“SSP RULES” for FALL 2026

EFFECTIVE 9.18.2026

Unless noted prior to the event, the following “local” rules will ALWAYS be in effect. If the rule is not discussed below, Southern Sports will follow the National Federation High School Rules (NFHS). Southern Sports reserves the right to change the following rules at any time. All teams will be made aware of changes prior to the start of their event. If there is a rules question for younger age groups that are not applicable with NFHS rules, the tournament director will make the final decision on interpretation.

RESPONSIBILITY OF KNOWING AND UNDERSTANDING RULES

It is the sole responsibility of each team’s head coach to understand ALL rules and guidelines that are presented in this document, as well as in the NFHS rule book.

FINAL DECISIONS

The Tournament Director shall have final decision on all tournament questions/decisions.

AGE REQUIREMENT

May 1, 2027 will be the designated date to determine ages. Photocopies of birth certificates MUST be made available upon request.

PLAYER WAIVERS

Every player who participates in a Southern Sports event must have a signed waiver authorized by a parent/guardian. It is the responsibility of the head coach to confirm this is complete, and not allow his/her players to participate without an authorized waiver.

BIRTH CERTIFICATES/PROOF OF AGE

Each team MUST have copies of birth certificates available throughout the tournament. An age protest, like any other protest, requires a $300 cash protest fee. If an age protest is lodged against your team, you MUST provide proof of age (eligibility). If you cannot do so, you lose the protest and the protesting team gets their $300 back. If you are able to prove proper age (and eligibility) for your player, the protesting team loses the protest and the protest fee.

NEW SCHOOL/AGE CUTOFF RULE

- 7U Division Players who turn 8 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible unless they are in the 1st grade. Also, any player turning 9 prior to May 1 will not be eligible. Players who are 7u are eligible for this division regardless of their grade.
- 8U Division Players who turn 9 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible unless they are in the 2nd grade. Also, any player turning 10 prior to May 1 will not be eligible. Players who are 8u are eligible for this division regardless of their grade.
- 9U Division Players who turn 10 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible unless they are in the 3rd grade. Also, any player turning 11 prior to May 1 will not be eligible. Players who are 9u are eligible for this division regardless of their grade.
- 10U Division Players who turn 11 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible unless they are in the 4th grade. Also, any player turning 12 prior to May 1 will not be eligible. Players who are 10u are eligible for this division regardless of their grade.
- 11U Division Players who turn 12 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible unless they are in the 5th grade. Also, any player turning 13 prior to May 1 will not be eligible. Players who are 11u are eligible for this division regardless of their grade.
- 12U Division Players who turn 13 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible unless they are in the 6th grade. Also, any player turning 14 prior to May 1 will not be eligible. Players who are 12u are eligible for this division regardless of their grade.
- 13u Division Players who turn 14 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible unless they are in the 7th grade. Also, any player turning 15 prior to May 1 will not be eligible.
- 14u Division Players who turn 15 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible unless they are in the 8th grade. Also, any player turning 16 prior to May 1 will not be eligible.

***Verification of the new age cutoff must be kept with the team coach/manager at all times, and other **OFFICIAL SCHOOL** documents that confirm current grade level. Failure to provide documentation, upon request, will result in an age/rules violation.

TEAM ROSTERS

All teams must have an online player roster in the Southern Sports Promotion system prior to the first game of each event. If a team has previously submitted an online roster to Southern Sports, that will be treated as the current roster. It is the team's responsibility to make any changes necessary to their Southern Sports roster for the current event. In the event that a roster is challenged, during an event, the current (online or recently submitted) roster will be the roster of record. If a team's roster is challenged, via an official protest, that player must be on the team roster. If the player is not listed, the team will forfeit any games in which that player has played during the event. IF THE CHALLENGED TEAM DOES NOT HAVE A ROSTER OF RECORD, THE TEAM MAY BE FORCED TO FORFEIT GAMES PLAYED TO THAT POINT. THE ONLY WAY TO CHALLENGE A TEAM'S ROSTER IS TO FILE A PROTEST DURING THE GAME AND SUBMIT $300 CASH AS A PROTEST FEE.

Online rosters are internal documents and not available to anyone other than the team and/or Southern Sports.

PLAYERS ON MULTIPLE ROSTERS

No player is allowed to participate on more than one team in the same age group for each event. For example, organization rosters have to designate players on one specific team in conjunction with their submitted rosters. With that said, no player is allowed to play on more than one team in the same division, or age group. PENALTY FOR THIS VIOLATION IS TEAM FORFEIT OF ALL GAMES IN WHICH THE PLAYER PARTICIPATED IN WITH SAID TEAM(S).

MINIMUM PLAYERS

A team can play an official game with no less than 8 players. If a team plays with 8 players, that team must have a designated out for the 9th position in the batting order. If a team loses a player due to injury or illness, a designated out will be recorded in that position of the batting order, if there are no substitutions available.

kept with the team coach/manager. Failure to provide documentation, upon request, will result in an age/rules violation.

COMBINING AGE/CLASSIFICATION GROUPS

Southern Sports Promotions reserves the right to combine age/classification brackets. (Example: 9U with 10U or AAA with Major) This decision will be based on the number of teams that enter into each age group division.

INDIVIDUAL GATE FEES

Southern Sports does charge a gate fee to all who attend events. **At most events, spectators are charged as they enter the complex.**

Cash, Apple Pay, Debit/Credit, and Paypal are all accepted (no $100 bills can be accepted)
ADULTS - $10.00 per person per day
SENIORS (65+) - $7.00 per person per day
KIDS (9yr and older) - $7.00 per person per day
8yrs and under is FREE.

TEAM GATE FEES

At some parks (Dacula Park, Shorty Howell, and other Gwinnett parks), Southern Sports will charge a team gate of $100 per team, in lieu of the individual gate fee. This will be communicated to the head coach several days prior to the event.

LINE-UP OPTIONS

Teams have 5-choices for your lineup: (1) Bat a traditional 9 player line-up, (2) Bat 9 with a DH, (3) Bat 10/Play 9 with an EH, (4) Play 10 or 11 with an EH and a DH or (5) Bat the entire roster (Continuous batting order allows for FREE Defensive Substitutions). Such line-up must be declared before the start of the game and used the entire game. If a team uses a line-up that contains substitute players, all starting players may be removed and re-enter the game once, but must re-enter in their original position in the batting order. Non-starters are not allowed to re-enter. When a starter re-enters, the player in the starter's batting position in the batting order must be removed from the game and is ineligible for the remainder of the game. If a team uses a line-up that contains ten (10) players, the player in the Extra Hitter position has free defensive substitution. If a team uses a continuous line-up, all players other than the nine (9) defensive position players are Extra Hitters and may move freely in defensive positions with the exception of the pitching position. When using the continuous lineup and a player has to leave the game for any reason, that position in the line-up becomes an out when that at bat comes around. A starting pitcher can re-enter the game as a pitcher later in the game. No other pitchers can be pulled from the pitching position and re-enter the game as a pitcher later in the game.

IF A TEAM DOES NOT FOLLOW THIS RULE, IT IS THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OPPOSING HEAD COACH TO STOP PLAY. AT THAT TIME, THE TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR WILL REVIEW THE SITUATION, AND MAKE THE FINAL DECISION ON CONTINUING PLAY.

COURTESY RUNNERS

If using substitutes: As per NFHS rules, a courtesy runner may be used for the pitcher or catcher. The courtesy runner must be a substitute player that has not been in the game. A courtesy runner may run for either the pitcher or catcher, but not both in the same inning. Two courtesy runners (one for pitcher, one for catcher) may be used if the team has eligible substitutes for both roles. If there are no substitutes available, THE TEAM MAY USE THE LAST BATTED OUT AS THE COURTESY RUNNER. THE SAME RUNNER CAN NOT RUN FOR BOTH THE PITCHER AND CATCHER WITHIN THE SAME INNING.

If batting the entire lineup: The last batted out can be used as a courtesy runner for the entire game for the pitcher and catcher. The same runner can not run for both the pitcher and catcher within the same inning. If there is no batted out recorded, the last player to bat that is not actively on base, can then be used as a courtesy runner. If no such player exists, the last person in the lineup can be used.

GAME TIME/START TIME

There is no "grace period" for teams. If a team is not present at game time, it will result in a forfeit. **Game time starts at the completion of the home plate meeting, and the game time will be announced at the conclusion of that meeting**. No changes in games time limits will be allowed…..ALL game time limits will follow what is stated in these rules unless altered ONLY by the tournament director. The umpire crew is the only "official" timed clock. To begin a new inning, there must be time left on the "official clock" when the third out of the previous inning occurs.

GAME BASEBALLS

Teams must provide all game balls. Two new balls are required to begin each game. The baseballs are not required to be a specific brand but must be comparable to Diamond DOL-1 baseballs.

HOME TEAM

Determined by coin flip in pool play. In bracket play the better seeded team will be given choice of home/visitor. Home team is required to keep the official book. The visiting team is required to have an adult manage the field score board (when applicable)

PRE-GAME WARM-UP

All teams are encouraged to warm-up as much as possible before game time. No pre-game infield. Players cannot warm-up in the fair territory area of the infield.

FIELD DIMENSIONS

7u and 8u – 40' Pitching Mound; 60' Base Length
9u and 10u – 46' Pitching Mound; 65' Base Length
11u and 12u – 50' Pitching Mound; 70' Base Length
13u – 54' Pitching Mound; 80' Base Length
14u and Older – 60'6" Pitching Mound; 90' Base Length

BAT RULE (USABats stamped bats are allowed)

7u–12u: There is no restriction on weight or length as long as the bat has been marked with "BPF 1.15" stamp. "USABat" stamped bats are also allowed. Wood bats are allowed.
13u: must swing either a -5 stamped 1.15 BPF, -3 BBCOR or wood.
14u and Older: All bats must be -3 BBCOR or wood.

Effective January 1, 2021, the following bats may not be used in Southern Sports events:
-2015 Demarini CF7 (-5)
-2015 Easton XL1 (-5)-2016 Demarini CF8 (-5), (-8), & (-10)
-2017 Demarini CF Zen Balanced (-8)**
-2017 Demarini CF Zen SL 2 3/4" (-10)**
-2017 Demarini CF Zen Zero Dark 2 3/4" (-10)**
-2017 Demarini CF Zen (-5)
-Louisville Slugger Blue Meta Composite (33/30 model only)
-2018 Dirty South Kamo BB KA 8 (30/22, 31/21, 32/22, 31/23, 32/24 only)
-(Easton) Ghost X (30/20 only - USA Baseball Marked)

****Re-tooled models of these bats may be used in Southern Sports events. Once returned from the manufacturer, these bats will have updated model numbers and new orange end cap and stickers indicating the corrected performance standards.****

TIME LIMIT PER AGE GROUP

All tournament game time limits are:
7u and 8u - 1 hour 30 minutes, or 6 innings
9u and 10u – 1 hour 30 minutes, or 6 innings
11u and 12u - 1 hour 40 minutes, or 6 innings
13u and 14u - 1 hour 40 minutes, or 7 innings

When a 3rd out is made to end an inning, if there is any time left on the official clock, a new inning will start. For example, a new inning will start if there are just seconds left in the game. There is NO rule at Southern Sports that prohibits a new inning from beginning when there is any amount of time remaining on the official clock.

RUN RULES FOR ALL AGE GROUP

After 2nd Inning = 20 runs
After 3rd Inning = 15 runs
After 4th Inning = 10 runs
After 5th, 6th, or 7th Inning = 8 runs

PITCHING LIMITS

It is the responsibility of each team's manager to challenge pitching violations by notifying the umpire and filing a protest with the tournament director. A protest may be filed at any point after the pitcher in violation records any out beyond his legal limit AND while the pitcher in violation is in the game as the pitcher of record. If such violation is the last recorded out of the game, the protest MUST be filed prior to the Umpire and the teams leaving the field of play.

PITCHING LIMITATIONS

8u-12u = 6 Innings in 1 day
13u-14u = 7 Innings in 1 day
If pitching rules are violated and the infraction is detected, the situation will be reviewed, and final decisions will be determined by the tournament director.
PENALTY: current game will result in a forfeit for the team violating this rule.

ADDITIONAL PITCHING RULES

1) One additional inning per game, per player starting in a team's 5th game played. Daily limit does NOT increase, only the total number of innings for the event.
2) Pitching/Score cards MUST be signed by both teams at the conclusion of games. **Once the cards are signed, the information becomes official**, and will be utilized for record keeping.
3) Pitching limits will be based on 1/3 concept. Each recorded out is 1/3 of an inning against the pitcher.

4) Players should always have molded cleats, or turfs, with them in case they are asked to pitch on a temporary mound**. A player cannot pitch with metal cleats on a temporary mound.**
5) The starting pitcher is the ONLY pitcher allowed to be re-inserted as the pitcher, if he has not been removed from the line-up.
6) At the beginning of each inning, warm-up pitches are not to exceed 8 (for new pitcher) and 5 (for returning pitcher)

VISITS TO THE MOUND

As per NFHS rules, each team is allowed three charged visits to the mound within a game. A charged visit is a trip in which the manager or coach does not remove the pitcher. After the three charged visits are used, every trip to the mound will result in the pitcher being removed. A visit is not "charged" when the manager removes the pitcher from the mound. Remember, charged visits are cumulative for the entire game (visits are not tracked "per pitcher" or inning). No restrictions on visits per inning.

PROTESTS

$300 cash (**on rule interpretation only**). Must be paid at time of protest. Protests must be submitted before the next pitch of the game, if the protest is play specific. **It is the sole responsibility of the head coach to call time and communicate with the umpire to stop the game to protest a rule interpretation.** More general protests must be submitted prior to the conclusion of the game, and before the umpires leave the field. If the protest is upheld, the protest fee is returned to the team who filed the protest.

PLAYER AND COACH EJECTIONS

Any player or coach ejected from a game, will not be allowed to participate in the next game. The Tournament Director will make all final decisions on suspensions. Without exception, anyone (player, coach, spectator) who is ejected from a game, or asked to leave by a tournament/park official, must leave the vicinity of the playing field. This means to an area where they cannot be "seen or heard" for the remainder of the game, or the park completely in some cases.

METAL SPIKES

Allowed in 13u and above divisions ONLY.NO METAL SPIKES ARE ALLOWED ON ANY TEMPORARY MOUND!

HEAD FIRST SLIDE/C-FLAP RULE

As of July 31, 2025, this rule is no longer in the Southern Sports "Local Rules"

SLASH BUNT

A slash bunt is when a batter shows intent to bunt, and then pulls the bat back, and takes a full swing.
- 12u and below – SLASH BUNT IS NOT ALLOWED

Penalty: Batter is called out if attempted…does not have to make contact.
- 13u and above – SLASH BUNT IS ALLOWED

THIRD - FIRST "PICK-OFF"

The traditional third-first pick-off play is allowed in Southern Sports events. Once the pitcher disengages with the rubber he is identified as a fielder.

CRITERIA FOR SEEDING IN BRACKET PLAY (process does not re-start at any point)

1) Won – Loss record
2) Head to Head ***(utilized ONLY if two teams are tied. If more than two teams are involved in this tie-breaker, this step will NOT be considered)***
3) Runs Allowed
4) Run Differential (max = -7/+7)
5) Runs Scored
6) Coin Toss

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME FORMAT

All Championship games will not have an increased time limit

Run rules are still in effect. No coin toss….Highest seed will be given the choice of home/visitor. In the event of a tie at the end of an official game, the last "batted out" will be placed on second base with no outs and the game will continue until a winner is declared at the conclusion of innings played.

OFFICIAL GAME

In the event of natural occurrences to include weather, field conditions, or any other situation that causes a game to be STOPPED and it cannot be physically or reasonably continued, the game will be considered an official game if the teams have played 3 1/2 innings with the Home Team winning or 4 complete innings if the Home Team was losing after 3 1/2 innings. If stoppage is required after the 4th inning, the winner will be determined based on the last inning both teams completed an equal number of times at bat. For instance, if the Visitors are batting in the top of the 5th and they score 3 runs to go up 5 to 4, if the game is STOPPED, the Home Team will be declared the winner because at the bottom of the 4th, they were winning, 4 - 2. This is based on a STOPPED game that cannot be completed for various reasons to include time constraints, not a POSTPONED or DELAYED game that can be continued. If stoppage is required before a game can be considered "official", and the game cannot be continued:

During pool play, the team winning after the last completed inning (that was played) will be considered the winner, **regardless of the inning**. Only Tournament and/or Site Directors can STOP a game and consider it an official game.

ADVERSE WEATHER

Southern Sports Tournaments will be played in adverse weather conditions. The format may be changed to lessen time limits or reduce innings to complete the tournament. Coaches and teams accept these conditions when entering the tournament.

ENDING A GAME – IS CALLED PRIOR TO THE NATURAL ENDING OF THE GAME

Should an official game end due to circumstances such as lights/darkness issues, the final result will correspond to the score at the end of the last completed inning no matter which inning in the game this happens.

The exception is if the home team is losing after the last completed inning and scores enough runs to equal or exceed the opponent's score in the bottom half of the incomplete inning, the final score shall be recorded when the game is called.

TIED POOL PLAY GAMES

There are no extra innings in pool play games. A pool play game that ends in a tie, after the completion of all innings or time has expired, will be recorded as a tie.

CANCELED GAMES DURING POOL PLAY

Any pool play game that is canceled, will be recorded in the scoring system as a tie score of 7-7 for the sole purpose of continuing the bracket/seeding process for the event.

FORFEITED GAMES DURING POOL PLAY

Any scheduled pool play game that results in a forfeit will be scored 7-0. If a pool game is forfeited, that team will be placed in lowest seeded bracket position at the end of pool play. Final decision will be made by Southern Sports. Southern Sports will also make the determination of which bracket the team will be placed if there are multiple brackets for the event….i.e. gold or silver.

FINAL STANDINGS IN EVENTS THAT ARE NOT FINISHED

If an event is canceled while in progress, final standings will be determined in the following way….
1) For there to be final standings, all teams in a specific division MUST finish all pool play games. The final standings will be based on the criteria section for seeding to bracket play
IF NO BRACKET ROUND IS **COMPLETED**, **AWARDS WILL ONLY BE GIVEN TO #1 AND #2 SEEDED TEAMS IN EACH AGE GROUP, IN THE GOLD BRACKET ONLY.**

CANCELLATION POLICY

YOU MUST REFER TO THE EVENT'S WEBPAGE FOR SPECIFIC REFUND GUIDELINES.

REFUND POLICY

YOU MUST REFER TO THE EVENT'S WEBPAGE FOR SPECIFIC REFUND GUIDELINES.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Southern Sports Promotions, and all of its park facility partners, have a ZERO TOLERANCE policy on behavior by players, parents, and coaches. This includes, but is not limited to,
- possession of alcohol on park property
- use of foul language
- **any type harassment towards players, parents, coaches, umpires, tournament officials, park staff or others**
- interference with games

Any individual who conducts themselves in an unsportsmanlike manner is subject to removal from the tournament, and from the park property, without further explanation. All head coaches are responsible for the behavior of their team. If it is deemed necessary, the head coach can be ejected from the game due to behavior of his/her players, parents, coaches, or team spectators. In extreme situations, teams can also forfeit games due to the behavior of their coaches, players, parents or team spectators.

SEVERE WEATHER POLICY

Everyone's safety is the most important this when attending a Southern Sports event. For that reason, the following "Severe Weather/Lightning Policy" is in place at all events.

As stated in our "local" rules, it is the sole responsibility of each team's head coach to understand all rules and guidelines for Southern Sports events. With that said, any weather-related directive is also a shared responsibility with each parent or guardian affiliated with the players and teams.

When lightning or severe weather is detected within the designated safety radius, all Southern Sports Promotion activities will stop immediately. All players, coaches, umpires, spectators, and staff must promptly leave the playing fields, dugouts, and batting cages. Spectators must also leave common and spectator areas and seek shelter.

No one is allowed in the following areas, during a weather/lightning delay…no exceptions:

- Playing Field
- Dugouts
- Batting Cages

During a lightning event, dugouts, pavilions, tents, and other covered structures are NOT safe shelters and must not be used. Everyone must go directly to an enclosed building or personal vehicle, remain inside with all doors and windows closed, and stay there until the lightning threat has ended. In most cases all spectators should enter their vehicles in the parking lot. Southern Sports will communicate when the threat is over via website or phone app alerts.

8U KP SPECIFIC RULES

RUNS PER INNING
7 runs maximum per inning, per team

INFIELD FLY
No infield fly will be in effect

DROPPED THIRD STRIKE
No dropped third strike in effect

BASERUNNING
Stealing is allowed. Baserunners must remain on the base until the ball reaches home plate before the runner can leave their base. Once a player reaches 3rd base, the ONLY way they can score is to be batted in or forced home on a bases loaded walk. A baserunner can steal 2nd and can advance to 3rd on the same play only if 3rd base is not occupied. When a baserunner reach third base, time is not automaticlly called. Advancing runners stop and the umpire will make the decision to call time. If the runner on third base is off the base, at anytime, he can be tagged out.

BALL IN PLAY
The ball is always in play unless time has been called by an umpire. On 4th Ball to batter, when a walk is awarded, a “dead ball” situation is in effect and no one may advance bases.

8U CP SPECIFIC RULES

RUNS PER INNING
7 runs maximum per inning, per team

INFIELD FLY
No infield fly will be in effect

AT BATS
- Each batter receives 5 pitches or 3 swinging strikes, whichever comes first. If the batter fouls the 5th pitch, the at bat continues.
- One bunt is allowed per inning
- A player can not be intentionally walked

BASERUNNING
-No leadoffs
- A runner starting a play at 3rd base may ONLY advance home on a batted ball or when forced home.
- Runner may leave base once contact is made: 1st Offense = Dead Ball / warning; 2nd Offense = Dead Ball / offending runner is called out,
- Courtesy runners are allowed for the catcher of record.

FIELDERS
Teams can use 9 or 10 fielders. If using 10 players, there must be 4 outfielders.

FIELD
- There is a 30-foot safety arc from the 1st base line to the 3rd base line in front of home plate. All fielders must stay behind the line until the ball is hit.
- There is a circle 10 feet in diameter drawn with the front of the circle being at 42 feet from home plate. The defensive player playing the pitcher position must start each play with a foot in the circle.
- There is a line drawn from the 30-foot safety arc to the pitcher's circle. The coach pitcher will keep one foot on the line or straddle the line and can pitch anywhere on the line.

PITCHING COACH
- There is a 30-foot safety arc from the 1st base line to the 3rd base line in front of home plate. All fielders must stay behind the line until the ball is hit.
- The pitching coach will not obstruct or interfere with any play. The penalty will be an umpire judgement call and can include an out called and all runners returning to their bases.
- If a batted ball hits the pitching coach, it's called a foul ball if the umpire rules that the contact was unintentional. The batter is called out if the umpire rules the contact was intentional and runners must return to their bases.

DEFENSIVE COACHES
Are not allowed on the field of play. They will coach from the vicinity of the dugout. Teams are allowed to two defensive coaches outside the dugout.

RUN RULES
- Run rules apply
- The game is called if one team is mathematically eliminated from winning or tying the game.

TIME CALLED
Umpires will call "Time" on each play and the ball is dead. This happens when all baserunners stop attempting to advance and there is no defensive play imminent.