

7U & 8U GHVBL Rules

In general, we follow Little League rules in 7U & 8U – with some differences to simplify game management, promote player safety, and encourage coaching flexibility (2/17/24 Updates)

Sportsmanship Rules

All GHVBL participants (Players, Coaches, Umpires, Spectators) must follow the GHVBL Code of Conduct (COC). Our expectations are clear and must be adhered to by all participants. Not every game situation is covered in the COC, so some game situations fall into “general sportsmanship” – For example, No Heckling of Pitchers is permitted. Team is welcome to cheer on their players in a positive tone, but there shall be no outbursts when a pitcher starts their windup to distract or gain an advantage.

<https://resources.ghvbl.com/forms/GHVBL-Code-of-Conduct.pdf>

Game Day Logistics

Game Balls – Each team (Home & Away) must supply new game balls (2 or more) each game. After that, teams alternate providing umpires with new baseballs starting with the away team. GHVBL provides league logo & approved Baden GHVBL-HS (High Seam) & GHVBL-LS (Low Seam) baseballs for use. We may approve additional models of cushioned cork baseballs. (No rubber or solid cork balls are permitted in game play)

Umpires – Umpires are paid at the pregame meeting. Team split the cost of umpire(s). For updated rates, please refer to the following link – <https://www.ghvbl.com/umpires/>

Game Time Limits – 6 inning games – Inning does not start after 2 hours of play (clock starts at first pitch). Make good judgment – tie game at 2:00 is ump discretion. **Time Limit Exception** – In limited cases, some field complexes have time limits and/or tight scheduling with back-to-back games. Home team is expected to let the opponent know in advance of any unique time constraints – and should be confirmed at the pre-game meeting with the umpire.

Coaching staffs – may consist of a Head Coach, Assistant Coach, Scorekeeper, & One Bench Coach for a total of no more than 4 coaches. There should never be more than 4 coaches in the bench area.

Base Coaches – Not allowed to touch player when ball is in play. At umpire discretion – batter runner may be directed back to base OR called out.

PITCHING DISTANCE – 7U & 8U pitching distance is 42'. Exception – if both teams agree on a distance of 46' OR the home field does not have a 42' capable pitching distance. 7U & 8U plays 46' x 60' in the event 42' can not be safely supported.

Doubleheaders – Each team will be home one game. The host team will have a choice of which dugout they will use regardless of which team arrives at the field first.

Forecast for Rain – HOST team always makes the call – Most importantly – please contact opposing coaches and call umpires DIRECTLY. Secondly, cancel game on your team portal. Please make a call at least two hours before game time – if game is called after the umpire travels to the game – they are entitled one-half game fee. After first pitch is thrown, the responsibility shifts to the UMPIRE for any/all cancellations.

IMPORTANT – Game Cancellation Policy (non-weather related) – when a game must be canceled, we prefer BOTH teams to inform the league to give our umpire assignor Tom Kienzle enough time to redeploy the umpire crew. Please cancel the game via your team portal and inform Tom (tom@ebuaumpires.com) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. If the cancellation occurs within 24 hours of game time – canceling team is subject to forfeit & must pay the umpire(s) FULL FARE if we can not reassign for the game (or games if a doubleheader). Remember, we have great umpires that depend on our league for their income. It is not fair to leave them hanging.

Darkness or weather shortened games – Official games (4 innings complete in 6 inning games) & (5 innings complete in 7 inning games) are final. Unofficial games (not yet reaching the above length) are suspended and played the next day (only in the playoffs meaning we do not suspend games in the regular season). With away team leading or tie game, and home team does not complete their home at bat, game reverts back to the last completed inning, if that results in an official game – game is final. With home team leading in a shortened game, home team is not required to complete their at bat for the game to be final.

Game incidents – Any conduct deemed detrimental to the game by the game umpire shall result in a game ejection or forfeiture. If anyone associated with a team (coach, player, or spectator) is ejected from a game, that person will have an automatic one (1) game suspension, for the following game, the first time. In the event the following game is not played due to inclement weather or schedule conflicts, the suspension applies to the next game played; The second time that same person is ejected, the GVHBL Director will review the matter for further disciplinary action. Game umpires will notify the appropriate league director of the suspended player's name and game conduct. Specifics in this area are detailed in the league Code of Conduct.

Safety Rules

Helmet – Any player at-bat, on the bases, or in the coaching boxes must wear a double ear-flapped helmet.

On Deck, Warm Up Batter – On Deck Batter – ONLY IF THERE IS AN ENCLOSED designated area. NO open area on deck batters.

Cleats – 7U & 8U – Plastic Molded (No Spikes)

Catcher Safety – An extended “dangling” throat protector is considered a required part of the catcher’s mask. Hockey-style catcher’s masks with built-in extended throat protection are approved and do not require an extended “dangling” throat protector. The catcher’s mask shall not have a chrome or mirror-like surface. The catcher’s helmet and mask combination shall meet the NOCSAE standard which includes having full ear protection with dual ear flaps. The skull cap and mask combination does not meet the NOCSAE standard nor does it provide full ear protection with dual ear flaps and is not permitted in GHVBL.

Pitcher Safety – GHVBL has adopted the Pitch Smart Compliance Program. Teams are required to adhere to the very specific documented pitching limits in the chart following. This is an ENFORCED RULE. **Pitch limits and “Daily Max” are NOT HARD STOPS – meaning the pitcher MAY finish the batter.** Teams should communicate between innings – to properly document pitch counts. In areas of disagreement – HOME TEAM owns OFFICIAL PITCH COUNT. Pitch Smart is a safety rule, so ALL PITCHING, regardless of league is relevant. Meaning a pitcher’s daily limit would include pitching in a local rec game, in addition to the GHVBL game the same day.

GHVBL PITCHSMART RULES (no hardstop may complete batter as of 2024)

AGE (Division)	DAILY MAX (May Complete Batter)	REQUIRED CALENDAR DAYS REST & NUMBER OF PITCHES					
		0 Days	1 Days	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days	5 Days
7U & 8U	50	1-20	21-35	36-50	N/A	N/A	N/A
9U & 10U	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
11U & 12U	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
13U & 14U	95	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
15U & 16U	95	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+	N/A
VARSITY	105	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-80	81+	N/A
COLLEGE	120	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-80	81-105	106+
9U EXAMPLE	45 PITCHES WEDNESDAY	THU = 0	FRI = 1	SAT = 2	SUN = 3	MON = 4	TUE = 5
12U EXAMPLE	76 PITCHES WEDNESDAY	THU = 0	FRI = 1	SAT = 2	SUN = 3	MON = 4	TUE = 5

Additional Pitcher Safety – On 46/60 fields & games, a pitcher once removed MAY NOT RETURN TO THE MOUND in the same game.

Thunder & Lightning Policy – Thunder and lightning necessitates that games be suspended. The occurrence of thunder and/or lightning is not subject to interpretation or discussion - thunder is thunder, lightning is lightning. With any weather in the forecast, please set up a plan for shelter prior to

the start of a game. When thunder is heard and/or when lightning is seen, the following procedures should be adhered to:

Suspend play and direct participants to go to shelter, a building normally occupied by the public or if a building is unavailable, participants should go inside a vehicle with a solid metal top (e.g. bus, van, car). Do not permit people to stand under or near a tree; and have all stay away from poles, antennas, towers and underground watering systems. After thunder and/or lightning have left the area, wait 30 minutes after the last boom is heard or strike is seen before resuming the game.

Seasonal Rules

Rosters – Your age on APRIL 30th of the current year is your baseball age for the entire Spring/Summer seasons – teams “move up” in the Fall..... Rosters are limited to 20. A player may play “up” to help a team in the event that the older age group is in need of a player short of players. A player may NOT play on two teams in the same division.

Game Play Rules

Offensive Lineup – A team may bat 9 players, the entire lineup/roster or anything in-between. Once the number of batters is determined, it must remain for the entire game. No automatic outs recorded unless an ejected player’s turn comes up and there are no subs available. In the event a team has 8 players, the 9th position in the order will be recorded as an automatic out. **TEAMS MAY PLAY WITH 8 PLAYERS**

Once a substitution bats or runs for a player, the sub and the original starter are locked into that batting position – players may be interchangeable in this situation, they are “married” in that spot in the order. Either one may bat or run in that position **ONLY** and are interchangeable for the game – no limit on re-entry. If a player is removed due to injury (and skipped in the lineup – that player **MAY NOT RETURN TO THE GAME**)

Courtesy Runners / Speed-Up – With any # of outs, running for the catcher, pitcher OR INCOMING catcher, pitcher is allowed. However, it is not mandatory & is **not allowed DURING AN AT BAT**. Courtesy Runner must be last batted out.

Leading & Stealing – 7U & 8U – Leading only after ball passes home plate. **Point of emphasis - please encourage leading/stealing ONLY after ball passes home plate. Excessive “leaving early” may result in runner being called out in umpire judgment. Only one base per steal attempt and NO STEALING HOME AT ANYTIME!** There is no advancing on overthrows from steal attempts or pickoff attempts. To help clarify if there is a runner on third at the start of a play, he can only score from a ball put in play or being forced in by a walk or hit by pitch. Runner may lead (after ball passes home plate) at their own risk and is subject to pickoff, but there is **NO BENEFIT** to leading as they **MAY NOT SCORE** unless a ball is put in play or is forced in by a walk or hit by pitch.

Baserunning – GHVBL is a slide or “best attempt to avoid contact league” – Forceful, purposeful collisions are grounds for immediate ejection. Players are not required to slide into all bases, if they are avoiding contact. No headfirst sliding into a base on 46/60 fields although you may slide headfirst BACK to a bag. If a play is being made he may go in standing but must make their best effort to avoid contact. Batter runner does not lay claim to the baseline – batter runner must avoid any collision (may veer out of baseline to avoid collision – and will not be penalized for going out of the baseline to avoid contact with defensive player in baseline) – this is an umpire judgment call.

Slap Bunt/Slashing – NOT ALLOWED – Successfully batting a ball, after, in the umpire’s judgment, attempting to feint a bunt, shall be treated as an illegally batted ball. Runners return to their bases. (5.09(d)) The batter is out. (6.06(a))

Infield Fly Rule – Not applied in 7U & 8U

Dropped Third Strike – Not applied in 7U & 8U

Run Limits – 7U & 8U – A 6 run maximum each inning until the 6th inning, which is UNLIMITED.

Mercy Rule – If a team is winning by 10 runs after 4 full innings, game is complete.

Extra Inning Rules & Ties – All games in tie after 6 innings (7U – 12U) shall play one extra inning (7th) “straight up”, then inning 8 & 9 use California Rule (Last Batted out goes to second base & inning starts with ZERO OUTS). Game is TIE after 9 innings (7U – 12U) Regulation games called due to darkness or weather related MAY end in a tie.

Defensive Lineup – Open & unlimited defensive substitution. Any player on the roster may play in any defensive position at any time, regardless of being in the batting order. 7U & 8U May play 10 players in field – 10 players playing defense consists of a catcher, a pitcher, 4 infielders and 4 outfielders. Outfield will be defined as in the grass or at least 20’ behind baseline – no outfielders allowed to be on the infield/dirt.

Balks – 7U & 8U – There are no balks. Illegal Pitches or Quick Pitches will be recorded as balls after one warning per pitcher.

Trip to the Mound – 7U & 8U – 2 trips per inning, the third he must be removed. At any time in the game – the third visit to a pitcher must result in the removal of the pitcher. Once a pitcher is removed he can no longer pitch in that game.

Minimum Play Rule – In 7U & 8U all players in uniform must play 2 innings in field & have at least 1 at bat. No exception to this rule – please plan accordingly – team breaking this rule is subject to forfeit.

Bat Rules – 7U & 8U – Wood or USABat (non-wood bats must have USABat stamp or label) For more information on GHVBL Bat Rules – <https://www.ghvbl.com/bat-rules/>

Post-Season Rules

Postseason Eligibility (Team) – Team must play 6 games (Spring/Fall) or 8 games (Summer) in order to be eligible for playoffs. ALL eligible teams are entered into the playoff tournament. Higher Seed has option of hitting first or second. Higher seed may host for first two rounds of playoffs.

Postseason Seeding – Based on a weighted point system for regular season games. First 12 (16 in SUMMER) complete games played count in playoff seeding standings. Additional games do not count in standings.

Postseason Eligibility (Players) – Each team member must play in at least 4 games (Spring/Fall) and 6 games (Summer) (FOR THE TEAM THEY ARE PLAYING WITH IN THE PLAYOFFS) to be eligible for participation in Post-Season Play. Rare exceptions made in situation of injury – contact league email for league exception consideration. PLAYERS may not play playoffs for more than ONE TEAM in the same DIVISION.

Play-Off Extra Inning Rules – All playoff games in tie after regulation play ONE extra inning straight up. Starting with the second extra inning and forward until completion – play the California Rule.

Darkness or weather shortened games – Official games (4 innings complete in 6 inning games) & (5 innings complete in 7 inning games) are final. Unofficial games (not yet reaching the above length) are suspended and played the next day (only in the playoffs meaning we do not suspend games in the regular season). With away team leading, and home team does not complete their home at bat, game reverts back to the last completed inning, if that results in an official game – game is final. With home team leading in a shortened game, home team is not required to complete their at bat for the game to be final.

The GHVBL Playoffs are a single elimination tournament. Teams are expected to be ready to play on any day of the tournament. League guidance and expectations are given for playoff game days, please meet (or beat) guidance to keep the tournament moving forward. Playoff scheduling posturing (gamesmanship) is not tolerated and is grounds for removal from tourney. If you are participating in an outside tournament that conflicts with GHVBL playoffs – please do not participate in the playoffs.