

STSA TOURNAMENT RULES

St. Thomas Sports Association Baseball

Official STSA Tournament Playing Rules

These rules apply to all STSA-sanctioned baseball tournaments unless a tournament-specific rule sheet states otherwise.

QUICK FIND — AGE DIVISIONS

Division	Bases	Mound	Innings	Lead-Offs	Dropped 3rd Strike
10U	60'	46'	6	No	No advance
11U	70'	50'	6	Yes	Advance
12U	70'	50'	6	Yes	Advance
13U	90'	60'6"	7	Yes	Advance

1. GENERAL RULES

1. All STSA tournament games will be played under these rules.
2. Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players, coaches, parents, and spectators.
3. All teams must submit an official tournament roster before participating.
4. STSA reserves the right to verify player age and eligibility at any time.
5. All disputes must be brought directly to the STSA Tournament Director. Coaches, parents, and players should not confront another team regarding an eligibility or rules dispute.
6. **Player Eligibility Challenge Fee:** A team wishing to formally contest the eligibility of a player from another team must submit a **\$100 non-refundable fee** to the STSA Tournament Director at the time the challenge is made. The fee does not guarantee that the challenge will be upheld. The Tournament Director will investigate and make the final determination.
7. The Tournament Director has final authority regarding tournament rules, scheduling, weather, player eligibility, protests, and unusual circumstances.

2. GAME TIME & LENGTH

10U–12U: Games are 6 innings with a 1 hour and 45 minute time limit. No new inning will begin after the time limit. If an inning has legally started, it will be completed unless weather, darkness, or safety conditions prevent play.

13U: Games are 7 innings with a 1 hour and 45 minute time limit. No new inning will begin after the time limit. If an inning has legally started, it will be completed unless weather, darkness, or safety conditions prevent play.

Championship Games: Championship games have **NO TIME LIMIT**. They will continue until a winner is determined unless weather, darkness, unsafe field conditions, or another circumstance prevents completion.

3. LINEUPS

Teams may use one of the following lineup options: **Bat 9** — nine players bat; **Bat 10** — ten players bat, including an extra hitter; or **Bat Entire Lineup** — every player on the roster bats. The lineup option must be declared before the game begins. Defensive substitutions are permitted according to the applicable lineup and substitution rules.

4. PITCHING RULES

1. A pitcher may be removed from the mound at any time.
2. **Once a pitcher is removed from the mound, that pitcher may not return to pitch again during that game.**
3. Each pitcher is allowed **one free mound visit per game.**
4. A **second mound visit to the same pitcher requires that pitcher to be removed from the mound.**
5. A new pitcher entering the game will receive **8 warm-up pitches.**
6. At the beginning of a new inning, the pitcher will receive **5 warm-up pitches.**
7. Coaches are responsible for monitoring their pitchers and protecting the health and safety of their players.
8. STSA may establish additional pitching limits or rest requirements for a specific tournament when necessary.

5. BASE RUNNING

10U: Lead-offs are not permitted. Runners may advance after the pitched ball crosses home plate. Stealing is permitted. Runners may not leave early.

11U–13U: Lead-offs are permitted. Stealing is permitted. Runners may advance according to applicable baseball rules.

6. DROPPED THIRD STRIKE

10U: The batter is out and may not advance.

11U–13U: The batter may attempt to reach first base when the third strike is not caught, subject to applicable baseball rules.

7. BALK RULE

10U: One warning will be given for a balk.

11U: One warning will be given for a balk.

12U–13U: No warnings. Balks will be enforced immediately.

8. SLIDING & COLLISION RULES

STSA places a high priority on player safety.

1. **Players must slide on any contested play at a base when a slide is required to avoid a collision.**
2. Players must make every reasonable effort to avoid collisions.
3. At home plate, runners must slide on a contested play when a play is being made on the runner.
4. **Any runner who intentionally attempts to run over, initiate, or create a collision with a defensive player will be called out and may be subject to ejection.**
5. Players must not intentionally initiate contact with a catcher, fielder, or other defensive player.
6. Umpires will determine whether a runner made a legal attempt to avoid contact.
7. Malicious or intentional contact may result in an immediate ejection.

9. BUNTING

Bunting is permitted. **Slash bunting is prohibited.** A batter may not show bunt, pull the bat back, and then swing at the same pitch.

10. BATS & EQUIPMENT

STSA Approved Bats: Bats used in STSA tournaments must carry one of the following approved certifications: **USSSA, USA Baseball, or BBCOR**. Wood bats are also permitted.

Bats must comply with applicable certification requirements and may not appear on an applicable withdrawn or illegal bat list.

Altered, shaved, rolled, illegal, or modified bats designed to increase performance are prohibited.

The umpire or Tournament Director may remove any bat from play if its legality is in question.

11. CLEATS

10U–12U: Metal cleats are prohibited.

13U: Metal cleats are permitted. STSA may prohibit metal cleats at a particular facility if required by field or facility rules.

12. MERCY / RUN RULE

15 runs after 3 innings

12 runs after 4 innings

10 runs after 5 innings

Once the applicable run differential is reached, the game is officially ended. The run rule applies to all age divisions unless a tournament-specific rule sheet states otherwise.

13. COURTESY RUNNERS

Courtesy runners are **strongly encouraged for pitchers and catchers**.

1. A substitute who is not currently in the batting lineup should be used as the courtesy runner whenever possible.
2. If a substitute is used as a courtesy runner for a pitcher or catcher, that player is **committed to that pitcher or catcher for the remainder of the game** as the courtesy runner.
3. If all players are batting and there are no available substitutes, the **last batted out must be used** as the courtesy runner.
4. The purpose of the courtesy-runner rule is to help protect pitchers and catchers and keep games moving.

14. WEATHER

Player safety is STSA's first priority. Games may be delayed, suspended, shortened, or cancelled because of lightning, severe weather, heavy rain, unsafe field conditions, darkness, or other safety concerns.

The Tournament Director and umpires will determine when play may resume. Tournament schedules, game times, field assignments, and formats may be modified because of weather.

15. POOL PLAY & TIEBREAKERS

When teams finish pool play with identical records, STSA will use: **1. Head-to-head; 2. Fewest runs allowed; 3. Most runs scored; 4. Coin flip**.

If more than two teams are tied, the Tournament Director will apply the tiebreaker system in the appropriate order to determine tournament standings.

16. EXTRA INNINGS / ELIMINATION GAMES

STSA will use **International Rules** for elimination games that are tied after regulation.

Beginning with the first extra inning, the **last batted out from the previous inning will begin the inning on second base**.

The same procedure will continue for each additional inning until a winner is determined.

The International Rule format will continue until the game has officially declared a winner.

17. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY & PROTESTS

1. All players must meet the age requirements for their division.
2. STSA may request proof of age at any time.
3. A team using an ineligible player may forfeit games in which that player participated.
4. All eligibility challenges must be brought directly to the Tournament Director.
5. A **\$100 non-refundable fee** is required to formally contest another player's eligibility.
6. The Tournament Director will investigate the eligibility challenge and make the final determination.

18. ZERO-TOLERANCE SPORTSMANSHIP POLICY

STSA HAS A ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY.

STSA expects all players, coaches, parents, and spectators to demonstrate proper sportsmanship.

The following will not be tolerated: fighting; threatening behavior; physical intimidation; harassment; abusive or threatening language; arguing aggressively with umpires; deliberately attempting to injure another player; disrespect toward tournament officials; fighting or threatening another player, coach, umpire, or spectator; or any behavior that creates an unsafe environment.

There will be NO tolerance for violations of these rules.

19. EJECTIONS & REMOVAL FROM TOURNAMENT

Any player, coach, manager, parent, or spectator who is ejected for violating STSA's sportsmanship or conduct rules will be required to **leave the tournament premises immediately**.

The individual will not be permitted to return to the tournament premises for the remainder of the tournament.

This includes all fields and tournament facilities being used by STSA.

Depending on the severity of the incident, STSA may also impose additional disciplinary action.

A team is responsible for the conduct of its players, coaches, parents, and spectators.

20. INJURED PLAYERS

If a player is injured and cannot continue, the umpire must be notified. The player may be removed from the game. The player's batting position will be handled according to the applicable lineup rules. A player removed because of injury may not return unless permitted by the applicable substitution rules.

Player safety always takes priority over the outcome of a game.

21. TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR AUTHORITY

The STSA Tournament Director has final authority regarding rule interpretation, weather, scheduling, field conditions, player eligibility, protests, tournament brackets, game format, conduct, ejections, and emergency situations.

The Tournament Director may make reasonable adjustments when necessary to safely and fairly complete the tournament.

22. 10U QUICK RULES

FIELD: **60-foot bases / 46-foot pitching mound**

GAME: **6 innings / 1:45 time limit**

BASE RUNNING: No lead-offs; stealing permitted after pitch crosses home plate; no leaving early.

DROPPED THIRD STRIKE: **Batter is out. No advancement.**

BALK: **One warning.**

CLEATS: **No metal cleats.**

MERCY: **15 after 3 / 12 after 4 / 10 after 5**

23. 11U QUICK RULES

FIELD: **70-foot bases / 50-foot pitching mound**

GAME: **6 innings / 1:45 time limit**

BASE RUNNING: Lead-offs permitted; stealing permitted.

DROPPED THIRD STRIKE: **Batter may advance.**

BALK: **One warning.**

CLEATS: **No metal cleats.**

MERCY: **15 after 3 / 12 after 4 / 10 after 5**

24. 12U QUICK RULES

FIELD: **70-foot bases / 50-foot pitching mound**

GAME: **6 innings / 1:45 time limit**

BASE RUNNING: Lead-offs permitted; stealing permitted.

DROPPED THIRD STRIKE: **Batter may advance.**

BALK: **No warnings. Balks enforced immediately.**

CLEATS: **No metal cleats.**

MERCY: **15 after 3 / 12 after 4 / 10 after 5**

25. 13U QUICK RULES

FIELD: **90-foot bases / 60'6" pitching mound**

GAME: **7 innings / 1:45 time limit**

BASE RUNNING: Lead-offs permitted; stealing permitted.

DROPPED THIRD STRIKE: **Batter may advance.**

BALK: **No warnings. Balks enforced immediately.**

CLEATS: **Metal cleats permitted.**

MERCY: **15 after 3 / 12 after 4 / 10 after 5**

26. STSA EQUIPMENT QUICK REFERENCE

Equipment	10U	11U	12U	13U
USSSA Bat	YES	YES	YES	YES
USA Baseball Bat	YES	YES	YES	YES
BBCOR Bat	YES	YES	YES	YES

Wood Bat	YES	YES	YES	YES
Altered/Illegal Bat	NO	NO	NO	NO
Metal Cleats	NO	NO	NO	YES
Lead-Offs	NO	YES	YES	YES
Dropped 3rd Strike Advance	NO	YES	YES	YES
Balk Warning	1	1	NO	NO

STSA TOURNAMENT STANDARD

PLAY HARD. PLAY FAIR. PLAY THE RIGHT WAY.

STSA's goal is to provide competitive baseball in a safe, organized, and respectful environment. Player safety, sportsmanship, and fair competition will always be the priorities of STSA Tournament Baseball.