both games of a doubleheader as long as they don’t exceed 12 innings for that week. One pitch constitutes an inning pitched. Two extra innings per pitcher will be allowed when more than 3 games are played in one week.

**SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA SOFTBALL LEAGUE**

**The following rules are specific only to the 6th– 8th grade softball division.**

1. 12” Official .47 core.375 compression girl’s high school softball will be used in all games.
2. Pitching rubber will be 43 feet from home plate.
3. All illegal pitches will be dead. No balks allowed
4. Pitchers must have one foot in contact with the pitching rubber. The pitcher’s hands are apart at the start of the pitch and must come together for the start of the wind-up. Crow hopping will result in a dead ball.
5. All starters, including the pitcher, may re-enter the game one time. Only the starting pitcher may re-enter as a pitcher.
6. The infield fly rule will be in effect in this division.
7. Stealing is allowed after the ball has left the pitchers hand. Penalty for leaving early is no pitch and runner is out.
8. Batters can advance on a dropped third strike.
9. Teams will play with 3 outfielders. All outfielders must be positioned at a minimum of 10 yards behind the baselines and may not move beyond this line toward the infield until the ball is hit.
10. Pitchers may pitch a total of 12 innings a week (Mon-Sun). They may start both games of a doubleheader as long as they don’t exceed 12 innings for that week. One pitch constitutes an inning pitched. Two extra innings per pitcher will be allowed when more than 3 games are played in one week.