



2026 Baseball Rules
The American Legion
Department of Texas

1. RULE 1-DEPARTMENT REGULATIONS

2. Deadline to purchase the required insurance and register a team is midnight May 15 of the given year. Team registration will be cut off by computer at this time. Required insurance must be in place prior to any play of American Legion teams. The insurance should be purchased prior to any tryouts, or practice, and MUST be in place prior to any games between American Legion teams. As part of the education and training requirements of Public Law 115-126, the Protecting Young Victims Act of 2017 all Managers, Coaches, Staff Members, **Team Players 18 years old** and Volunteers must complete the Abuse Awareness Course either thru Protect Youth Sports or USA Baseball as well as submit Background Checks. a. All teams MUST register online at www.legion.org/baseball. All fees must be submitted through the web site at the time of registration. American Legion national has imposed a fee of \$150.00 plus a \$25.00 non-refunded fee for senior teams and \$150.00 plus a \$25.00 non-refunded fee for junior teams. The department registration fee of **\$500.00** for senior teams and **\$250.00** for junior teams and the required insurance will also be paid through the web site. When the team is registered by either the coach or the manager and the fees have been submitted to national, and the information is submitted to the Department Baseball Chair, and the Department Director of Internal Affairs. The chair will review the registration and if approved only then will the registration funds be processed.
3. Max of an 18-player team roster must be submitted for approval by June 23 of the given year. Rosters not submitted by this deadline are subject to being denied and the team not being allowed to register or play. The submitted roster must be approved by the Department Baseball Chair or their representative prior to play. No team may have more than eighteen (18) registered players. A team will not be considered eligible to play until the registration and roster are approved by the Department Baseball Chair or the designated representative.
4. The manager/coach must keep copies of all the registration forms and will have them available for inspection by the tournament director at all games.
5. If discrepancies are noticed, these discrepancies will be immediately brought to the attention of the team concerned by the director.
6. No District, Division, or Department Baseball Chair, Vice-Chair, or member of any baseball committee can serve as a manager, administrator, or coach of a baseball team that participates in The American Legion, Department of Texas Baseball Program. Any member of a baseball committee, at any level who has an issue with play, or protest MUST recuse themselves from any decision of that issue.
7. Each Team must submit to department/baseball chairman an email or hard copy if required of all completed form 2's for the members on the approved team roster. The completed form two's must be received by the department/baseball chairperson later than 23 June of the year. (Note that will be the roster sent to National)



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8. A manager, administrator, or coach must have a verifiable form signed by the administrator or statement from the schools that they wish to recruit from for the enrollment of the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades for the school year as of March 31st of that year. The combined Maximum School enrollment number cannot exceed 7500.
9. Each team must be able to prove, if requested, that they played a minimum of four games prior to the district tournament.
10. All teams that have advanced to the department tournament level are required to attend all banquets or special functions as determined by the Department Tournament Director. Any team that fails to meet this requirement will be subject to forfeiture of some or all games and expulsion from tournament play as determined by the Department Tournament Director. Coaches and or managers are required to attend the daily morning meeting for the conducting of tournament business.

11. RULE 2 – DISTRICTS

12. American Legion Baseball in Texas will be played according to districts shown on the map located on the last page of this rulebook. The District Baseball Chair reserves the right to zone any district into as many zones as is necessary to prevent hardship on a team or excessive travel. The District Baseball Chair shall direct the baseball activities within their respective district.
13. In district play, any two competing teams playing each other should be limited to one trip each. Expenses of games played district bracket shall be borne by the teams participating.
14. The District Chair will have a meeting with all managers and coaches in their district, review all rules and regulations of the baseball program and establish a schedule of play. A written report of this meeting MUST be sent to the Division Baseball Chair and the Department Baseball Chair prior to any play.
15. District Play – May 18 to June 29.
16. Districts with fifteen (15) or more teams that are properly registered as fully defined in Rule 1, paragraph (B) on page 1 will be allowed to certify to Division, two (2) teams for the first fifteen (15) teams and one (1) additional team for each additional ten (10) teams registered.
17. Each district will decide during district play whether to play seven (7) or nine (9) inning ball games, ten (10) run rule, courtesy runner for the catcher, or any other rules they see fit to use in district play. District rules must be voted upon before district play begins.
18. District Tournaments must be completed by June 30 of the given year. Tournaments and/or play after this date will not be recognized by the Department Baseball Committee.



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19. District play and tournaments will be played using the national tournament rules and policies. District Tournaments will use National Brackets. A drawing with the managers of all team's present will decide the placement on the brackets.
20. A coin toss with both team managers will determine "Home" and "Visitor".
21. Water and ice will be furnished in the dugouts in all district tournaments.
22. The post in a town or city hosting a district tournament will be allowed to have a host team competing in the tournament.
23. At the conclusion of the district tournament/season each district chair will ensure that pictures of the winning team will be emailed to the Division chair and to the Department of Texas. Everyone in the picture must be properly identified.
24. All department and national rules will apply during all levels of district play.
25. RULE 3 – DIVISIONS
26. Division tournament will be held between June 30 and July 10.
27. Divisions with fifteen (15) or more teams that are properly registered as fully defined in Rule 1, paragraph (B) on page 1 will be allowed to certify to Division, two (2) teams for the first fifteen (15) teams and one (1) additional team for each additional ten (10) teams registered.
28. The winning team will be certified as the Division Champion to Department Headquarters by the Division Chair as soon as the tournament is complete.
29. Division tournaments must be completed by July 10 of the given year. Tournaments and/or play after this date will not be recognized by The Department Baseball Committee.
30. Division tournaments will be played using the National and Department rules. Tournaments will use National Brackets. A drawing with the managers of all teams' present will decide the placement on the brackets.
31. A coin toss with both team managers present will determine "Home" and "Visitor".
32. Water and ice will be furnished in the dugouts in all division tournaments.



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33. The post in a town or city hosting a division tournament will be allowed to have a host team competing in the tournament. Should the host team also be the champion of its district, then the second-place team from that district can also compete in the tournament. Host teams are required to play the lower-level tournament for which they are eligible. (Division hosts will, if eligible, play in district tournaments.)
34. At the conclusion of the division tournament/season each division chair will ensure that pictures of the winning team will be emailed to the department chair and to the department of Texas. Everyone in the picture must be properly identified.
35. At the conclusion of the division tournament, the division chair will email a completed rooming list for the department tournament to Department Headquarters
36. All department and national rules apply for division play.

37. RULE 4 – STATE TOURNAMENT

38. The state tournament will be a five (5) team tournament, (unless no host team is designated due to no post or other organization submitting a successful bid for the tournament. If no bid is awarded, then the department headquarters will act as host of a four (4) team tournament.) Each division winner will advance. The host post will be allowed to send a “Host Team”. The host team will be selected by the local baseball committee (subject to the approval of the Department Baseball Committee) and must be within twenty-five (25) miles of the tournament sites. If there is a division that cannot send a team, then the division with the largest number of properly registered teams will be allowed to send an additional team. (No division will be allowed to send more than two teams. (In addition to the host team) If there are at least forty teams registered in the Department, the Department Baseball Committee may, at its discretion, organize and conduct an eight (8) team State Championship tournament upon approval of the Americanism Commission.
39. The Department Commander will select the site of the Department (state) tournament. The investigation and recommendation of the Department Baseball Committee will determine his selection. The host site will be allowed to have a host team to compete in the state tournament.
40. The Department Commander or their designated representative will draw the team names for the seeding at the banquet. The host team will play the prime-time game on the first day. Thereafter, regular play will be allowed.
41. Each team that lives within fifty (50) miles of the tournament will receive \$5.00 per diem for every person on the roster.



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42. Teams whose base school is more than fifty (50) miles from the tournament site will receive a per diem rate of \$10.00 for every person on the roster who is with the team for each day of play in the tournament and will be reimbursed for transportation from their base school to the tournament and return at the rate of \$0.14 cents per mile, per team one time only. The per diem money will be paid every morning at the coaches' meeting and will be used to feed the team while required to be in the tournament.
43. Teams over fifty (50) miles will receive housing which will be paid by the department. (limit of seven rooms per team - one for the manager, one for the two coaches, and up to five rooms for the players, with four players per room) There is no per diem for the day of the banquet if there is no play that day.
44. The department has no control over, nor does it assume any right to control or make rules to determine the manner and mode of transportation of individual ball players and teams from their homes to individual games and or tournaments. The department expressly disclaims all control and liability over the manner and mode of transportation, as set out above, not only for the Department Baseball Tournament, but also for individual ball players and teams involved in individual games and tournament on the District and Division levels prior to the Department Tournament, and then after the Department Tournament, also this disclaimer of liability applies to individual ball players and teams who advance to the National level. The parents and families of a ball player must assume the sole risk and liability for the manner and mode of transportation of the respective ball player and by the parents or legal guardians' acceptance of these rules by the enrollment of a ball player, such parents or legal guardians do hereby indemnify and hold harmless the department from and all liability for claims arising out of the mode of transportation.
45. All teams outside the fifty (50) mile radius of the department tournament site will stay at the same housing site. This is not an option. If the base school is outside the fifty (50) mile limit the teams will stay in the department provided housing.
46. ANY TEAM THAT ENTERES THE DEPARTMENT PLAY-OFFS BY ATTENDING AND PLAYING IN THE DEPARTMENT TOURNAMENT HEREBY AGREES TO CONTINUE TO THE NEXT LEVEL OF PLAY, INCLUDING ALL NATIONAL PLAY-OFFS UNTIL THEY ARE ELIMINATED OF THE TOURNAMENT WINNERS.
47. TEAMS COMPETING IN THE DEPARTMENT TOURNAMENT MUST HAVE A MINIMUM OF 9 Registered available players in uniform to participate in the Department Tournament. Any senior team that does not have nine players and they are affiliated with a junior program, then up to three players can be transferred from the junior program to the senior program to meet the 9-player minimum. Players must be certified by the Department Chairperson using the ALB Form #5. This rule will apply to the hoist team if applicable.
48. A team, upon arrival at the designated hotel will pay a \$200.00 cash deposit to cover damage to the hotel by its players, coaches, or managers. This deposit will be paid at the time of the hotel room inspection to be completed by the Director of Internal Affairs or his designated representative and by the team manager or his designated representative. This deposit can be part of the team's mileage payment, held back upon arrival and refunded when the team completes the checkout inspection provided no damage to the hotel property has occurred.



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49. ALL national rules, **major league rules**, state rules and regulations apply during the department tournament.

50. RULE 5 – GENERAL RULES

51. All teams must be covered by the Van Dyke American Legion Baseball Group Accident and Liability Insurance prior to the first day of tryouts. Coverage will be automatically purchased at the time the team registration is approved by the Department Baseball Chair. Van Dyke insurance is the only approved insurance, and any other outside insurance will not be accepted.
52. American Legion Baseball players or teams may participate in other armature baseball programs subject to prior approval from the Department Baseball Chair. **IT IS IMPORTANT THAT SUCH PERMITTED DUAL PARTICIPATION SHOULD NOT, IN ANY MANNER, INTERFERE WITH A PLAYER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL PROGRAM.**
53. A member of the post should oversee the team as manager, except in the case of outside sponsorship. A non-legionnaire may function as coach. A team shall have a member/ representative of the American Legion Post present at all District, Division, and State Tournament games in which the team participates. No member of the Americanism Commission or Department Baseball Committee shall be permitted to coach or manage a baseball team entered in The American Legion competition.
54. Outside sponsorship is permissible, subject to approval by and under the control of the Department Baseball Chair and under regulations promulgated by the department.

55. RULE 6 – PLAYING REGULATIONS

56. Uniforms

- a. Teams must be uniform starting at the District Tournament level. All team members must be in proper uniform, there will be no exceptions.
- b. The American Legion Baseball insignia must be worn on the left sleeve or left breast of the uniform shirt.
- c. The front of the uniform shirt shall carry only lettering or wording that identifies the post, department, town, city, or community which the team represents, and the official team's name listed on the team registration form. This can be individual lettering or a patch on the left breast. (No other lettering can be on the front of the shirt {except as in Rule 5 (c) above}).
- d. A number at least six inches high must be carried on the back of the uniform shirt.
- e. The name of the sponsor may appear on the back of the uniform shirt.
- f. Caps will be considered a part of the uniform and must of a uniform color and style, including the team logo.



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- g. Coaches and Managers must be in uniform. (This includes District and Division, as well as the department play.)
- 57. Only registered players or adult coaches (not the manager on the registration form) of the team are permitted on the coaching lines. Any adult coach or player making any remarks or undue criticism of opposing players is to be ejected immediately from the game. An adult must be always in the dugout.
- 58. Under no circumstances will any team be required to play more than two games in any one day. Playing days will begin after 8:00 AM local time.
- 59. All players are required to wear a double flapped or protective helmet while batting and running the bases.
ANY PLAYER REFUSING TO DO SO WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO PLAY.
 - a. Catchers must wear some type of safety helmet, mask, and cup.
 - b. Throat protectors on a catcher's mask are mandatory. Any catcher's mask that does not have an extended metal throat protector at least two inches in length is required to have a second attachable throat protector. Umpires and our tournament official shall halt the game until this rule is complied with.
 - c. WHILE WARMING UP A PITCHER AT ANY TIME, A CATCHER OR ACTING CATCHER MUST WEAR A MASK AND THROAT PROTECTOR. A PLAYER OR COACH REFUSING TO DO SO, OR AFTER REPEATED VIOLATIONS OF THIS RULE BY A TEAM IS CAUSE FOR IMMEDIATE EJECTION OF THE OFFENDING PLAYER OR COACH.
 - d. Bat boys and girls must be in uniform and wear protective head gear.
- 60. No player may pitch more than a total of twelve innings during any consecutive 3-day period. No player may make more than four appearances as a pitcher during any consecutive 3-day period. **PENALTY:** The game shall be forfeited IF protest is filed with the umpire in chief before the last out of the game.
 - a. Should a double or triple play cause a pitcher to exceed the permitted twelve innings in three consecutive days, that action in and of itself shall NOT be construed as a violation of this rule.
 - b. Any player may be removed from the pitching position and remain in the game at another position. However, a pitcher will be automatically removed when coach makes two trips to the mound in the same inning and the player cannot return to that game as a pitcher. **PENALTY:** The game shall be forfeited IF protest is filed with the umpire in chief before the last out of the game.
- 61. A player must be replaced after a coach, manager, or non-playing person makes a second trip to the pitcher's mound or crosses the foul line a second time to talk to a defensive player or calls time out a second time to talk to a defensive player in any one inning. The said pitcher may remain in the ball game at another position. **SHOULD AN INJURY OCCUR, THAT ACTION IN ITSELF, FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS RULE SHALL NOT BE CONSTRUED AS A VIOLATION OF THIS RULE.**



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62. Each team shall always have a first aid kit available.
63. Wood, metal, ceramic, or graphite bats may be used.
64. There will not be a courtesy runner. The ten-run rule, after 5 innings will be used at the department tournament, unless the home team is ahead by ten runs or more after 6 1/2 innings. All department tournament play shall utilize The American League designated hitter rule as published by The Sporting News. All games will be seven inning games unless tied at the end of seven. Then will be played until one team is declared the winner. **The 10-inning tied game rule in the major league rule book will be use as defined in the rule book.**
65. The use of any form of tobacco by a player, coach, manager, or umpire while on the playing field, benches, in the bullpen, or dugouts, is prohibited. Any individual violating this rule will be ejected from the game.

The slide/collision rule shall be in effect as defined in the National American Baseball rulebook, Rule 1, playing regulations, paragraph (E).

- a. Only bats are used in warming up in the on-deck area or in any other location.
- b. Weighted bats, devices designed to attach to the remaining part of the bat, such as weights or wind resistant foils, are permitted.
- c. Sledgehammers, weighted pipes and other heavy paraphernalia are not permitted.
- d. Safety of other players and spectators is paramount. Unsafe devices cannot be used.

66. American Legion Baseball is played under the "Official Baseball Rules".

67. RULE 7 – PLAYER ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

68. American Legion Baseball competition in 2024 is open only to players born on or after January 1, 2005. (Junior Legion Ball will be as outlined in National Rule 2). Players competing who are 18 years of age or older signed a professional baseball contract in accordance with the rules of professional baseball.

https://www.legion.org/documents/legion/baseball/baseball_age_chart.pdf

The parents or court appointed guardians' legal residence that applies to players eligibility should be established prior to March 31, of the given year.



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69. Competition is open to armatures. To remain an armature a player must NOT:
 - a. Receive money, favors, or gratuities, direct or indirect, for playing baseball.
 - b. Play with or against anyone who receives money, favors, or gratuities.
 - c. Accept money or favors for reimbursement for time lost at work while playing or for expenses incurred while playing.
 - d. Participating in an all-star baseball game not American Legion approved. (NOTE: Posts, Districts, or Divisions planning an all-star game should contact the Texas Interscholastic League to clarify a boy's high school eligibility.)
 - e. Accept directly, indirectly, or agree to accept money and or any favors (also the parents, trustees, guardians, etc.) offered by anyone for his baseball services, past, present, or future.
 - f. Try out with any professional team without written permission from his coach, or the current Post Commander. (Professional Baseball Rule 3-(l) on page 3 governs tryouts and merits of contracting with professional clubs.)
70. Records of birth must be original or a state certified document from the State Bureau of Vital Statistics or Department of Health or other governmental agency authorized to produce birth documents. The following are never accepted as birth records: Notarized copies of birth certificates, hospital records, baptismal records, or school records. These will disqualify a player and/or a team.
71. In case of foreign birth, the player will present any certificate or document duly issued to the bearer by the United States Immigration and Naturalization service, or the Department of State which shows the birth date of the bearer. **OFFICIAL BIRTH CERTIFICATES OR RECORDS ISSUED BY A FOREIGN COUNTRY ARE ACCEPTABLE WHEN ACCOMPANIED WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION.**
72. A properly notarized copy of that portion of legal adoption papers showing the place and date of a player's birth shall be acceptable in cases involving foster parents.
73. **RULE 8 – PLAYER RECRUITMENT**
74. All questions concerning player recruitment are referenced in the American Legion National Rulebook, Rules 3 and 4. **RULE 9 – PROTESTS**
75. All protest of player eligibility must be specific with definite written proof.
76. If a player is found to be ineligible (Due to eligibility rules) they shall be disqualified immediately. All games in which the disqualified player participated shall be forfeited.



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77. Protests of official baseball rule interpretations during actual game conditions must be made known to the Umpire in Chief before the next legally pitched ball is thrown from the pitcher's mound. If this is not done, no protest will be accepted.
 78. Protests must be made in writing and mailed by registered letter to the Department Baseball Committee and must be signed by the team manager and/or coach and (if sponsored by an American Legion Post) the Post Commander and/or Post Adjutant within 48 hours after the incident occurred. A copy of the protest shall also be mailed at the same time to the officials of the opposing team by the team filing the protest. Protests must be specific in complaint and set forth with definite proof.
 79. A \$50.00 cashier's check or money order must accompany the protest sent to department. The fee will be returned if the protest is upheld. If the protest is overruled the fee will be forfeited and the fee will be deposited in the Department general fund and credited to the baseball budget.
 80. Should a protest occur during a department tournament game, the game will be stopped, and the protest ruled on at the time by a tournament protest committee consisting of three members selected by a department program representative?
 81. Nongame related protests submitted during a state tournament will be submitted with a \$100.00 fee in the form of a cashier's check or money order and are subject to the same conditions in rule 9 (E) of this rulebook.
82. RULE 10 - CONDUCT
83. Any manager, coach, or player who conducts themselves in an ungentlemanly, undignified, or unsportsmanlike manner (which would reflect poorly or bring discredit to this program) while participating in any American Legion Baseball competition shall be removed from any future participation.
 84. No player, coach, manager, or party (fan, parent, supporter) associated with any American Legion Baseball Team shall, ride, heckle, abuse, or make any uncomplimentary remarks whatsoever to any opposing player, team, official, or supporter of another team. Any individual violating this rule shall cause the game to be halted and delayed until the violator is ejected.
 85. Any player, coach, manager, or party accompanying a team will be suspended for the remainder of the game from the time of the rule infraction if they:
 - a. Use Profane or vulgar language.
 - b. Throw bats or other equipment.
 - c. Make vulgar, profane, unnecessary gestures to fans or opposing players.
 - d. Resort to unnecessary roughness on the field.



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- e. Making vulgar, profane, unnecessary comments or gestures in protest to an umpire's decision.
(Only the team captain or coach may ask for a clarification of a ruling. Arguing will not be tolerated)
- f. A decision to the definition of vulgar, profane, or unnecessary will be left to the tournament director.

86. RULE 11 – DEPARTMENTAL JURISDICTION

- i. Department Rules and Regulations. It is the duty of the department (state) baseball committee to formulate rules and regulations that are not in conflict with national rules.
 - 1. *Department recruiting rules may be more restrictive than national rules.*
 - 2. *Department rules will include procedure for protests. (The protection and stimulation of competition must be used in setting these regulations.)*
 - 3. *A copy of the department rules must be filed with National Headquarters before April 15, of the given year. Departments are encouraged to email a copy of their rules to baseball@legion.org.*
- ii. Department Rulings. The department baseball committee shall decide all questions, disputes and protests within a department. The department baseball committee shall have the authority to disqualify or suspend anyone violating a department or national rule.
- iii. National Player Eligibility Rule Interpretations. The National Americanism and Children & Youth Division shall make interpretations of national rules.
 - 1. *All requests for interpretations must be in writing and routed through the appropriate department baseball chairman or department adjutant. Telegrams, e-mail and fax copies are considered written requests. Failure to follow this procedure may result in suspension and/or forfeiture of fees.*