



All coaches and managers must use the Teamsnap Tourney app for communication during the tournament. This app will be used to communicate schedules, schedule changes, weather related updates, scores, standings, etc. Please turn on notifications and favorite the event, as well as your team.

Follow the Maryland Stars & Strikes website for important news and updates leading up to and throughout the tournament. The website address is www.mdstarsandstrikes.com.

Modified Major League Baseball rules will be used for this tournament. All modifications are listed below. Coaches should print a copy of this document and keep it with them during the tournament. Coaches should read all rules carefully and share them with assistant coaches, players, and parents (as appropriate) so that everyone is fully informed about the rules and other tournament matters.

Bat Restrictions:

8U Machine Pitch to 13u: Bats must be stamped with USSSA BPF 1.15 or USA Baseball.

14U to 19U: BBCOR bats are required. Bats must be stamped BBCOR with a drop of -3. The barrel may not exceed 2 5/8 inches.

Metal Cleats: Metal cleats are only allowed for the 13U - 19U age groups. NO metal cleats allowed at Blandair Regional Park.

Age Group	Base Distance	Mound Distance	Innings Played
8U	60'	40'	6

2026 Maryland Stars and Strikes Tournament Rules

9U-10U	60'	46'	6
11U-12U	70'	50'	6
13U	90'	60' 6"	6
14U-19U	90'	60' 6"	7

Extra Innings: There are no extra innings in preliminary seeding games. These games can end in a tie. If an elimination game (excluding the championship game) is tied after the no-new-inning limit is reached, all subsequent innings begin with the last batter out in the preceding inning on second base (international tie-breaker rule).

Determination of Home Team: For preliminary seeding games, home team will be determined through a coin flip during the plate conference with the umpire and head coaches. For elimination games, the higher seeded team has their choice of being the home or away team. The home team is responsible for maintaining the official scorebook. Dugout selections are first come, first served.

Time Limits & Official Games: There will be a one hour and forty five minute no-new-inning time limit for all games, excluding championship games. The start time for the game will be determined by the umpire and should be recorded by both teams. A new inning officially starts as soon as the third out is recorded in the previous inning. Once an inning starts, it must be completed unless the home team is leading or takes the lead during their final at-bat. An official game will be recorded after four innings or three and one half innings if the home team is leading for a six inning game. An official game will be recorded after five innings or four and one half innings if the home team is leading for a seven inning game.

Mercy Rule: Games will end when a team is ahead by at least 15 runs after 3 innings, 10 runs after 4 innings, or 8 runs after 5 innings. The home team does not bat if ahead by the mercy rule limit but does bat if the visiting team goes ahead by the mercy rule limit in the top of an inning.

Game Delays: The game clock continues to run during any weather-related or other delay (injury, field condition, etc). The following are examples of situations that might be impacted by game delays.

Example 1: If a game is delayed and play is able to be resumed with time remaining on the game clock, the game will be played until one of these occurs:

- a) The time limit is met.
 - i. In preliminary rounds, the game would end regardless of the number of innings played as per the published rules on Official Games.
 - ii. In elimination rounds, the game would be played until it is at least an official game.
- b) A full game is completed (6 or 7 innings, depending on the age group).
- c) The mercy rule is enforced.

2026 Maryland Stars and Strikes Tournament Rules

Example 2: If a game is in the bottom of the 2nd inning and there is a delay that lasts beyond the no-new-inning time limit, the following will occur:

- a) In preliminary rounds, the game would end regardless of the number of innings played.
- b) In elimination rounds, the game would be played until it is at least an official game.

Example 3: If the game is official, and there is a delay that lasts beyond the time limit of the Game, then the game is over.

Intentional Delays: The umpire and tournament directors reserve the right to eject any player, coach or fan for intentionally delaying a game and a forfeit may be enforced at the tournament director's discretion.

Pitching Restrictions: Coaches are expected to use reasonable care to protect the health of their players.

Uniforms: All players must wear team hats and numbered shirts/jerseys with shirts tucked in. No duplicate numbers are allowed

Line-Ups: Our intent is to encourage coaches to play as many players as possible and provide each coach with options. The coach must determine prior to the game how many batters will be in the starting line-up, and this must be communicated to the umpire and the opposing coach/scorekeeper. Teams may bat 9 players, the entire roster, or any number in between. Once the number of batters is established, it must remain the same throughout the game. A substitute is defined as any player not placed in the original batting line-up to begin the game. As soon as a substitute bats or runs for another player, the substitute and the original starter are locked into that batting line-up slot and either one may bat or run at any time (in that line-up position only). If no substitutes are available, an out will be recorded each time that spot in the line-up is scheduled to bat with two exceptions:

Exception 1: A player may leave the game early if, before the first pitch of the game, the player's Coach (or scorekeeper) informs the opposing coach (or scorekeeper) and the official scorekeeper that the player must leave early, and of the appointed time the player must leave. Upon such notification, and upon penalty of forfeit, the player may not bat or play in the field after the player's appointed time of leaving. Conversely, should the player be removed from the game prior to his appointed time of leaving, for whatever reason, that player is considered an out during his next one scheduled plate appearance, unless Exception 2, below, applies. To prevent potential protest situations, please sign the official scorebook prior to the game with details of the player's departure.

Exception 2: A player who is injured on the field of play, and who is immediately and permanently removed from the game, will not be considered an out in subsequent scheduled plate appearances if he is unable to complete his next at-bat. Exception 2 applies only to

2026 Maryland Stars and Strikes Tournament Rules

players who are injured during play, not to players who may become ill or need to be removed from the game for any reason other than injury. A player is considered to have been removed immediately after injury only if he is removed from the game prior to the next pitch. A player is considered to have been permanently removed from the game if he does not, following removal from the game, play in any defensive or offensive capacity for the remainder of the game following his removal.

Courtesy Runners: Courtesy runners are allowed for the pitcher and catcher at any time. When batting the entire lineup, the courtesy runner will be the last batted out (who is not the pitcher or catcher). If not batting the entire lineup, a courtesy runner may be any player who has not entered the game yet as a substitute. A courtesy runner may later enter the game as a substitute for any of the position players but can no longer be a courtesy runner unless they are the last batted out. If a team runs out of subs (they've all entered the game and are married to a position player in the starting lineup), the courtesy runner would be the last batted out.

Pinch Runners: Pinch runners are substitutes for the specific purpose of replacing another player on base. Once a pinch runner is put into the game, they are then "married" to the player they pinch ran for.

Number of Players: A team must have at least 8 players to play a game. However, a team with only 8 players must take an out each time the 9th batter would be scheduled to bat until additional players join the game. Late players must be added to the end of the line-up.

Injuries to Baserunners: If an injury occurs to a baserunner and no substitute is available, the last batted out may take his place on the bases. If a player is removed from the game due to an injury, that player is not eligible to return to the game once his spot is skipped in the lineup. However, the injured player can return to the game as long as he has not been skipped in the lineup.

Defense: Any player on the roster may assume any defensive position in the field at any time throughout the game with one exception. A player once removed from the pitcher position may not return to pitch later in the same game.

Collision and Slide Rules: For ages 8U-10U there are no head first slides into a base, sliding head first is only allowed when going back to a base. For 11U and older, head first slides are allowed everywhere. All runners must slide or otherwise attempt to avoid a fielder who has possession of the ball and is waiting to make a tag. If in the judgment of the umpire the collision is intentional or flagrant, the offending player may be ejected from the game. If a runner does not slide and there is no collision and the umpire rules the runner safe, then the runner is safe.

NCAA Forced Slide Rule: On any force play, the runner MUST slide, and slide directly to the base. In addition, the runner cannot interfere with a fielder's ability to throw the ball in any way. A runner is out when he does not slide and his not sliding causes illegal contact and/or illegally alters the actions of a fielder in the immediate act of making a play, or on a force play, does not

2026 Maryland Stars and Strikes Tournament Rules

slide in a direct line between the bases. This is true even when the runner did not intend to cause contact. Any runner who, in the umpire's judgment, is involved in contact of a malicious manner is not only out but is immediately ejected from the game.

Protests: No protests are permitted on any umpire judgment calls. If there is a valid dispute over a rules issue, the decision of the tournament director (or designee) will be final. Resolve any disputed rule questions before play continues. Protest must be made within 30 minutes of the end of the game.

Player Eligibility: If a coach/manager questions the eligibility of a particular player or players, he may do so privately with the tournament director (or designee). He/she will investigate and resolve eligibility questions immediately. Player eligibility protests must be addressed during the game or immediately (within 15 minutes) following the game. Age eligibility is determined as the players' age before May 1, 2026.

Forfeited Games: The final score of a forfeited game will be 10-0.

Tie Breaker System:

Tie Breaker

When 2 teams are tied with the same record, follow the list below until the tie is broken.

- Head-to-head results from pool play (if applicable)
- Fewest runs allowed
- Run Differential Tied teams only
- Coin Toss

8U Machine Pitch Rules

Baserunning: Players may not take leads or steal bases. A player may not leave the base until the ball is struck by the batter. If an umpire rules that a base runner has left the base early, the runner will be declared out and the pitched ball will be declared a dead ball immediately (no warnings). The results of the pitch will not count (i.e. no pitch).

Batting: Each batter will receive 5 "hittable" pitches. If they foul off the 5th pitch, they will receive a pitch until they either strike out or a play is made. A caught foul tip on pitch number 5 or after will be a strike out. The umpire may declare a "no pitch" if the ball is not hittable and the batter does not swing, in which case that pitch will not count towards the batter's 5 pitches. Because we are using pitching machines, a batter will be allowed to move toward the pitcher or toward the catcher in such a manner that might otherwise cause the batter to be considered out of the batter's box. Bunting is not permitted. A dead ball will be called immediately and a pitch counted against the batter if the umpire determines that the batter squared to bunt. If the pitch is the 5th pitch, the batter will be called out.

2026 Maryland Stars and Strikes Tournament Rules

Defense: No Intentional walks are allowed. There is no infield fly rule or dropped third strikes. Eleven players may be placed on the field defensively, including an extra outfielder and extra infielder. The extra infielder may be placed anywhere in the infield, except pitcher. (i.e. 1 catcher, 1 pitcher, 4 outfielders, and 5 infielders).

Pitching Machine: The pitching machine will be placed 46 feet from home plate and will be set to approximately 40 m.p.h. Adjustments to the machine can be made before the start of an inning, or at any time if the machine has been hit by either a thrown ball, a batted ball, or any person, at the discretion of the umpire. If a batted ball hits the pitching machine, hits the pitching machine operator, or comes to rest under the pitching machine, it is a dead ball situation, the batter will be awarded first base and all runners will advance one base. If a thrown ball hits the machine, it is a live ball and play continues. If, however, a thrown ball comes to rest under the pitching machine, a dead ball will be called. Any runner that, in the judgment of the umpire, is more than halfway to a base will be awarded that base. Otherwise, the base runner(s) will be returned to the previous base. The pitcher must be positioned behind the pitching machine wheel and within 9 feet of the machine prior to the pitch. The umpire will have the sole discretion to move the pitcher to a position behind the pitching machine wheel.

Time Out Rule: Any player, in possession and in control of the ball within the 60' base paths (and in fair territory) may call time out. If the umpire feels that the aforementioned requisites have been met, the umpire will grant time out immediately. Any runner that, in the judgment of the umpire, is more than halfway to a base will be awarded that base. Otherwise, the base runner will be returned to the previous base.

Run Limit: There is a 5 run limit per team per inning during pool play. Final inning is unlimited runs. A 15-run mercy rule will be in effect after 3 and ½ innings if the visitor is behind, or 4 innings if the home team is behind and a 12 run mercy rule after 5 innings. There will be **NO** run limit per inning for bracket play (mercy rule is still in effect) and **NO** run limit **OR** mercy rule for the championship game.

8U to 10U Specific Rules

8U Specific Rules: There is no stealing bases for 8U. Otherwise, all of the rules below apply to 8U.

Baserunning: There is no leading. Runners may steal bases for 9U and 10U but cannot leave the base they occupy at the time of the pitch until the pitched ball crosses home plate or is hit by the batter. If an umpire rules that a runner has left his base prematurely, the runner will be declared out and the pitched ball will be declared a dead ball immediately (no warnings). In this instance the results of the pitch do not count (i.e. no pitch).

2026 Maryland Stars and Strikes Tournament Rules

Defense: There is no infield fly rule, dropped third strikes, or balks. Ball 4 is a dead ball for the batter only. The batter cannot advance past first base on a walk. However, runners on base can advance as allowed on any other pitch.

11U Specific Rules

Balks: Balks will be called and will be ruled a dead ball. However, one warning per pitcher will be issued each game before a balk is called. (Note: there are no balk warnings for 12U and older age groups.)

Additional Information

Pre-game Warm-ups: No batting practice or infield practice prior to the games. Teams are permitted to warm up in OF as time permits between the end of the game before and the start time of your scheduled game.

Reporting Game Results: On-Site Field Coordinators will provide Post Game Reports for each game. Immediately following the conclusion of each game, the winning team is responsible for getting the form signed by both coaches and for turning in the Post Game Report to the On-Site Field Coordinator. Failure on the part of the winning team to communicate the game result to the Age Group Coordinator within one hour of the completion of a game may result in the game being declared a tie and the runs allowed by the team that won the game on the field will be increased to the same number of runs allowed by the losing team.

Playing Conditions: The tournament director (or his/her appointees) will make all decisions regarding playing conditions prior to each game. He/she will determine whether or not the field conditions are fit to play with the safety of the players first and foremost in mind at all times. Teams must check the tournament website for updates regarding field conditions and game postponements. After a game starts, the umpire is responsible for stops/starts. Any sound of thunder or sight of lightning in the area will immediately stop play for 20 minutes. Weather related make-ups/continuations will be rescheduled by the tournament director.

Refund Policy: We make every effort to get as many games played for our participating teams as possible. Unfortunately, weather conditions beyond our control occasionally conspire against us. In the event that the tournament is abbreviated, the following refund policy will apply: 70% refund if all games are canceled due to inclement weather; 20% refund if only one game is played; no refund if two or more games are played. No refund will be given, under any circumstance, to a team that has been removed from the tournament due to a rules or sportsmanship violation.

Official Team Roster and Insurance: Every team must fully complete and maintain in their possession at all times a Roster & Waiver and Release of Liability Form (Official Team Roster) and a Certificate of Insurance. Elkridge Youth Organization should be listed as "Additional Insured" on the certificate. The Official Roster Form contains player birth date certification and

2026 Maryland Stars and Strikes Tournament Rules

will also serve as your team's Official Team Roster. Participating tournament teams are limited to a maximum of fifteen (15) players for ages 8U through 14U; and eighteen (18) players for 15U and above. A parent (or guardian) of each player must read and sign the document. The head coach/team manager is required to maintain in their possession a copy of the official team roster and a copy of each player's birth certificate in the event that an eligibility question arises. We would not expect that an ineligible player would ever be asked by a coach/manager to play. However, if that were to occur and it is discovered, the player and his head coach/manager will be disqualified for the remainder of the tournament. A game underway will be forfeited immediately to the opposing team as would a game completed in which the ineligible player participated. The team (without its head coach/manager and the ineligible player) may continue to play in the remainder of the tournament.

Roster Protests: In order to question the age qualification of an opposing player, a team raising the question must pay a \$100 protest fee. If a player is found to be in violation of age limits, the team receives a refund of protest fee. If the player is found to be in compliance with age limits, the protesting team forfeits a \$100 protest fee.

Sportsmanship: We anticipate that tournament games will be emotionally charged and competitive. However, we also expect that every participant will conduct him/herself at all times in a manner that is appropriate for youth baseball. Accordingly, arguing with or complaining about umpire judgment calls (balls/strikes, out/safe or fair/foul) or any display of inappropriate behavior (to include foul language used) by coaches, managers, players, parents or spectators simply will not be tolerated. Anyone (except players) in violation of this sportsmanship rule will be asked to leave the premises immediately by either the umpire or On-Site Field Coordinator. If after five (5) minutes the offending person is not out of sight and sound of the field, the team will forfeit the game in progress. An ejected player will be confined to the dugout. A player ejected from a game is suspended from participating at the next game. A coach or parent ejected from a game is suspended from participating or being a spectator for the remainder of the day. Team head coaches/managers are 100% responsible for the conduct of their assistant coaches, players, parents and any other related spectators. If anyone other than the head coach/manager or assistant coach is ejected by an umpire, the team's head coach/manager will be automatically ejected from the game in progress and suspended for the next game as well. Anyone who threatens a tournament official, umpire, opposing coach or player (either physically or verbally) will be asked to leave immediately and may not return for the duration of the tournament. Team managers should make certain that everyone associated with their team is fully aware of the sportsmanship rules in advance of the tournament. The games should be fun for all involved, especially the kids playing in them. The Tournament Director reserves the right to remove any manager, coach, player, or spectator from the ballpark for unsportsmanlike behavior.