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General Rules for All Age Groups and Divisions

(Please refer to Exception Rules/Matrix for individual league rules)

I. Players and Eligibility

- Rule 1. Determination of age level is based on the child’s age as of July 31, current year. A player can only move up one division with the Recreation Supervisor’s approval.
- Rule 2. Eligibility Format – The Highlands Ranch Metro District will strive to have single age group teams within the divisions listed below. Players must stay in the same division for the entire year.

T-Ball:	4 & 5 year olds	
Modified T-Ball:	6 year olds	
Baseball:	Coach Pitch - 7 year olds	Baseball - 10 year olds
	Coach Pitch - 8 year olds	Baseball - 11 year olds
	Modified Kid Pitch - 9 year olds	Baseball - 12 year olds
		Baseball - 13/14 year olds
Softball:	Coach Pitch – 7/8 year olds	Softball – 11/12 year olds
	Modified Kid Pitch – 9/10 year olds	Softball – 13/14 year olds

- Rule 3. Registration closure dates will annually be determined by the Highlands Ranch Metro District employees and published in the Metro District Messenger. Players that fail to register by the deadline will be put on a waitlist. “Free agent” players that have registered by the deadline will be placed on teams before waitlisted players.
- Rule 4. Payment of Fees – No player shall be eligible to play until the registration fee has been paid and a parent or legal guardian signs the registration form or other arrangements have been made with the Highlands Ranch Metro District staff.
- Rule 5. Roster Creation – HRMD reserves the right to fill out each team’s roster up to the maximum number allowed per league (13 for baseball and softball, 10 for T-ball). Teams are allowed to exceed the maximum number allowed with approval from an HRMD league coordinator.

***HRMD’s goal is to allow every child the opportunity to compete on a team within a fair and competitively balanced league. With this goal in mind, HRMD will ask parents/guardians to rate their child’s ability/experience at time of registration. The ratings will help HRMD create teams as equally as possible. The ratings will never be shared with anyone outside of the HRMD recreation offices.

- Rule 6. Official Rosters – the Highlands Ranch Metro District staff will maintain rosters. Official rosters may not be protested. Rosters shall be “frozen” the Friday prior to the official beginning practice date each year. After that date, the Highlands Ranch Metro District staff must approve additions and changes.
- Rule 7. Teams playing in two or more tournaments during the summer season will not be eligible to play in any of our summer Highlands Ranch Metro District leagues.

II. Playing Period

- Rule 1. Team Limit – Each team is limited to one, one-hour on field practice a week except for the first 2 weeks of the season. Teams may have up to two on field practices for the first 2 weeks of the season (except for 4-6 year olds). For the entire

season – teams may have up to 3 events per week (unless the Highlands Ranch Metro District schedules a team three or more events). An event is defined as anytime a team gets “together”.

- Rule 2. **Sundown Rule** – No new inning shall be allowed to continue after 8:30 p.m. on an unlit ball field. If the home team has not had the opportunity for their last at bat, the final score of the ball game shall revert back to the last full inning of play to determine the outcome. If the score is tied at the end of the last full inning of play, then the game will end in a tie. The umpire, at any time, has the option of calling the game if he/she determines conditions are unsafe to continue play.
- Rule 3. **Time Between Innings** – The umpire has the responsibility of expeditiously moving the game along. A maximum of six warm-up pitches will be used to guide play between innings. This same number of pitches will be allowed for changing pitchers during an inning. The umpire must assure teams are moved quickly on and off the field of play.
- Rule 4. **Mandatory Play** – Players participating with the Highlands Ranch Metro District shall play in every game during the regular season. Below are the minimum participation requirements:
- a) Every player present for the game will be placed in the batting order, but only 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 10+ players will take the field during each inning (look at exception rules). Players showing up late will be inserted into the first empty batting order spot. In situations where a player is injured and cannot continue to play, his/her turn at bat will be passed over without any penalty such as an out; however, if he/she has been ejected from the game, an out will be taken.
 - b) Rotational batting will be in effect for all age divisions. Free substitution is allowed.
 - c) Each player must play a minimum of 2 defensive innings. If a player does not play the minimum innings in a game in which he/she was available from the start, the player must start the next game regardless of whether the game ended early due to the run rule, time limit, or was suspended.
 - d) If a player cannot take a turn at bat, the player may not re-enter the game.
 - e) Reasons for not participating in mandatory play are:
 1. Illness
 2. Injury
 3. Attitude – justifiable and explainable to the Highlands Ranch Metro District staff.
 4. Ejection for play by an umpire.
 - f) Failure to comply with mandatory play rule can be a forfeitable offense.
 - g) Failure of a coach to comply with the mandatory play rules shall be reported in writing to the Highlands Ranch Metro District by an appointed team representative. This complaint is to be delivered to the respective coach along with a warning by the Highlands Ranch Metro District staff.
 - h) Upon a second reported offense, with a determination by the Highlands Ranch Metro District staff that the coach in question has violated the mandatory play rule, then the coach shall be barred from coaching in the Highlands Ranch Metro District program for the remainder of the calendar year.

III. Fields

- Rule 1. **Field Size** – The Highlands Ranch Metro District schedules and assigns all fields. They will assure field dimensions are suitable for the age divisions assigned to that field.
- Rule 2. **Markings** – The Highlands Ranch Metro District handles the field maintenance and as such is responsible for the quality of the markings. Any problems or concerns with regard to marking of the fields should be referred to the Highlands Ranch Metro District staff. Rulings based upon markings of the field shall be in the discretion of the umpire.
- Rule 3. **Warm-up Practice** - There shall be no infield practice on dirt fields prior to the start of each game. You can use the first and third base sides outside of the chalk lines. Hitting soft toss into the fences is not permitted.

IV. Equipment and Uniforms

- Rule 1. **Game Equipment** – It is the responsibility of the Highlands Ranch Metro District to purchase and maintain team equipment needed for play. Please contact the Highlands Ranch Metro District immediately if a piece of equipment breaks or needs replacement.
- Players may use non-Highlands Ranch Metro District equipment as long as the following rules are adhered to:
- Batting Helmets and Catchers Helmets must have the NOCSAE stamp of approval and must have full ear coverage.
 - Batting Helmets and Catchers Helmets may NOT have any placement of logos or league affiliations.
 - Bats must be legal for use in league play – see Rule 2 below.
- Rule 2. **Bats** – Bats may be either metal or wooden, but must be identified as a “baseball” bat for play in the baseball league or identified as a “softball” bat for play in the softball league. The following bats will be illegal for play in all leagues:
- Bats labeled “Senior” Bats are illegal.
 - Big Barrel Baseball Bats that are larger than 2 & ¾ inches are illegal.
 - Bats that are marked as (or designated or marketed as) Coach Pitch, practice, etc... are illegal.
 - Altered bats are illegal.
 - Bats that are altered or that do not meet the rule specifications are illegal.
 - Bats that are broken, cracked or dented or that deface the ball shall be removed without penalty.

- Rule 3. Uniforms –All players must wear the approved 2024 Highlands Ranch Metro District issued jersey and hat or visor. The Highlands Ranch Metro District will provide each player with a numbered jersey and a hat or visor. Shirts must be tucked in at all times. Teams are not allowed to put anything on the jersey or hats/visor (patches, MLB logos, etc.). Teams are allowed to put the player’s name on the back of the jerseys if they chose to. No split sleeves or cutoff sleeves will be permitted and any player with such modification to the jersey is ineligible for play in that game. The Highlands Ranch Metro District staff must approve any deviations from the above standards. Each individual team must decide, as a team, what type of pants/shorts and/or socks the team would like to wear. It is not mandatory for any team to have matching pants/shorts or socks. Each coach is required to have a team meeting with parents and players to decide on what pants/shorts and/or socks their team would like to wear.
- Rule 4. Game Balls – Game balls shall be in conformity with Highlands Ranch Metro District approved requirements. Highlands Ranch Metro District will issue each team one new game ball for each regularly scheduled season game. This game ball is to be used for that purpose. Each team shall give a new ball to the umpire at the beginning of each scheduled game.
- Rule 5. Cleats – **STEEL/METAL CLEATS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED** in any of the Highlands Ranch Metro District’s leagues. Shoes are to be molded soles only. Players may only wear cleats that are molded, sneakers or turf shoes. All players must wear shoes. Shoe must cover the entire foot.

V. Game Rules and Umpires

- Rule 1. Official Rules – Where applicable and with changes and additions listed herein, the official rules for baseball and softball shall be the National Federation of State High School Association Rules. The Highlands Ranch Metro District may adopt special rules augmenting the above listed rules; however, the spirit of the above rules shall be considered before any change is made.
- Rule 2. Umpires – Two (2) volunteer umpires (adults) will be used for the 7 and 8 year old boys and 7 and 8 year old girls’ divisions. These age groups are responsible for soliciting these volunteers who can, if they so choose to, attend a league-sponsored program for the purpose of training in the fundamentals of umpiring and philosophy of the Highlands Ranch Metro District league. Any game in which two paid umpires are assigned may be played with only one umpire. Any game that does not have an umpire present can be played as long as a volunteer from each team is willing and able to umpire the game.
- Rule 3. Length of Games – The maximum length of a game and qualification for a legal game shall be discussed in the T-ball/Baseball and Softball Matrix’s. The matrix may be found at the end of each age group exception rules.
- Rule 4. Scorekeepers – Two volunteer scorekeepers, one representing each team, shall record the plays and determine the state of the game. Each shall keep an accurate account of the game in a scorebook provided by the coach of their respective teams. The scorebook of the home team shall be considered the official score. The scorekeepers shall cooperate with the umpire at all times. The umpire, whose decision is final, shall resolve any discrepancies between the scorekeepers. Line-ups will be exchanged prior to every game.
- Rule 5. Ineligible Player – If an ineligible player plays in a game, the game is automatically forfeited.
- Rule 6. Forfeited Game – At least 6 players are needed to constitute a legal team. If one team is short players and the opposing team has extra players, the opposing team may loan the “short” team players of the opposing team’s choosing. The opposing team only has to loan enough players to get the “short” team up to 6 players; it may loan more if it so chooses. Under this scenario, there is no forfeit. There will be no outs taken in the batting order by a team who is short players. For example: If a team only has 8 players, an out will not be taken for the “9th” and/or “10th” batter.
- Rule 7. Tied Game/Complete Game – If after the designated “complete game” time has been reached and the game has been canceled due to weather, the score will revert back to the last complete inning of play. If the game is still tied at the end of regulation time, it will end in a tie. Playoff games that are tied after regulation will utilize the California tiebreaker rule (last out of previous inning starts at second base with one out).
- Rule 8. Sliding – A slide rule is in effect. The runner is out when he/she does not slide or attempt to avoid contact with a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag or if the runner maliciously runs into a fielder. In addition to being out, the runner may be ejected from the game at the discretion of the umpire.
Sliding (Get Down/Get out of the Way/Give yourself Up) – Sliding is the preferred option to avoiding contact on close plays at any base. Knowing not everyone slides, we do ask that you avoid contact the best you can or give yourself up to the out. Lowering a shoulder or intentionally taking out a fielder will constitute an ejection.
 Errant throws can create unavoidable (incidental) contact. **Incidental contact** is a judgment call by the umpire.
- Rule 9. Jewelry – There is no jewelry allowed, regardless of placement on the body. After seeing any jewelry, the umpire at this time will start counting off ten seconds and a strike will be issued for every ten seconds counted off until jewelry is off or three strikes are counted off and the player will be counted as an out.
 *Medical bracelets/necklaces are allowed.

Rule 10. Pitching Definitions:

- a) Baseball pitching – “Two calendar days rest” after pitching four (4) or more innings in a game. “One calendar day rest” if pitching less than four (4) innings in a game. A pitcher must rest two (or one) full days of the week and may pitch again on the third day (i.e. pitches on Monday, rest Tuesday and Wednesday and may pitch again Thursday). The start of the week will be defined as Monday – Sunday.
- b) Softball Pitching – “One calendar days rest” after pitching in a game. A pitcher must rest one full day of the week and may pitch again on the second day (i.e. pitches on Monday, rest Tuesday and may pitch again Wednesday). The start of the week will be defined as Monday – Sunday.
- c) One pitch constitutes an inning.
- d) A substituted pitcher may re-enter the game as a pitcher as long as he/she does not exceed his/her innings pitched. EXCEPTION: If a coach approaches the mound twice in the same inning, the pitcher must be removed during the second trip to the mound. If a pitcher is removed by a second trip to the mound in one inning, he/she may not re-enter the game as a pitcher.
- e) If a pitcher has been substituted twice in one inning, he/she may not re-enter the game as a pitcher.
- f) Violation of pitching limitations in any game will cause a forfeit of that game.

Rule 11. Base Coaches – Bases must be coached by adults (18 & older). Individuals who are coaching the bases must only coach their own team’s players. Base coaches are not allowed to talk to the defensive player (s) at any time.

Rule 12. Dugouts – The Home Team shall occupy the 3rd base dugout and the Visiting Team shall occupy the 1st base dugout.

Rule 13. The hidden-ball trick shall not be allowed.

Rule 14. Saying “SWING” is not allowed. Neither player nor spectator may shout to the batter after the time of the pitch.

VI. Scheduling/Rescheduling of Games

Rule 1. Scheduled League Games – The Highlands Ranch Metro District will be responsible for obtaining fields, field maintenance and scheduling of league games. Changes in scheduled league games will be the sole responsibility of the Recreation Staff. Failure by a team to report at the start of a scheduled league game will constitute forfeiture.

Rule 2. Postponement of Games – In general, the league discourages the postponement or suspension of games for any reason other than inclement weather. A game may be suspended or postponed by an umpire (or the coaches in the absence of an umpire) if he/she deems the playing surface or conditions to be potentially hazardous to the players. If a game is suspended during play, the Highlands Ranch Metro District staff will have the final determination as to whether the game will be resumed from that point forward or if the results are to be final.

Rule 3. Rescheduling of Games – Rained-out or suspended games will be rescheduled when and where possible by the Highlands Ranch Metro District Recreation staff for age groups Boys 8-14 and Girls 9-14 years old. For age groups 4-7 T-ball/Coach Pitch and Girls 7 & 8 years old, both coaches will be responsible for scheduling their own make-up games during a practice or call the Highlands Ranch Metro District to inquire about an available field. HRMD staff will do our best to reschedule all games canceled due to inclement weather, however all but one of the games advertised for each league are guaranteed (for example, there are 10 regular season games advertised for the 11-year old leagues but only 9 are guaranteed to be played).

Rule 4. Games will only be rescheduled if they are cancelled by a Highlands Ranch Metro District employee, by an umpire, due to inclement weather, or due to safety issues. If a team cannot play their regularly scheduled game due to a low number of players, that game will be considered a forfeit by that team.

VII. Players, Coach and Spectator Conduct

Rule 1. Umpire’s Responsibilities – Umpires will enforce the Highlands Ranch Metro District Rules. A coach may ask for a rule interpretation from the game umpire provided he/she does it in a professional manner.

Rule 2. Keeping Order – Each team shall be responsible for keeping the spectators orderly and off the playing field and behind spectators’ boundaries. Players, coaches and fans are to refrain from being behind the backstop, unless there are bleachers and everyone remains seated. Shouting abusive language or inappropriate comments at players, umpires, or spectators is strictly prohibited. Violation of this rule by players, coaches or spectators shall result in ejection from the game and playing area. Failure of an ejected person, to leave the playing area shall result in a forfeit by the offending team

- Any player, coach or spectator ejected from a game will be suspended from playing, watching or coaching in the next game. Depending upon the severity of the offense, suspension from further games may be possible.

- Rule 3. Abuse of an Umpire – At the immediate time of any incident of physical or verbal of an umpire; the umpire will meet with the head coaches of both teams in order that every effort is made to identify the assailant. Physical abuse of an umpire or another coach by a coach, spectator or player will result in suspension of that person from all Highlands Ranch Metro District activities for the entire calendar year or 365 days commencing with the date of the infraction.
- Rule 4. Smoking, Chewing Tobacco and Alcohol Policy – There shall be no smoking, no chewing tobacco use, and no alcohol use by coaches, players, or spectators during their teams' practices and games.
- Rule 5. Number of Coaches Permitted – There shall be a maximum of two coaches on the field and a maximum of three coaches in the dugout.

VIII. Protests

- Rule 1. Protests are allowed only for ineligible players.

Ineligible Players:

1. Anyone who submits a falsified registration.
 2. Anyone playing who has not registered or paid.
 3. Anyone playing for a team to which they were not assigned.
 4. **A pitcher who has pitched too many innings or who has not rested for 2 calendar days before pitching again.**
- Rule 2. Protest of Player Eligibility - If upheld, the team with the ineligible player forfeits the game and the coach will be suspended for the next two (2) games. Upon a second violation, the coach will be suspended for one (1) calendar year from the time of the violation. EXAMPLES: A pitcher who has pitched too many innings in a given time period or non-rostered player...

IX. Miscellaneous

- Rule 1. Use of Video Film Equipment – During league games, the use of video or filming equipment will be permitted under the following conditions:
- a) Videotaping/filming must take place from out of bounds and not from behind home plate, unless bleachers are provided. If any player who is on the field of play feels that video or film equipment presents a distraction and obtains the umpire's concurrence, said equipment shall be relocated.
 - b) Taping/filming cannot impede/restrict the umpires, in the performance of their duties or the safety of players.
 - c) Failure to comply with the above condition, at the request of a game umpire, will result in a delay of game until safe conditions can be established and safe play can continue.

X. Safety Equipment

- Rule 1. The following safety equipment is highly recommended but not required by HRMD in all of our leagues.
- a) Face masks
 - b) Heart guards
 - c) Protective Cups

Concussions

The Jake Snakenburg Youth Concussion Act:

After coaches complete concussion training and provide certification of said training, the coaches have the responsibility of looking out for possible symptoms of concussions in youth athletes who take a blow to the head or body. If a concussion is suspected, the law requires the coach to immediately remove the youth athlete from a game, competition or practice (unless the symptoms can be readily explained by another condition). The coach needs to contact the parents (guardian) informing them of the suspected concussion. The youth athlete is not permitted to return to the game or practice without being evaluated and released to participate by a health care provider. Parents (guardians) must provide written clearance to the coach in order to return to play. The law provides detailed definitions of acceptable health care provider qualifications.



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Code of Conduct

CODE

1. **NO PLAYER, COACH OR SPECTATOR SHALL:** At any time lay a hand upon, shove, strike, or threaten an official, player or spectator. Officials are required to suspend said person immediately from further play and report such people to the League Director. Such person shall remain suspended until his/her case has been considered by the League Director.
 - **MINIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension for the remainder of the season, placed on probation for the remainder of the year.
 - **MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension from all recreation activities for one year and probation for the following year plus at the beginning of the following year, the case is subject to review by the Highlands Ranch Metro District.
2. **NO PLAYER, COACH OR SPECTATOR SHALL:** Refuse to abide by the official's decision. Officials are required to suspend said person immediately from further play and report such person to the League Director. Such person shall remain suspended until his/her case has been considered by the League Director.
 - **MINIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension for one week from all HRMD league participation, placed on probation for the remainder of the season.
 - **MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension for the remainder of the season, placed on probation for the remainder of the year.
3. **NO PLAYER, COACH OR SPECTATOR SHALL:** Be guilty of obscene gestures of objectionable demonstrations of dissent at the official's decision. Penalty: The degree of infraction of this tenet of good sportsmanship shall, in the official's judgment, draw:
 - **MINIMUM PENALTY:** Warning by the official.
 - **MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Removal from the game and suspension for up to one week from all HRMD league participation.
4. **NO PLAYER, COACH OR SPECTATOR SHALL:** Discuss with an official in any manner the decision reached by such official except the manager or captain. Penalty: The degree of infraction of this tenet of good sportsmanship shall, in the official's judgment, draw:
 - **MINIMUM PENALTY:** Warning by the official.
 - **MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Removal from the game.
5. **NO PLAYER, SHALL:** Be guilty of using unnecessarily rough tactics in the play of the game against the body and person of an opposing player. Officials are required to suspend players immediately from further play and report such players to the League Director. Such player shall remain suspended until his/her case has been considered by the League Director.
 - **MINIMUM PENALTY:** Placed on probation for the remainder of the season.
 - **MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension for up to two weeks from all HRMD league participation and placed on probation for the remainder of the season.
6. **NO PLAYER, COACH OR SPECTATOR SHALL:** Be guilty of physical attack as an aggressor upon any player, official or spectator. Officials are required to suspend such person immediately from further play and report such people to the League Director. Such person shall remain suspended until his/her case has been considered by the League Director.
 - **MINIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension for up to two weeks from all HRMD league participation and placed on probation for remainder of the year.
 - **MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension from all recreation activities for one year and placed on probation for the following year, plus at the beginning of the following year, his/her case is subject to review by the Highlands Ranch Metro District.
7. **NO PLAYER, COACH OR SPECTATOR SHALL:** Be guilty of an abusive verbal attack upon any player, official or spectator. The officials are required to suspend any person immediately from further play and report such person to the League Director. Such person shall remain suspended until his/her case has been considered by the League Director.

- **MINIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension for one week from all HRMD league participation and placed on probation for the remainder of the season.
 - **MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension for the remainder of the season and placed on probation for the remainder of the year.
8. **NO PLAYER, COACH OR SPECTATOR SHALL:** Sit in the stands before or after their games and harass or heckle other teams or game officials.
 - **MINIMUM PENALTY:** Warning from the field supervisor.
 - **MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Removal from the ballpark and suspension for up to one week from all HRMD league games.
 9. **SMOKING, CHEWING TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL POLICY** – There shall be no smoking, no chewing tobacco use, and no alcohol use by coaches, players, or spectators during their teams’ practices and games.

ENFORCEMENT'S

1. Any individual being placed on probation for the remainder of the season and reported again for violating the Code of Conduct may be suspended for the remainder of the season.
2. The suspended individual must remove himself/herself immediately from the confines of the contest areas as designated by the Umpire, Field Supervisor, and/or Recreation Staff Member.
3. If a suspended individual does not remove himself/herself from the confines of the contest area, the Umpire, Field Supervisor and/or Recreation Staff Member shall call the authorities.
4. One-minute clause: One minute shall be allowed for suspended individual to remove himself or herself from the designated area. If this time limit expires, the contest shall be forfeited to the opponents.
5. Any individual on probation who violates the Code of Conduct will be placed on suspension until their case can be heard by the Recreation Supervisor.
6. Any individual wishing to appeal the decision reached by the Recreation Supervisor should do so by calling the Recreation Manager to set up an appointment to discuss the decision reached.

HAVE FUN!