

# Contents

16U and 14U .....	2
<b>ELIGIBILITY</b> .....	2
4. A VFW Baseball team and players must register online at <a href="http://www.sdvfwbasesball.com">www.sdvfwbasesball.com</a> .....	2
11. Determining team class assignment using SDHSAA ADM numbers. ....	4
<b>General Rules</b> .....	6
<b>Regional and State Tournaments</b> .....	7
28. GUIDELINES ON HANDLING LIGHTNING OR THUNDER DISTURBANCES: .....	11
<b>Equipment</b> .....	12
<b>Enforcement of SD VFW Jewelry Rule:</b> .....	13
<b>Regulations</b> .....	13
7. Pace of play guidelines (at discretion of VFW Baseball Representative, Chief Umpire or Tournament Director):.....	14
d. COURTESY RUNNERS .....	14
e. AFTER PUTOUTS .....	14
13. Bench and Field Conduct .....	18
14. Coaches Code of Ethics .....	20
<b>13-14 Year Old Regulations</b> .....	20
<b>South Dakota VFW Baseball Code of Sportsmanship</b> .....	21

# South Dakota VFW Baseball Rules

16U and 14U  
January 1, 2021

## ELIGIBILITY

1. Competition is open to boys and girls who have not reached his/her 17<sup>th</sup> birthday (16U) or 15<sup>th</sup> birthday (14U) before **January 1<sup>st</sup>** of the current year. In order to be eligible for the VFW 16U and/or 14U Baseball program, his/her name must be on the state tournament roster.
2. If a player is found ineligible, he/she shall be disqualified immediately. In the case a player is found guilty of losing his or her amateur status only, the player should be disqualified. In all other cases where the player is found ineligible the entire team shall be disqualified and all games forfeited that have been played up to that point in time.
3. A local baseball association or community attempting to register with the VFW for postseason play must register their oldest team (19U, 16U, 14U, 12U, 10U), if the community has that particular team. If the association chooses not to do so, the VFW baseball administration will not recognize them as a governing body of local baseball in their specific area. This may void any and all registrations from said community/association. Exceptions and extenuating circumstances will be ruled on by the VFW administration.
4. A VFW Baseball team and players must register online at [www.sdvwfbaseball.com](http://www.sdvwfbaseball.com)
  - a. Early registration fee is **\$175** per team until **May 1**.
  - b. Registration fee is **\$200** per team from May 2 until June 15. Entry form and rosters are **due by June 15<sup>th</sup>**.
  - c. **14U and 16U** late registration is **\$225** per team from June 16 until **June 21<sup>st</sup>**. It is imperative **14U and 16U** registration/rosters be completed by **June 21<sup>st</sup>** to allow region brackets/seeding to be completed no later than **June 25<sup>th</sup>**.
  - d. **10U and 12U** late registration of **\$225** will be accepted until **June 25<sup>th</sup>**.
  - e. Extremely late registration: All age division team initial registration may be accepted on a case-by-case basis until **June 30<sup>th</sup>** and the fee will be **\$250**. After brackets are posted, **14U and 16U** team acceptance into tournament requires 2/3 approval of the teams in their prospective region and the fee will be **\$250**.
  - f. Team registration will include Team's name, Sponsor's name, Coaches Name, information, phone, cell phone, address and email.
  - g. Team roster must have the following player information by June 21<sup>st</sup>: **uniform number, first and last name, address/city of primary residence, school attended the last school year or will feed into for 10U/12U and date of birth**.

Initial team rosters with **complete** player information, including school information, must be posted by **June 21<sup>st</sup>**. If your team roster doesn't have the information necessary to determine your class assignment, VFW Baseball reserves the right to move you to a higher class or disqualify the team without refund.

- h. You may list unlimited players on the team roster however, VFW Baseball provides 14 medals per team for 10U and 18 medals per team for 12U, 14U and 16U State Tournaments. VFW Baseball will provide vendor information for purchasing additional medals as required.
  - i. **June 21<sup>th</sup>** is the cutoff date for all roster changes to be posted on the website, late roster changes for all age divisions will be on a case-by-case basis and coordinated with the VFW Baseball Chairman (**do not** post rosters to the website after **June 21<sup>st</sup>**).
5. All protests of player's eligibility or rules interpretation must be specific with definite proof.
- a. Regional Coordinators will decide on issues on the local level. If a regional coordinator is a coach of a team within that region, consultation with the Director of Baseball Operations and/or Department of SD Baseball Chairman should take place and if conflict of interest is apparent, the ruling shall be made by the Director of Baseball Operations and/or Department of SD Baseball Chairman.
  - b. Director of Baseball Operations, Department of SD VFW Baseball Chairman, SD VFW Commander, or SD VFW Quartermaster shall render decision as they pertain to the protests directed to any of them on the state level.
  - c. All appeals on all levels must be in writing to the next higher authority within 48 hours after the decision has been rendered at each level.
  - d. No protests will be allowed on judgments by umpires in league and/or tournament competition.
  - e. Any umpire's decision which involves judgment, such as whether a hit is fair or foul, whether a pitch is a strike or a ball, or whether a runner is safe or out, is final. But if there is reasonable doubt about some decision being in conflict with the rules, the head coach or designated head coach may ask that the correct ruling be made. The umpire making the decision may ask another umpire for information before making a final decision. No umpire shall criticize or interfere with another umpire's decision unless asked by the one making it. All protests of this nature will be settled on the field at the time of the dispute.
    - i. The umpire-in-chief sometimes asks for aid from the base umpire when there is a question as to whether a batter's "half swing" is such as to be called a strike. As an aid in deciding, the umpire may note whether the swing carried the barrel of the bat past the body of the batter, but final decision is based on whether the batter actually struck at the ball.
    - ii. The use of videotape or equipment by game officials for the purpose of making calls or rendering decisions is prohibited.

- iii. No umpire may be replaced during a game unless he becomes ill or is injured. His right to disqualify players or to remove nonplayers for objecting to decisions or for unsportsmanlike conduct is absolute.
  - f. In regional or state competition on the field, decisions governing interpretation of rules may be appealed to the tournament officials; however, in most cases the umpire's decision will be upheld.
  - g. No questions of eligibility may be raised after the first pitch of the second round in tournament play since all rosters and age verification certificates have been checked prior to the first game and the same player's name as appears on the score book appeared on the checked roster for the complete tournament.
6. A team seeking entrance into a South Dakota VFW State Baseball Tournament (Regional & State Tournaments) must be sanctioned by their local VFW post. If the local VFW Post does not provide a VFW program for its area youth, a team seeking to participate in a South Dakota VFW Regional, League play and/or State Tournament must be sanctioned and/or approved in the following priority order:
- a. Local Youth Baseball Association
  - b. City Recreation Department
  - c. Highest Ranking City Official
7. A notice of approval must be included from the governing body with registration. The entry form and fee must be presented by the local governing unit. For the purposes of clarification, the mailing address of the registering team shall be used as the point of origin. The youth baseball association nearest to a team's "point of origin" must grant approval.
8. If a player attempts to play for another team outside of his or her local governing baseball association where he or she attended school the previous year, he or she is required to be released by his or her local governing baseball association.
9. (19U, 16U, 14U, 12U, 10U & 8U) A local baseball association or community wishing to register a team with the VFW will be classified by the Director of Baseball Operations and/or VFW Baseball Chairman. The Team Average Daily Members (ADM) number will be determined using Eligibility Rule #11.
10. A team wishing to register must have a minimum of at least **80%** of their players from its local governing baseball association from where they are attempting to be sanctioned.
11. Determining team class assignment using SDHSAA ADM numbers.
- a. Classification is determined by Average Daily Membership (ADM) as defined by the South Dakota High School Activities Association. The school district or sports co-op paired with sanctioning organization location will be used to determine starting ADM.

- b. The South Dakota High School Activities Association [Alphabetical Listing](#) (or the SDHSAA [Non-Member Schools Classification](#)) web page for ADMs will be used to determine team total ADM. Your VFW Baseball team Co-op must be listed on the SDHSAA Cooperative page under the Football listing to be a valid as one sanctioning organization.
- c. **“No School” Exception:** If a sanctioning organization does not have a school located in the same town as their team, they can use the players with addresses where their baseball field is located to determine their ADM. The ADM will be determined by the school where the majority of the team is enrolled. If the player doesn't have an address with the field's zip code, they will be treated as a pick-up player requiring a release unless they are enrolled at the school determining the team's ADM.
- d. As a **general rule of thumb** an ADM of 150 and below will be considered Class B and above 150 will be Class A. VFW Baseball may be required to move higher ADM Class B schools to Class A tournaments to facilitate region and state competition. (As a **general rule of thumb**, an ADM of highest SDHSAA Class A school (currently approx. **450**) and above will be considered Class AA.)
- e. Extenuating circumstances (divorce, non-custodial parents/grandparents) will be ruled on by the administration to determine the impact to the base ADM. The player may also require a release for from the team he is leaving.
- f. **In addition, teams may be moved to reasonably balance regions up until July 1.**
- g. Any team is allowed two pick-up players from other towns/schools as long as those towns/schools do not have a team at that particular age group.
- h. No out of state (unless a member of the sanctioning organization's SDHSAA sports co-op) or class AA pick-up players unless there are extenuating circumstances and approved by SD VFW Baseball Chairman.
- i. A Class A/B team will be allowed two release/pickup players without adding their ADM numbers.
- j. Class A/B team with more than two release or pickup players from another town/school on a roster will result in all ADM numbers being added to the registering team's ADM based on the sanctioning organization. The addition of ADMs to a team may or may not reclassify them into a higher class or result in forfeit without refund.
- k. Private and/or Homeschooled kids are exceptions to being added to the registering team's ADM, and/or being required to be released but will be

decided by the Director of Baseball Operations and/or Department of SD Baseball Chairman.

- I. Extenuating circumstances (non-custodial parents, etc.) will be taken under advisement.

## **General Rules**

1. For all purposes, the first game of your team's 14U and 16U age division regional tournaments will be considered as the beginning of the VFW Baseball season.
2. A boy or girl may not participate in VFW baseball and any other baseball program in the same season. However, subject to approval of the Director of Baseball Operations, an entire VFW Baseball team may be registered in a program covering the ages of 13-14 and 15-16, for example, Babe Ruth, Pony, Colt Leagues and USSSA and if so registered all members of the VFW team shall be eligible even though the team is registered in the Babe Ruth, Pony, Colt Leagues and USSSA or some other formally organized baseball program.
  - a. Exception to this rule will be allowed for teams who are signed up in 16U Class A and 16U Class B VFW Programs. These teams will be allowed unlimited players on their team to play also with a South Dakota Senior American Legion B or A Program and [Community Amateur Team](#).
  - b. Players registered on a VFW team can play on an American Legion team and unlimited players from a registered **Senior American Legion Team** can play on a VFW team. Names of the players, roster of Senior American Legion team and birth certificates must be attached to the VFW Roster and Team Entry Form.
  - c. Members of teams must be part of the same organized local governing body for baseball in the community. South Dakota VFW **pitching rules** will always apply. These other affiliations must be noted on your VFW team registration or disqualification may result. [A player on an Amateur Team Roster is prohibited from pitching for that Amateur Team during their VFW Age Division Season.](#)
3. A player can be listed on multiple teams in separate age divisions, but a boy or girl can only be listed on one 8U, one 10U, one 12U, one 14U, one 16U and one 19U roster.
4. It is the duty of the Director of Baseball Operations to select regional, state tournament dates for VFW Baseball Chairman approval as well as facilitate league schedules.
5. It is the duty of the Director of Baseball Operations to make the drawings for the state tournaments. State tournament A and B classes Regional Champs vs. Regional Runners up pairings will be drawn by the Director of Baseball Operations and/or Baseball Chairman.

6. In accordance with the Department of SD By Laws (dated 06/2018), Each Post or Community that registered a team will receive a delegate vote at the Annual Meeting for each team they registered the previous season not to exceed 4 votes.
7. All proposed rule changes must be submitted in writing to the VFW Baseball Chairman no later than **July 15** of each year or they will not be considered at the annual meeting unless two-thirds of those present and eligible to vote so determine. Rules committee will meet as directed by the Baseball Chairman. **The VFW Executive committee may make rule adjustments for the good of VFW Baseball with the approval of the Baseball Chairman.**
8. Proposed rule changes should be posted to the website 1 week prior to annual meeting to be held on the **3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in August** or as determined by the VFW Baseball Chairman.

## **Regional and State Tournaments**

1. A regional tournament consists of teams from one area or region participating against each other.
2. The 16U and 14U State Tournament brackets should be considered as **tentative and subject to change**. The draw posted is final but the actual game times on Friday may change. The final state bracket will have all the teams participating listed with the Host Team playing the last game on Friday evening thereby necessitating the swapping of brackets.
3. All 16U and 14U regional and state tournaments shall be played on a diamond (facility) with regulation distances between bases and between pitching mound to home plate. In addition, the distance from home plate to the right and left field corners shall be at least 275 feet. The distance from home plate to straightaway center field shall be at least 300 feet. The infield will consist of turf, either real or artificial.
4. Entrants in the Regional Tournaments must be decided by the SD VFW Baseball Chairman and SD VFW Director of Baseball Operations as soon as possible. Regional Tournament sites will be determined by Regional Coordinators and approved by the SD VFW Director of Baseball Operations. SD VFW Baseball Chairman and/or Director of Baseball Operations will make the drawings for Regional Tournaments. Before any 16U Class A or 16U Class B Regional Tournaments are held, the VFW SD 14U Class A and Class B Tournaments must be completed. This is to facilitate teams who have 13 or 14-year old players on their 16U Class A or Class B teams.
5. Regional Tournaments may be held up to 1 week prior to the 16U and 14U State Tournaments. The 16U Regional Tournaments should be completed by the Friday

prior to the state tournament start. The 14U Regional Tournaments should attempt be completed by the Thursday but no later than the Friday prior to the state tournament start. This will allow the State Tournament Host Committees the weekend to communicate and collect data from the attending teams. In addition, this will allow the 14U Regional Tournaments to conclude prior to the start of the 10U/12U State Tournament weekend.

6. All VFW Baseball Tournaments games shall be 7 innings duration unless a team is leading by 10 runs at the end of 5 innings, 4 ½ innings if the home team is leading by 10 runs, or if a team is leading by that number of runs any complete inning thereafter. A team leading by 15 runs or more after 3 complete innings, or any complete inning thereafter until the ten-run rule becomes effective will be declared the winner.
7. GameChanger App is **required** to be used for 19U/16U/14U Region and State Tournaments as well as 10U/12U Championship Sundays. The GameChanger App is the preferred method of scoring during all pool play games. Department of SD VFW Baseball Webmaster will set up all region and state tournament games and is the preferred method for keeping tournament stats. Tournament hosts and region coordinators are responsible for providing GameChanger score keepers.
8. If a team elects to not play the region championship game, the team forfeits their position in the state tournament and the next placed team will participate in the state tournament. A written (email) request for a waiver will be evaluated by VFW Baseball Administration in coordination with the Host Tournament Director/Region Coordinator to determine validity.
9. All of the umpires for regional and state tournaments must be registered. A certified umpire shall act as the umpire-in-chief at **all age divisions**. All games must have at least two umpires in state tournaments. It is highly encouraged that an Umpire crew of three be used on Championship Sunday for 16U and 14U Class A and Class B State Tournaments.
10. All 16U and 14U regional tournaments shall be double elimination or pool play with the decision to be made by SD VFW Baseball Chairman and Director of Baseball Operations. Home team will be established and posted on the region bracket prior to region start by the SD VFW Baseball Chairman using a random number process. SD VFW Baseball may elect to have a “Sweet 14 One or Done” games between regions and the 16U/14U State Tournament.
11. All 16U and 14U Class A and B State Tournaments shall be single elimination. When a four region (champions and runner up advancing to the state tournament) format is used, the four regional champions will be awarded home team status in the first round. The “higher” seed will be home team throughout the bracket. Coin flip will be used to determine home/away team when the teams have the same seeding. All



registered teams must play in a qualifying regional tournament. If pool play format is used in an “open” state tournament, there would be no need for a qualifying regional tournament.

12. Insurance is mandatory for each team in tournament play. A copy must be submitted online at the SD VFW Baseball Website during initial registration.  
Minimum Insurance Requirements per team:
  - a. General Liability: \$2,000,000 Occurrence
  - b. \$100,000 Accident Medical | \$5,000 AD&D
  - c. At least a \$250 deductible for youth and \$500 deductible for adults
  - d. Excess Liability Coverage Increase General Liability Per Occurrence by \$3,000,000 each (total of \$5M)
13. All teams, including coaches, shall be in baseball uniforms for tournament play. If a coach or team player is not in uniform, they will not be allowed on the field. All 16U and 14U uniforms **must have a VFW patch or other VFW identifiable method** on the jersey with a team determined, consistent location. SD VFW Baseball will provide and send 15 patches to each team that didn't receive 15 patches in 2018. Additional patches are available through the Department of SD VFW Baseball Chairman at \$2 per patch.
14. When the 16U and 14U Class A and Class B tournaments consists of two teams from each region, the champion and runner-up. The region hosting the state tournament will have a host team, that team will replace the runner-up if it does not place 1st or 2nd in their regional tournament.
15. The Baseball Advisory Committee will announce the sites of the State Tournament by January 31. **State tournament hosting fees** will be based on the following formula: \$25 per team participating in the State Tournament; minimum fee \$200 and maximum fee of \$600 apply.
16. Fee shall be paid to the Department of SD VFW Headquarters within 30 days after the completion of the tournament.
17. The game to determine 7th and 8th place in the 16U and 14U Class A and B State Tournaments will not be played in any of the tournaments.
18. Any team that does not report to play or notify the tournament officials at any regional or state tournament of a justifiable reason for being late by 30 minutes past the time established to play, shall forfeit the game.
19. State tournaments will not be played on any diamond where another baseball tournament is being played on the same diamond on the same dates.
20. Trophies shall be furnished for state tournaments by the Department of South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars. Trophies for all state tournaments with eight team

format shall be awarded to the winner, runner-up, third and fifth place winners. Individual medals will also be presented to the members of all the teams that participate in the tournament. Trophies for all state tournaments with a pool play format shall be awarded to the winner, runner-up and third place winner and in some tournaments, there may be a 4th place trophy. Individual medals will be presented to members of the top four teams. Sportsmanship Team Plaque will be presented in the memory of Louie Thury by the South Dakota Baseball Umpire Association for the 16U Class A and B Tournaments. Sportsmanship Team Plaque will be presented in memory of William Radigan by the Department of South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars for the 14U Class A and B Tournaments. Region Champion awards for 14U and 16U will be presented during the state tournament opening ceremony. These awards are the only awards presented at the VFW State Tournament.

21. Photo copies of Birth, Baptismal or Hospital Certificates, Certified Copy from the Bureau of Vital Statistics or a valid Driver's License **will need to be presented** at the regional and state tournaments for cross reference with the official VFW Baseball roster for age verification.
22. The official Team rosters used for age verification to participate in regional and state tournament play will be submitted by VFW Baseball to the region coordinator/tournament director as early as possible before the tournament starts. Coaches **are required** to bring age verification documents to all age division regional and state tournaments. It is necessary to check birth age verification certificates and rosters at regional and state tournaments. Teams participating in a VFW State Tournament should send rosters with uniform numbers and a team picture to their Tournament Director to meet the tournament publishing deadline.
23. Tournament officials have complete autonomy on taking whatever action is necessary in behavior problems of participants. Severe cases involving coaches, players and spectators/fans may result in suspension or disqualification. Return to play will be determined by the VFW Baseball Chairman.
24. In interest of time all rained out or postponed championship round ball games in tournament play will begin from point of stoppage unless the Ten Run Rule has taken effect. It is recommended during regular league play that if a game is rained out it should be called a game if five or more innings have been played.
25. Gate fees will not exceed five dollars per adult per day for all VFW Baseball authorized activities including region tournaments.
26. Pool Play Tie Breakers Formats for all VFW Baseball Tournaments.
  - a. Win-loss record in pool play
  - b. Head-to-head competition provided all teams have played each other.
  - c. Fewest runs allowed (overall).

- d. Best run differential in all pool play games (maximum per game run differential of +10 or -10).

27. If, in the event of a 3-way tie or more, the 3-way tie is broken either before step #4 or upon completion of step #4 and a 2-way tie still remains, the two remaining tied teams will revert back to step #2 and repeat the tie-breaker criteria from that point in order to break the tie. In the event of forfeit in Divisional/Pool Play, the non-forfeiting teams will be credited with a 10-run differential victory. Teams that forfeit a game cannot advance in tournament play.

## 28. GUIDELINES ON HANDLING LIGHTNING OR THUNDER DISTURBANCES:

These guidelines provide a default policy to those responsible or sharing duties for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of contests based on the presence of lightning or thunder.

### a. PROACTIVE PLANNING

- i. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during activities.
- ii. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safer areas and determine the amount of time needed to get everyone to a designated safer area: A designated safer place is a substantial building with plumbing and wiring where people live or work, such as a school, gymnasium or library. An alternate safer place from the threat of lightning is a fully enclosed (not convertible or soft top) metal car or school bus.

### b. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:

- i. When thunder is heard or lightning is seen\*, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location immediately.
- ii. 30-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed\* prior to resuming play.
- iii. Any subsequent thunder or lightning\* after the beginning of the 30- minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
- iv. When lightning-detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology could be used to assist in making a decision to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within **10 miles** of the event location. However, you should never depend on the reliability of these devices and, thus, hearing thunder or seeing lightning\* should always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning detection device. \* – At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.

29. The VFW Creed shall be said before every game of VFW Regional and State Tournaments; **at all levels.**

## **Equipment**

1. Bat requirements for 16U Age Division. All bats must be wood or in accordance with BBCOR Bat Standards and have the official BBCOR stamp. Any illegal bats will be removed from the game and the batter is out.
2. Bat requirements for 14U Age Division. All bats for 14U teams must be in accordance with BBCOR Bat Standard or USABAT Standard. The bat shall include the official stamp of the Little League Baseball organization, BBCOR or state Little League approved. See this [link for USABAT](#). Any illegal bats will be removed from the game and the batter is out.
3. The Wilson A1010 baseball is the official SD VFW Baseball Program baseballs and will be used for all age divisions state and region tournament games.
4. A batter without protective headgear including ear protectors will be declared out when the pitcher comes to the set position, or begins his motion. Protective helmet including ear protectors is required for all base runners, and if the base runner refuses to put on a helmet after being advised by the umpire, he shall be automatically out.
5. Catchers must wear protective headgear and throat protectors (hockey style mask), chest pad and catcher's cup. Warm-up catchers must wear protective headgear and throat protectors.
6. Courtesy runners may be used for pitchers and catchers attaining first base at any time. The same courtesy runner cannot be used for the pitcher and catcher in the same inning. Courtesy runners are not allowed for pinch hitters for catchers. A player, who has already participated in the game, is not eligible to be a courtesy runner (except under injury substitution).
7. Any player equipment judged by the umpire to be unreasonably dangerous is illegal.
8. Any questions regarding legality of a player's equipment shall be resolved by the umpire-in-chief.
9. Non-traditional playing equipment must be reviewed by the VFW Baseball Rules Committee before it will be permitted to be used.
10. Jewelry shall not be worn except for religious or medical medals. A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical alert must be taped and may be visible.

## **Enforcement of SD VFW Jewelry Rule:**

Items that are attached except medical appliances/devices are considered to be jewelry. The restriction of jewelry is primarily for risk minimization for the wearer and for the opponent. Earrings and various other piercings can be problematic for a player if the piercing gets caught on equipment and torn away from the body. Obviously, if a physician has provided documentation in support of a particular piercing, the local state association has the latitude (with proper justification) to make a special accommodation for the player. We need to be more vigilant to protect our players and their opponents

11. VFW Patch must be worn on 19U, 16U and 14U uniform jersey with a team consistent location to be determined by the team. SD VFW Baseball will provide and send 15 patches to each team that didn't receive 15 patches in 2018. Additional patches are available through the Department of SD VFW Baseball Chairman at \$2 per patch.

## **Regulations**

1. If a pitcher is removed from the mound during the game he **may not** return to the mound in the same game though he is retained in the lineup.
2. Designated hitters may be used in VFW Baseball for any player. Teams participating in 16U, 14U and 12U age division VFW Baseball sanctioned tournaments may utilize one extra hitter as well as the designated hitter.
3. South Dakota VFW Baseball utilizes the NFHS rule for re-entry. Any of the starting players may be withdrawn and re-entered once, including a player who was the designated hitter, provided such player occupies the same batting position whenever he is in the lineup. A substitute who is withdrawn may not re-enter.
4. All protests will be decided by the official on the level where they occur, but may be appealed to the next higher authority. The final authority resides with the VFW Baseball Executive Committee.
5. Adult managers who are at least 18 years of age only will be allowed in the coaching boxes, with permission granted to use one player in one box through state tournament play. Players in the coaching box must wear a helmet with ear protection. All 14U and 16U coaches must wear helmets in a coaching box.
6. Major League Baseball rules of baseball will apply to all VFW Baseball games except in all cases where VFW League Rules and Regulations conflict with major league professional rules, VFW Baseball rules will supersede professional rules. In the event of a serious injury and there are no other players on the bench who have not played, the last player taken out may be placed back in the game in place of the injured player or players. In the alternative, in a serious injury situation, a team may

continue to play with eight players and the team shall receive an automatic out at such player(s) turn at bat. The applicability of the rule shall be determined by the head umpire.

7. Pace of play guidelines (at discretion of VFW Baseball Representative, Chief Umpire or Tournament Director):
  - a. Batter must keep one foot in the batter's box between pitches
  - b. Time between innings will be 3 minutes or less to allow the pitcher 4 (or less) warm-up pitches and catcher 1 throw-down.
  - c. A courtesy runner may be substituted for the catcher or pitcher in all age divisions at any point in the game.
  - d. COURTESY RUNNERS
    - i. At any time, the team at bat may use courtesy runners for the pitcher and/or the catcher. In the event that the offensive team bats around, the pitcher and/or catcher who had a courtesy runner inserted on their behalf may bat in their normal position in the batting order.
    - ii. The same individual runner may not be used for both positions (pitcher and catcher) during the same inning.
    - iii. Neither the pitcher nor the catcher will be required to leave the game under such circumstances.
    - iv. Players who have participated in the game in any other capacity are ineligible to serve as courtesy runners.
    - v. A player may not run as a courtesy runner for the pitcher or the catcher and then be used as a substitute for another player in that half inning.
    - vi. If an injury, illness or ejection occurs and no other runners are available, the courtesy runner may be used as a substitute.
    - vii. The umpire-in-chief shall record courtesy runner participation and also announce it to the scorer.
    - viii. A player who violates the courtesy-runner rule is considered to be an illegal substitute. Should an injury, illness or ejection occur to the courtesy runner, another courtesy runner for the pitcher or catcher may run.
  - e. AFTER PUTOUTS
    - i. After a putout in the outfield and with no runners on base, the ball shall be thrown to a cutoff man and, if desired, to one additional infielder before being returned to the pitcher for delivery to the next batter.
    - ii. After a putout in the infield and with no runners on base, the ball shall be returned directly to the pitcher.
    - iii. Following the final out in any inning, the ball shall be given to the nearest umpire. The plate umpire shall give the ball to the catcher. The base umpire shall place the ball on the pitcher's plate.
8. South Dakota VFW Baseball will apply, execute and enforce pitch count rules in addition to providing several age appropriate recommendations listed below. Pitch

Smart ([USA Baseball's Pitch Smart Guidelines](#)) are a series of practical, age-appropriate guidelines to help parents, players and coaches avoid overuse injuries and foster long, healthy careers for youth pitchers. VFW Baseball elected to establish these rules to ensure the safety, wellbeing and yet have fun while playing in VFW sponsored events. However, it's **ultimately the responsibility** of the coaches, parents and the athlete to ensure that the player follows the guidelines for his age group over the course of the year especially since they will often play in multiple leagues with different affiliations covering different times of the year.

- a. Pitch count limits and required rest recommendations (**required** for VFW sanctioned events)

Age Division	Daily Max Pitch Count	Required Rest (Pitches)					
		0 Days	1 Days	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days	5 Days
7-8	<b>50</b>	1-20	21-35	36-50	N/A	N/A	N/A
9-10	<b>75</b>	1-25	26-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
11-12	<b>85</b>	1-25	26-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
13-14	<b>95</b>	1-30	31-40	41-50	51-65	66+	N/A
15-16	<b>95</b>	1-35	36-45	46-60	61-75	76+	N/A

**Exception:** If a pitcher reaches the Daily MAX Pitch Count limit, “zero” days or 1 day rest count imposed above for his/her age division while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until any one of the following conditions occurs: **1.** The batter reaches base; **2.** That batter is put out; **3.** The third out is made to complete the half-inning.

When identified, the days rest is in effect however, the total pitch count will carry over to the Max Daily Pitch Count if the pitcher pitches another game the same day. For example, if the pitcher reaches 35 pitches but requires 40 pitches to finish the batter, the pitcher will qualify for “zero” rest days but have a daily pitch count of 40 thus impacting the number of pitches during his second outing on the same day.

**NOTE 1:** A pitcher who delivers **46** or more pitches in a game cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of the day.

**NOTE 2:** Any player who has played the position of catcher **in more than four innings** in a **calendar** day is **NOT** eligible to pitch on that calendar day.

**NOTE 3:** Intentional walk: only pitches thrown by the pitcher will be counted (**doesn't throw, doesn't count**).

**NOTE 4:** A player **may** appear in a game as a pitcher for three consecutive days but will not exceed their zero days rest pitch count per day the first two days and the 1-days rest pitch count for the 3<sup>rd</sup> day. For example; 16U coach must identify “last batter” prior to reaching zero days rest pitch count of 35 (may finish the batter as detailed above) the first two days but the coach must identify “last batter” prior to reaching 1-days rest pitch count of 45 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day 16U: 35, 35, **45** and 14U: 30, 30, **40**).

**NOTE 5:** Pitchers once **removed** from the mound will not return to the mound in the same game.

b. **10U and 12U** additional recommendations

- i. Focus on athleticism, physical fitness and fun
- ii. Focus on learning baseball rules, general techniques and teamwork
- iii. Do not exceed 80 combined **innings** pitched in any 12-month period
- iv. Take at least 4 months off from throwing every year, with at least 2-3 of those months being continuous
- v. Make sure to properly warm up before pitching
- vi. Set and follow pitch-count limits and required rest periods
- vii. Avoid throwing pitches other than fastballs and change-ups
- viii. Avoid playing for multiple teams at the same time
- ix. Avoid playing catcher while not pitching
- x. Players should not pitch in multiple games on the same day
- xi. Play other sports during the course of the year
- xii. Monitor for other signs of fatigue

c. **14U and 16U** additional recommendations

- i. Players can begin using breaking pitches after developing consistent fastball and changeup
- ii. Do not exceed 100 combined **innings** pitched in any 12-month period
- iii. Take at least 4 months off from throwing every year, with at least 2-3 of those months being continuous
- iv. Make sure to properly warm up before pitching
- v. Set and follow pitch-count limits and required rest periods
- vi. Avoid playing for multiple teams at the same time
- vii. Avoid playing catcher while not pitching
- viii. Players should not pitch in multiple games on the same day
- ix. Play other sports during the course of the year
- x. Monitor for other signs of fatigue

- d. For VFW sanctioned events, the host committee and/or the regional coordinator (or designee) is responsible for keeping the official pitch count. During VFW sanctioned games, both coaches, umpire crew chief (or designated official) and official book are responsible for keeping the pitch count. Between innings or as required, the coaches, umpire crew and



official book (game changer app if used) will compare pitch count. The official book pitch count will be used as final. Disagreements on pitch count may be brought to the VFW Director of Operations or VFW Chairman for arbitration. When a pitcher has been discovered to have exceeded the above age appropriate daily max pitch count, they will be removed from the mound, IAW with the notes above, and allowed to play any position EXCEPT catcher. In addition, the player will be placed in rest status determined by the number of pitches performed.

9. All games scheduled on a definite date will be considered part of that day's play even though the scheduled is not completed until past midnight. In the event of interruption due to weather conditions and participating teams leave the ball park because the complex is closed for that session, all pitching records will be counted for the calendar day that they are started in.
10. No more than two complete games will be played by any one team in any one day, except when a pool play format is used.
11. A legal slide can be either feet first or head first. If a runner slides feet first, at least one leg and buttock shall be on the ground. If a runner slides, he must slide within reach of the base with either a hand or a foot. A runner may slide or run in a direction away from the field to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder. A slide is illegal if:
  - a. The runner uses a rolling, cross-body or pop-up slide into the fielder, or
  - b. The runner's raised leg is higher than the fielder's knee when the fielder is in a standing position, or
  - c. The runner goes beyond the base and then makes contact with or alters the play of the fielder, or
  - d. The runner slashes or kicks the fielder with either leg, or
  - e. The runner tries to injure the fielder, or
  - f. The runner, on a force play, does not slide on the ground and in a direct line between the two bases.
  - g. Any player may be ejected from a game for flagrant conduct, which in the umpire's judgment; either injures or is intended to injure another player.

Force Play Slide Rule Simply stated (**19U/16U/14U**), the runner **never** has to slide. However, on a force play when they do slide, it must be legal and in a direct line between the two bases. A runner may slide or run in a direction away from the fielder to

avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder. The force play slide rule is in effect at second, third and home plate.

12. The Director of Baseball Operations is authorized to move a team to a different class after reviewing and consulting the situation with the Department of SD Baseball Chairman. Such ruling should be made by **July 2<sup>nd</sup>**.

### 13. Bench and Field Conduct

- a. A coach, player, substitute, attendant or other bench personnel shall not:
  - i. Leave the dugout during a live ball for an unauthorized purpose;
  - ii. Fake a tag without the ball;
  - iii. Carelessly throw a bat;
  - iv. Wear jewelry (players participating in the game) or wear bandannas;
  - v. Hit the ball to players on defense after the game has started;

**PENALTY:** At the end of playing action, the umpire shall issue a warning to the coach of the team involved and the next offender on that team shall be ejected. In (ii), it is also obstruction.

- vi. Commit any unsportsmanlike act to include, but not limited to,
  - 1. Use of words or actions to incite or attempt to incite spectators - demonstrations,
  - 2. Use of profanity, intimidation tactics, remarks reflecting unfavorably upon any other person, or taunting or baiting. SD VFW Baseball disapproves of any form of taunting.
  - 3. Use of any language intended to intimidate,
  - 4. Behavior in any manner not in accordance with the spirit of fair play;
  - 5. Being in live ball territory (excluding team's bullpen area) during the opponent's infield practice prior to the start of the game.
  - 6. Any member of the coaching staff who is not the head coach (or designee) leaving the vicinity of the dugout or coaching box to dispute a judgment call by an umpire.
  - 7. Confronting or directing unsportsmanlike conduct to the umpires after the game has concluded and until the umpires have departed the game site.
- vii. Enter the area behind the catcher while the opposing pitcher and catcher are in their positions;
- viii. Use of any object in his possession in the coach's box other than a stopwatch, rule book (hard copy), scorebook;
- ix. Be outside the designated dugout (bench) or bullpen area if not a batter, runner, on-deck batter, in the coach's box or one of the nine players on defense;
- x. Charge an umpire;
- xi. Use amplifiers or bullhorns for coaching purposes during the course of the game;

**PENALTY:** The umpire shall warn the offender unless the offense is judged to be major, in which case an ejection shall occur. A warning may be verbal or written. If written, the offender shall be restricted to the bench/dugout for the remainder of the game. If a coach has previously received a verbal warning, he shall receive a written warning and be restricted to the bench/dugout for the remainder of the game. If a coach has previously received a written warning, he shall be ejected for any subsequent offense. Any offense judged to be major in nature shall result in an immediate ejection. For coaches who violate vii (1-5), vii, viii, ix, x or xi, the umpire may: (1) issue a verbal warning to the offender, (2) issue a written warning to the offender (any offender receiving a written warning shall be restricted to the bench/dugout for the remainder of the game), or (3) eject the offender for a major offense. For violation of vi(6) both the head coach and the offending coach shall receive a written warning and be restricted to the dugout for the remainder of the game unless the offense is so severe the umpire may eject the offender and restrict or eject the head coach. A coach may leave the bench/dugout to attend to a player who becomes ill or injured. In vi(7), SD VFW Executive Committee shall determine appropriate action.

1. Deliberately throw a bat, helmet, etc.;
2. Intentionally moving to a position to be hit in the head by a pitch
3. Initiate malicious contact on offense or defense;
4. Call "Time" or use any command or commit any act for the purpose of causing a balk;
5. Use tobacco or tobacco-like products within the confines of the field;
6. Leave their positions or bench area during a fight or physical confrontation; or
7. Have physical contact, spit, kick dirt or engage in any other physical action directed toward an umpire.

**PENALTY:** The umpire shall eject the offender from the game. Failure to comply shall result in game being forfeited. In (2), the ball is immediately dead, if on offense, the player is ejected and declared out, unless he has already scored. If the defense commits the malicious contact, the player is ejected; the umpire shall rule either safe or out on the play and award the runner(s) the appropriate base(s) he felt they would have obtained if the malicious contact had not occurred. In (5), a coach who attempts to prevent a fight or restore order is not in violation of the rule. In (7), a player or coach consciously makes forceful physical contact with an umpiring official, that player or coach will be ejected for the remainder of that contest, as well as the following 3 games. The suspension may be reviewed and altered by the SD VFW Baseball Director of Baseball Operations as coordinated with the SD VFW Baseball Chairman.

- b. A coach who is ejected shall leave the vicinity of the playing area immediately and is prohibited from further contact, direct or indirect, with the team during the remainder of the game. He may return when requested to attend to an ill or injured player.

- c. Players loosening up to bat shall remain in the area of their team's on-deck circle while the pitcher is warming up. **PENALTY:** The umpire shall issue a team warning to the coach of the team involved. The next offender on that team shall be ejected.

#### 14. Coaches Code of Ethics

- a. The function of a coach is to educate players through participation in sports competition. Each player should be treated with the utmost respect and his or her welfare should be considered in decisions by the coach at all times. Accordingly, the following guidelines for coaches have been adopted SD VFW Baseball.
- b. The coach shall be aware that he or she has a tremendous influence, for either good or ill, on the education of the student and, thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.
- c. The coach shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession. In all personal contact with officials, region coordinators, tournament directors, SD VFW Baseball administrators, the media and the public, the coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.
- d. The coach shall take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse. The coach shall avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco products when in contact with players.
- e. The coach shall master the contest rules and shall teach them to his or her team members.
- f. The coach shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.
- g. The coach shall exert his or her influence to enhance sportsmanship by spectators, both directly and by working closely with parents and administrators.
- h. The coach shall respect and support game officials.
- i. The coach shall not indulge in conduct which would incite players or spectators against the officials.
- j. Public criticism of officials or players is unethical.
- k. The coach should meet and exchange cordial greetings with the opposing coach to set the correct tone for the event before and after the contest.

### **13-14 Year Old Regulations**

1. **VFW 16U Baseball rules will apply to all games unless a change is listed above.**
2. Competition is open to boys and girls who are 13 and 14 years of age and eligible to play VFW Baseball. A boy or girl who has reached his or her 15th birthday before **January 1st** of the current year is not eligible for the 13-14 year old programs. A boy or girl who is under 13 years of age may play if permission is secured from the SD VFW Baseball Administration prior to the time of play.
3. The 14U State A and B Tournament will be completed before any 16U Class A or B region tournaments are held.

# **South Dakota VFW Baseball Code of Sportsmanship**

(It is recommended that this Code is recited by both teams before a game during the season. At regional and state tournaments, it is a requirement.)

- **Keep the rules.**
- **Keep faith with my teammates.**
- **Keep my temper.**
- **Keep myself fit.**
- **Keep a stout heart in defeat.**
- **Keep pride under control in victory.**
- **Keep a sound soul, a clean mind, and a healthy body.**