

RIVER VALLEY  
  
BASEBALL

OFFICIAL RULES

Revised March 15, 2013

## Rule 1.00 - Eligibility

**1.01 Conduct** - In March of 2006, the Executive Board of the Bridgeton Athletic Association published the following declaration relative to conduct:

*"Whereas it is the expressed purpose and goal of the Bridgeton Athletic Association to promote the tenets of the great game of baseball, and whereas it is their further purpose and goal to provide wholesome, instructional and developmental athletics for the youth of Bridgeton, Missouri and surrounding communities, the Executive Board of the Bridgeton Athletic Association hereby enacts the following sportsmanship code, unto which all of its programs, along with all program officials, players, coaches and team supporters, shall hereafter be subjected."*

### Sportsmanship Code of the Bridgeton Athletic Association

*"We, the players, coaches, parents and program officials of the Bridgeton Athletic Association, do hereby pledge ourselves to the continual pursuit of the highest standard of sportsmanship in Bridgeton Athletic Association's athletic programs, as evidenced in the consistent application of the rules of fair play and respect for all game participants, spectators and program officials."*

*"We denounce any violation of this sportsmanship code, whether in word or in deed, and do hereby acknowledge the right and responsibility of game and/or program officials to maintain this high standard, in the spirit of mutual respect."*

(enacted March 6, 2006)

**NOTE: Managers and coaches are responsible for the behavior of their team personnel and team supporters while at the park, whether or not a game is in progress. For that reason, they are cautioned to maintain a civil and respectful atmosphere at all times. In-game violations may result in ejection(s) and/or forfeiture and subsequent action by the BAA Executive Board. Other violations will be reviewed by the Executive Board for possible action.**

It is our intention to provide an enjoyable and productive baseball experience for every guest at our ballpark. To realize that goal we must, unfortunately, occasionally deal with a person or persons who do not (at least for a passionate moment) share that goal. Please help us in our efforts to make this baseball season a memorable one for you and your team. Do a little preventive maintenance with your coaches and parents. Share this sportsmanship code with them and point out the repeated word, 'respect'. If we all do our part, we can truly experience "baseball like it oughta' be."

**1.02 Rosters -** Every team registered in River Valley Baseball must present for approval a complete official roster, listing each rostered player. Rosters are submitted online through BAA's website. Managers must be prepared to produce a birth certificate and another form of identification prescribed by the Baseball Commissioner in the event that a player's eligibility is challenged. No identification need be carried or presented on the field. Waivers, certificates of insurance, etc. may also be required, at the discretion of the Baseball Commissioner.

A team must maintain a minimum roster of eleven (11) players and may carry a maximum of eighteen (18). Additions to an approved roster must be filed with, and approved by, the Baseball Commissioner prior to that player's participation in a league game. No roster additions may be made after a team has completed half of its league games.

**1.03 Age Requirements -** River Valley Baseball has enacted a cutoff date of May 1 for eligibility in each age division, 8u through 14u. High school age divisions (15u through 18u) shall adhere to their respective age requirements and/or grade levels, whichever is most applicable.

**EXAMPLE -** To play in the 10 & under division, players must not attain the age of eleven prior to May 1 of that year. RVB's fall program mandates that teams play in the divisions they will occupy the following spring. Therefore, a 10u team in the fall must carry players who will not attain the age of eleven prior to May 1 of the *following* year.

**NOTE:** At his sole discretion, and due to special circumstances, the Baseball Commissioner may exempt certain players from the strict application of these age requirements. However, coaches should be advised that such exemptions do not apply outside of the River Valley Baseball league. Appeals for such waivers must be made in writing.

**1.04 Player Eligibility -** Players may participate concurrently on more than one team, but not within a given skill division. Players may participate in more than one age division, though the second one must be above their rightful division. Players who participate on more than one team must submit two paid registrations.

A player's eligibility may be challenged by the opposing coach or manager at any time during the contest. The challenge will follow the standard protest procedure ( see rule # 3.15 ) and require the same cash bond for *each* player challenged. The game will then resume from the point at which it was interrupted and a protest hearing will be scheduled. If upheld, the game in which the

illegal player participated shall be declared a forfeit.

- 1.05 Player Procurement** - River Valley Baseball has no regulations which forbid tryouts, cuts, recruiting, etc. Neither do we regulate the manner in which a player is approached by a prospective coach, other than the dictates of good sense and common decency. We encourage players to migrate to teams where their best interests may be served. We likewise encourage coaches to work hard to improve their teams and their coaching skills. In so doing, they will attract better players. NOTE: No cuts may be made after the close of registrations except for the cause of injury or relocation.
- 1.06 Suspension/Termination** - Bridgeton Athletic Association, at the discretion of the Baseball Commissioner and /or the Executive Board, reserves the right to refuse entry or otherwise suspend or terminate the participation, of any player, coach or team in the River Valley Baseball program. Despite this action, all registration monies and team fees paid by expelled players or teams are non-refundable. This rule does not supercede or otherwise restrict the provisions for actionable conduct described in BAA's bylaws.

## Rule 2.00 - Game Preliminaries

**NOTE:** All game parameters, rules and regulations in this book are exceptions to Major League rules. Where this book is silent, the rules of Major League Baseball shall prevail.

At his sole discretion, and at any point prior to, or during the season, the BAA Baseball Commissioner may suspend, amend, delete or add rules in this book. However, *at no time* may coaches or umpires take it upon themselves to alter or otherwise set aside any of these rules or directives, even if both opposing coaches should agree.

- 2.01 Scheduling & Rescheduling** - All River Valley Baseball games will be scheduled and rescheduled, as the need arises, by the Baseball Commissioner. In so doing, we have eliminated the managers' responsibility to attend scheduling and rescheduling sessions. At the same time, such a policy demands that coaches be available to play on the dates and times scheduled.

Having players who are involved in other sports and activities does not excuse a team from its schedule of games, nor does it constitute a 'hardship case' for special consideration. An RVB roster may hold eighteen players (rule # 1.02). Coaches who have multi-sport players are encouraged to place other properly

registered players on their rosters to fill in during an absence. Schedules are easily accessible on BAA's website. If necessary, each team should designate an administrator to keep the team informed.

**2.02 Game Duration** - River Valley Baseball games in the 8 & Under division shall be 7 innings, or one hour and thirty minutes (1:30) in duration, whichever comes first. "Hard Time" shall prevail in the 8 & Under division only, meaning that the game ends immediately when the time limit is reached.

In age divisions 9u through 18u, game duration shall be 7 innings or one hour and forty-five minutes (1:45). In these age divisions, no new inning shall begin after the time limit has elapsed. A new inning begins when the third out is registered in the previous inning. One of the umpires shall keep the official time.

**2.03 Regulation/Official Game** - A Regulation Game in River Valley Baseball shall be seven full innings, or six and one-half innings if the home team is ahead. A game shall be considered an Official Game if halted due to rain, power failure, etc., when four (4) full innings have been played (three and one-half innings if the home team is ahead) or one-hour and fifteen minutes have elapsed. Games which are halted prior to satisfying the criteria of either a regulation game or an official game shall be rescheduled.

In the event that the home team is ahead when the final inning is begun and :

- 1) remains ahead after the visiting team completes its turn at bat **AND**
- 2) time expires prior to the home team completing its turn at bat;

The final score shall revert to the score of the last full inning, prior to the start of the partial inning. In lieu of playing the inning to its conclusion when the home team is ahead and remains ahead, this rule is in place to comply with time restrictions and to guarantee fairness to both teams in regards to the tie-breakers of runs scored and runs allowed.

**2.04 Team Strength** - Teams 8u through 14u must begin and end a game with a minimum of eight (8) players. 15u through 18u must begin and end the game with nine (9).

**2.05 Grace Period** - Should a team fail to appear for the scheduled start, or lack the necessary number of players to begin the contest, the umpire shall initiate a fifteen (15) minute grace period, wherein the offending team or tardy players are given opportunity to arrive at the field. If the grace period elapses without remedy, a forfeit loss (7 - 0) shall be levied against the offending team. Should both teams be in violation, a double-forfeit shall be declared. Any

elapsed grace time shall be considered part of the official game time.

**2.06 Pitching & Base Distances** - The pitching rubber and bases for a River Valley Baseball game shall be laid out according to the following table:

Age Division	Pitching Rubber	Bases
8u	40'	60'
9u	43'	60'
10u	46'	70'
11u	49'	70'
12u	52'	80'
13u	54'	80'
14u	60' 6"	90'
15u	60' 6"	90'
16u	60' 6"	90'
17u	60' 6"	90'
18u	60' 6"	90'

**2.07 Pitching Eligibility** - There exists no substitute for coaches and parents who conscientiously monitor young pitchers in order to ensure their health and safety. Coaches are strongly encouraged to school themselves on the proper handling of young pitchers and to religiously adhere to those healthy guidelines. As inadequate as the innings-per-age division table may be, we offer it as a means of structuring our league.

River Valley Baseball has decided to adopt the following guidelines, since they address pitching on consecutive days - something which poses a possible threat to young pitching arms. Column A represents the most innings a player is permitted to pitch in a single day; column B represents the greatest number of innings he may pitch if he wishes to pitch the following day; column C displays the total number of combined innings a player may pitch on consecutive days.

Age Division	A	B	C
8u	4	3	6
9u	6	4	8
10u	6	4	8
11u	6	4	9
12u	6	4	9
13u	7	5	11
14u	7	5	11
15u	7	5	12
16u	7	5	12
17u	no limit	no limit	no limit
18u	no limit	no limit	no limit

**2.08 Championships & Awards** - River Valley Baseball will recognize and reward league champions and runners-up in divisions 9u through 18u. First and second-place teams will receive a team trophy and individual trophies for all active players. All players in the 8 & Under division will receive participation trophies.

**2.09 Championship & Seeding Criteria** - Team seedings & championships will be decided (when records are identical) according to the following tie-breakers:

- 1) Head-to-head
- 2) Fewest runs allowed (in league play)
- 3) Most runs scored (in league play)

**NOTE:** All scores are official when they are entered on the official umpires' gamesheet and signed by the coaches. This occurs on the field immediately following the game. Controversies regarding the score must be settled prior to this signing and the umpires leaving the field.

**2.10 Uniforms** - A reasonable effort must be made by each participating team to outfit all of its players with full, matching uniforms. 'Matching', in this sense, does not mean identical. Nevertheless, **players must be dressed in appropriate baseball attire.** Players must not customize their uniforms in such a way as to compromise common decency, proper decorum or to express their individuality, gang-sign, etc., as all of these run contrary to the spirit of the game and are, therefore, unsportsmanlike. Uniform violations will be addressed by the umpire and corrections will be made immediately, if possible. Where such alterations are perceived by the umpire to be egregious in nature or uncorrectable at the field, the offending player will be disqualified from the contest.

It is understood that fall teams, which are often staffed by players from multiple summer teams, may not have matching uniforms. This would not constitute a violation of the uniform rule as long as alterations, such as those mentioned above, are not in evidence. All uniform jerseys must bear a readily identifiable number unique to that player.

**2.11 Equipment** - In order to ensure safe play, attention to the type and condition of team and player equipment must be maintained by each team's manager. Principal among these are:

**A) Batting Helmets** - these should be donned by all offensive players prior to entering the playing field. Each team, then, should have a minimum of five (5) - enough for each possible baserunner, the batter and the on-deck batter to wear at the same time.

**B) Catcher's Gear** - Every catcher must wear shin guards, chest protector and a mask/helmet combination with throat protector. The new hockey-style masks need not have a separate throat protector attached. Catchers warming up a pitcher, whether on the field or on the sidelines, must wear a catcher's helmet and mask.

**C) Cleats/Spikes** - Metal cleats are prohibited in age divisions 12u and below.

**D) Protective Cup** - Boys in all age groups should wear a protective cup.

**E) Gloves** - The rules of Major League baseball define in great detail the appropriate gloves for each position on the baseball field. These guidelines should be strictly observed. River Valley Baseball adds an exception for catchers in the 8u and 9u divisions only, who may, at their coaches' discretion, use a fielder's glove behind the plate.

**2.12 Official Ball** - River Valley Baseball shall use an official, 9" baseball for all divisions 10u and above. 8u & 9u divisions shall use an 8.5" baseball. Two new balls should be provided for each contest. All balls used in an official River Valley Baseball game shall have a natural cover (no synthetics).

**2.13 Bat Restrictions** - River Valley Baseball shall impose a length/weight differential of minus five (-5) for the 14u division and minus three (-3) for 15u and above. Bats for divisions 15u and above shall also adhere to the high school BBCOR and BPF standards. Coaches and parents are urged to monitor the "drop" numbers on their players' bats in younger divisions as well in order to help them comfortably transition.

**NOTE :** For the spring/summer session, the AA divisions of 13u & 14u shall utilize wooden bats *ONLY* and these shall conform to a weight/length differential no greater than minus five (-5).

## **Rule 3.00 - Playing Rules**

**3.01 Player Participation** - In all divisions, free substitution shall be in effect. Players may move freely from position to position, or from the bench to the field. However, a pitcher, once removed, may not return to the mound in the same game. Every player present at the game and available for participation shall be placed in the batting order, shall re-

main in that specified place in the order and shall take his turn at bat during each rotation. Once submitted, this batting order may not be altered, other than the addition of a late arriving player, who shall be placed at the bottom of the order.

In the event of injury, illness or any departure from the contest deemed reasonable by the umpire, no penalty shall result from the effected player failing to take his turn at bat. NOTE: Players ejected from a contest by the umpire(s) for any reason shall be declared out when their spot in the batting order is reached.

- 3.02 Mercy Rule** - River Valley Baseball shall impose a 'mercy rule' in all age divisions. If the run differential (the difference between the two team scores) in a game reaches 15 after three complete innings (or two and one-half innings if the home team is ahead), or 10 runs after five innings (four and one-half if the home team is ahead), the contest shall be declared a victory for the team that is ahead and that score shall be final.
- 3.03 Run Limits** - River Valley Baseball shall impose a five runs per inning limit in divisions 8u & 9u, and a seven runs per inning limit in 10u & 11u. Divisions 12u through 18u shall not play under a runs-per-inning limitation.
- 3.04 Home / Visitor** - The official game schedules of River Valley Baseball clearly indicate home and visitor in each regularly-scheduled and rescheduled game. Games which are rescheduled will carry the same home/away indicators. In playoff brackets, the higher seed shall be given home status *in the first round only*. Subsequent rounds or games shall determine home & away with a coin toss. Home team may choose either dugout. When in doubt, the visiting team should occupy the first base dugout.
- 3.05 Malicious Contact** - A 'malicious contact' rule shall be in effect for all age divisions in River Valley Baseball. Contrary to the infamous 'slide rule' or 'non-collision rule', this rule does not dictate that a runner must "slide or give himself up". In so doing, we acknowledge a runner's right to use his athleticism to beat, or otherwise evade, a tag.
- Contact which is deemed incidental by the umpire shall not constitute a violation of this rule. We will not, however, tolerate willful and malicious contact with a fielder *or runner*. When, in the umpire's judgment, such has occurred, the appropriate dead ball or delayed dead ball call shall be made. Depending upon the severity of the violation and at the umpire's sole discretion, the offending player(s) may be disqualified from the contest with possible further

action pending from the Baseball Commissioner or the Executive Board.

Coaches are cautioned to teach their fielders to not block the base or home plate, or otherwise occupy the baseline in a runner's path without possession of the ball. Umpires shall invoke the Major League obstruction rule.

- 3.06 Courtesy Runner** - In age divisions 8u through 18u, with two out, teams may use a courtesy runner for the catcher only. The courtesy runner shall be the last declared out. This rule is in effect to speed up the contest, so the catcher, once removed, should expedite the donning of his catcher's gear.
- 3.07 Stealing & Leadoffs** - No leadoffs or stolen bases shall be permitted in age divisions 8u & 9u. In all older divisions, both are permitted. However, a suicide squeeze or a straight steal of home shall not be permitted in age divisions 12u and below.
- 3.08 Balks** - No balks shall be called in age divisions 8u and 9u. In all other divisions, the Major League balk rule is in effect. No warnings will be issued.
- 3.09 Trips to the Mound** - In all age divisions, a team's coaches may make only one trip to the mound per inning without penalty. It matters not which coach makes the trip. On the second trip, the pitcher must be removed. Once removed, he may not return to the mound.
- 3.10 Injured Player** - In all age divisions, players removed from the contest due to injury may reenter in the same position in the batting order. Players who miss their turn at bat due to sickness or injury will not be declared out when they miss their scheduled turn at bat.
- 3.11 Late-Arriving Player** - In all age divisions, late-arriving players shall be placed at the bottom of the batting order and are fully eligible to compete. Players who must, for good reason, leave the contest early, must indicate such to the homeplate umpire upon exiting the contest. Having done so, the vacated spot in the batting order shall not be a declared out.
- 3.12 Coaches on the Field** - Each team, while on offense, may have one coach at first base and one coach at third base, in their respective coach's boxes. When the boxes are not clearly delineated, the umpire shall determine the area for each coach to occupy. No defensive coaches may be stationed on the field of play at any time. Coaches may not direct play from the spectator areas.

**3.13 Infield Fly** - The infield fly rule shall be in effect for all age divisions 10u through 18u.

**3.14 Dropped Third Strike** - The Major League rule governing a dropped third strike shall be in effect for all age divisions 10u through 18u. In the 8u & 9u divisions, batters shall be declared out anytime a third strike is registered, whether or not it is held by the catcher.

**3.15 Protests** - All official protests must be lodged at the time of the disputed call and must proceed according to the following procedure:

- 1) Notify the home plate umpire that the game is being played under protest and why;
- 2) Tender the cash bond of \$50 to the home plate umpire;
- 3) Record, in the score books of *both* teams, the nature and circumstances of the protest, as well as the inning, the number of outs, placement of runners, batter at the plate, the count and game time elapsed;

A protest, once lodged, may be rescinded by the team who registered it at *any time prior to the umpires leaving the field of play*. If the protest is lifted during that time, both teams should be informed that the protest has been rescinded and the cash bond will be returned immediately.

Protests that are up-held will result in a remedy deemed appropriate by the baseball commissioner. In the event of a protest being overturned, the on-field result of the game in question shall be final and the protest fee shall be forfeited.