

EBSA MIDDLE DIVISION RULES

Spring 2026

MIDDLE RULES AT-A-GLANCE

1. **FIELD SETUP:**
 - BASE DISTANCE: 60 feet
 - PITCHING DISTANCE: 45 feet (point of home plate to front edge of rubber)
 - HOME TEAM is responsible for:
 - setup of bases and pitching rubber
 - providing 2 new baseballs for each game
 - END-OF-DAY GAMES: Both teams should work together to:
 - Replace all base anchor plugs
 - Store and lock all bases and pitching rubbers in orange equipment bins
 - Report lost/broken equipment via the Coaches App
 - Ensure all dugouts are clear of debris and equipment
2. **GAME LENGTH:**
 - 6 innings or 2 hours, whichever comes first
 - No inning may start after 1:45 from first pitch
3. **PITCHING:**
 - AGE RESTRICTION: 6 batters faced by 3rd grader(s) by end of the 4th inning.
 - OUTS LIMIT: No more than 6 outs by any pitcher.
4. **BATS:** USA or wood. USSSA BATS PROHIBITED.
5. **NO LEADOFFS**
6. **STEALS:** After 1 out only, and after the ball crosses home plate.
7. **MERCY RULE:** 10 runs after 5 innings, or 4 ½ if the home team is winning.
8. **OVERTHROWS:** One base maximum on an overthrow.
9. **NO BALKS**
10. **NO DROPPED THIRD STRIKE RULE**
11. **NO INFIELD FLY RULE**
12. **NO SLASH BUNTS**
13. **NO INTENTIONAL WALKS**
14. **FOURTH OUTFIELDER PERMITTED**

I. OVERVIEW

1. **WHAT THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS:** This document contains the rules of the Middle Division of EBSA Baseball in particular. It does not contain a comprehensive list of every single rule of baseball. Any rule not covered by this document will default to the rules of Illinois High School Association baseball rules, which can be found at <https://www.ihsa.org/sports/baseball>.
2. **AMENDING THE RULES:** All questions, thoughts, and suggestions about the rules should be directed to the Middle Division Commissioner, who will bring them to the Rules Committee for consideration at the appropriate time. Urgent concerns, such as those that pertain to player safety, should be brought directly to the EBSA President, whose contact information can be found on the EvanstonBaseball.com website.
3. **INTERPRETING THE RULES:** These rules should be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with their purpose and intended effect, not by a rigid or technical reading of isolated provisions. Where the literal text and the evident purpose of a rule appear to conflict, the purpose and spirit of the rule shall govern, as determined on the field by the umpire(s).
4. **GOALS OF THE MIDDLE DIVISION:**
 - a. Help players build skills, confidence, and a love for the game of baseball
 - b. Emphasize the importance of teamwork and collective effort toward the goal of winning baseball games
 - c. Introduce the growth mindset toward excellence that will enable our more capable players to excel in the culture of travel baseball
5. **TEAM FORMATION:** Middle Division teams are formed by the Middle Division Commissioner, in collaboration with EBSA leadership. At the Middle level, teams are formed mostly along address and elementary school lines. Our aim is for Middle to be a balanced division where every team has a chance of winning, while giving players the continuity of being on a team with kids from their immediate community.

II. SPORTSMANSHIP

The Middle Division is a skill-building, developmental program focused on passion for the game, increased competition level, effort, and teamwork.

1. **GAMEDAY PRIORITIES:** Each game involves the participation of many individuals, including parents, coaches, players, umpires, league officials, city officials, and more. Every participant shall promote and foster an environment of **safety, fairness, and fun**, in that order. Put differently, any action that detracts from these priorities shall be considered unsportsmanlike. Any individual who repeatedly defies these priorities may be subject to sanction by the league.
2. **NO SMOKING, VAPING, OR TOBACCO USE:** No smoking or use of tobacco or nicotine products, including cigarettes, cigars, e-cigarettes, vapes, chewing tobacco, and similar products, is permitted in the bench area or on the playing field.
3. **NO HARRASSMENT:** EBSA expects and demands nothing less than exemplary conduct from all players, coaches, managers, and spectators throughout the season. Harassing of the opposition or umpires by spectators, managers, coaches, or players is prohibited. Managers/coaches are responsible for the behavior of their spectators. Harassment or public humiliation of a team's players by a team's own manager or coach is prohibited. Offending spectators, players, managers, or coaches shall be warned once or immediately ejected, at the discretion of the umpire and/or league officials.
4. **NO PROFANITY:** Use of profanity shall be grounds for ejecting a manager, coach, or player from the game.
5. **BENCH CONDUCT:** Managers and coaches shall monitor bench discipline of team members at all times and restrict all players to the sideline benches except for those occupying a defensive position, any runners, the batter and the batter on deck.
6. **EXCESSIVE DISPLAY OF ANGER:** A team will receive one warning followed by ejection for actions including but not limited to:
 - a) Deliberately slamming or throwing equipment on the field OR in the dugout, while on offense or defense.
 - b) Physical contact with another player, coach, or official with the intent to harm or intimidate them

A second infraction will result in possible player ejection from the game, at the discretion of the umpire. If in the umpire's discretion the act endangers the safety of anyone present, a first offense may result in ejection from the game.

7. **EJECTION FROM THE GAME:** If an umpire ejects a coach or manager from a game, said coach or manager must leave the park immediately, and gameplay will halt until the coach has departed. Said individual will automatically be suspended from participating in his/her next scheduled game. This means that said coach or manager will not be allowed in the area of the park where the scheduled game is being played.

If an umpire ejects a player, that player is automatically suspended from the next game. Said player may attend the game, but not participate in game play. In cases of extreme unsportsmanlike conduct by a manager or coach, league officials may take immediate action in the best interests of the League that may include longer suspension length, registration bans or league bans.

8. **UMPIRE'S DECISION:** The umpire shall control the progress of the game and decisions, including those of behavior governed above, of the umpire are final.
9. **RULES INTERPRETATION DISPUTES:** Only a head coach (or a single other coach present at pre-game umpire meeting, head or assistant) may discuss rule interpretations with the umpire. All other persons, including players and coaches, are prohibited from arguing the calls. After one warning, a player or coach may be ejected from the game for violation of this rule.
10. **POST-GAME CONDUCT:** At the conclusion of every game, all managers, coaches and players are expected to line up and congratulate the opposing team for a game well-played. Managers and coaches are expected to set a positive example of good sportsmanship at all times.
11. **REFUSE:** The dugouts are to be left clean and free of debris and equipment at a game's conclusion. It is the responsibility of the managers, coaches and players to remove all refuse from the dugout and playing field at the end of each game.

III. ORGANIZATIONAL RULES AND GAME STRUCTURE

A. ROSTERS AND REGISTRATION

1. **RULES:** All rules apply to the Day, Time and Date games are actually played regardless of when originally scheduled.
2. **ROSTER CHANGES:** The league Commissioner(s) must authorize any roster changes. Any proposed alterations to team rosters must be requested from the league Commissioners prior to any action being taken.
3. **REGISTRATION:** Each player must be officially registered through league systems and all fees must be paid or scholarship processed prior to being placed on a team. Use of an unregistered player will result in a forfeit.

B. GAME LENGTH

1. **TIME LIMIT:** Games in Middle Division are 6 innings in length with a 2 hour time limit. No inning may start after 1 hour and 45 minutes from the game's first pitch.
2. **OFFICIAL GAMES:** A game is considered "official" for the purposes of division standings after 4 innings OR after 3½ innings if the home team is in the lead.
3. **WEATHER AND CONDITIONS:** If there is a darkness or weather concern other than the observation of lightning or the hearing of thunder, as described in Part VII-B, umpires will conference with managers to clearly determine if a game will end early and at what point. All attempts should be made to play the complete or official game.

C. ROSTER MINIMUMS AND CALLUPS

1. **NOT ENOUGH PLAYERS:** A team failing to field at least 8 players at game time will forfeit the game.
2. **PLAY AFTER FORFEIT:** If both coaches and the umpire can agree, the game may still be played with the available players (or with substitutes) as scheduled with the forfeit being recorded as the official result.
3. **SUBSTITUTE PLAYERS:** When facing a team with fewer than 8 players, the opposing manager may if they so choose provide players from their team for a forfeit game or, so an official game can be played.
 - a) Any player acting as a substitute shall play with full intent to succeed. At the discretion of the umpire, a batter runner may be called out if a substitute fails to

attempt a play with intent to succeed.

- b) Substitute players from another team should play outfield only and bat at the bottom of the order.

D. CALLING PLAYERS UP

1. **FARM DIVISION CALLUPS:** To avoid a forfeit, a team may call up one or more players from the Farm division. Called-up players should be able to consistently protect themselves at the Middle level, and should have self-identified as willing to try playing up.
2. **SECOND GRADERS ONLY:** Only second year players (second graders) are permitted to play as call-ups. Coaches must know that a Farm player can protect themselves at the Middle Level.
3. **CALL-UP POSITIONING:** Second graders who are called up should be positioned at the coach's discretion, prioritizing safety. Callups may not play the pitcher or catcher position.

E. ROSTER PROTESTS

Protests made due to use of an ineligible player or suspended coach or manager must be made to the umpire and other team manager or coach any time before the last out of said game. Such protests will follow the procedure detailed below under *Protests and Weather*.

F. PLAYING TIME RULES

Playing time is to be distributed in a fair and equitable way at all times.

1. All players must play 3 full innings in the field.
2. All players must play a minimum of two innings in an infield position.
3. No player may sit out two innings consecutively and no player shall sit out for a second inning until all players present have sat for at least one inning
4. All players must be in the batting order.
5. Late arrivals are added to the end of the bottom of the order and shall play the field commensurate to their arrival time.

IV. GAMEPLAY RULES

A. FIELDING, BUNTING, AND POSITIONAL RULES

1. **NUMBER OF PLAYERS ON THE FIELD:** Coaches may choose to position either 9 or 10 players in the field. The 10th player, if used, must act as a fourth outfielder, and no short-center fielder is allowed.
 - a) Option 1 (9 players): RF, CF, LF
 - b) Option 2 (10 players): RF, RCF, LCF, LF
2. **OUTFIELDERS:** There must be either three or four outfielders on the field at all times, unless a team is short on players and is fielding only eight players in total, in which case they must field exactly two outfielders.
3. **OUTFIELD POSITIONING:** The outfielders must be at least 25 feet behind the infielders at the start of each play and when the pitch is delivered.
4. **BUNTS:** Bunting is legal. If a player attempts to bunt and misses, or the attempted bunt goes foul, a strike shall be assessed. If an attempted bunt goes foul with 2 strikes, the batter shall be declared out by swinging strikeout.
5. **NO SLASH BUNTS:** In order to protect the players in the field, after a player squares to bunt, they may not pull the bat back and then swing away. If a player squares to bunt, they must attempt to bunt, or take the pitch. If the umpire determines a player attempted such a slash bunt, the ball shall be declared dead, the batter shall be called out, and all runners must return to the bases they occupied at the time of the pitch.
6. **NO FAKE TAGS:** No fielder may intentionally simulate a tag when not in possession of the ball. The first intentional violation by a team will result in a warning, and each subsequent intentional violation will be called obstruction.
7. **PLAYING FIELD:** Only the manager, the two allotted base coaches, and players are allowed on the field. No coach of the defensive team may be on the field. Any violation of this rule should be handled by asking the offending individual to leave the field.

B. PITCHING RULES

1. **NO RE-ENTRY OF PITCHERS:** Once a pitcher is removed from the game, they cannot return to pitch again.

2. **THIRD GRADE PITCHING REQUIREMENT:** Teams must use both third and fourth grade pitchers in every game.

- a) Third grade pitchers must face at least 6 batters in total before the end of the fourth inning.
- b) Batters faced by third grade pitchers do not need to be consecutive or in the same inning.
- c) Fourth grade pitchers may relieve third grade pitchers at any time, provided the 6 batter minimum is reached prior to the end of the fourth inning.

Example 1: Pitcher X, a third grader, starts out the third inning and faces 6 batters: 2 walks, one out, and two hits, and 3 runs scored. A fourth grader can relieve them to get out of the inning.

Example 2: Pitcher Y, a third grader, starts out the third inning and faces 3 batters, all walks. A fourth grader may relieve Pitcher Y, but before the end of the fourth inning, a different third grader must face at least 3 more batters.

3. **PITCH COUNT LIMITS AND MAXIMUM OUTS**

- a. **MAXIMUM PITCHES:** The maximum number of pitches by a given pitcher is 60 on any given day. Any pitcher reaching the maximum number of pitches while facing a batter, may continue to pitch until the batter concludes their turn at bat, but may not pitch to another batter.
 - b. **MAXIMUM CONSECUTIVE OUTS:** No pitcher, regardless of age or number of pitches thrown may pitch more than six (6) consecutive outs.
4. **MOUND VISITS:** Any manager or coach who goes onto the field twice in one inning to talk to a pitcher will be required to remove the pitcher from the mound. A manager shall **not** be charged with a conference if they enter the field to attend to an injured player, or the opposing manager has called time out for a conference.
5. **DEFENSIVE CONFERENCES:** Each Team is allowed three (3) defensive conferences in a 6-inning game.
6. **INTENTIONAL WALKS:** There are no intentional walks. Pitchers must pitch to every hitter.
7. **HIT BATTER LIMIT:** A pitcher who hits 2 batters in one inning or 3 in a game must be removed from the mound for the remainder of the game.
8. **BALK RULE:** No balks are called in the Middle Division.

9. **NO RETURN TO THE MOUND:** A pitcher who has been removed from the mound, but remains in the game at a different position will not be allowed to return to the mound for the remainder of the game.
10. **NO JACKETS:** Pitchers may not wear jackets over their jerseys during play.
11. **NO WHITE OR GRAY SLEEVES:** Pitchers may not wear an exposed white or gray long sleeve undershirt.
12. **NO REFLECTIVE SUNGLASSES:** Pitchers may not wear these types of sunglasses on the mound.

13. **PITCHER WARMUPS, SAFETY, AND PITCH TYPES**

- a. **WARM-UPS:** If any player needs to warm up, that player and one additional player or adult may warm-up in the area beyond the bleachers. Pitchers must throw in the direction away from the bleachers and parallel to the foul line.
- b. **NO BREAKING BALLS:** Pitchers may throw any variety of fastball or changeup, but breaking balls of any kind are prohibited in the Middle Division. The primary reason for this rule is to protect the arms of young athletes and to encourage proper development.
- c. **PITCH TYPE VIOLATIONS:** If a player uses or attempts to use a disallowed pitch type, an immediate dead ball will be declared, and penalties will be assessed as follows:
 - i. *First violation:* automatic called ball
 - ii. *Second violation:* automatic called ball and an official warning from the umpire to the pitcher and coach
 - iii. *Third violation:* removal of the pitcher from that position in the field

14. REQUIRED PITCHER REST RULES:

Pitches thrown	Rest Required	Notes
1 to 30	One day	Starting on the next clean day
30 to 50	Two days	Starting on the next clean day
75	Weekly	Weekly maximum recommendation

- a. **CLEAN DAY** refers to rest starting on the day AFTER an athlete has pitched. If a player pitches on Wednesday, their rest period begins on Thursday. If they threw 30 pitches or fewer, they can pitch on Friday. If they threw 31 pitches or more, they can't pitch until Saturday.
- b. **WEEKLY MAXIMUM PITCH RECOMMENDATION:** We recommend keeping pitchers to no more than 75 pitches per week at this level, per orthopedic/sports medicine recommendations.

We recommend following the guidance in the MLB Pitch Smart Program:
<https://www.mlb.com/pitch-smart/pitching-guidelines/ages-9-12>

- c. **AVOID OVERPITCHING:** Please be mindful of over pitching kids. We have athletes who throw in both House and Travel as well as recreationally. This takes a toll on young arms. Development and long-term health are more important than short-term winning.
- d. **COORDINATE WORKLOAD WITH PARENTS:** Coaches should get in the habit of discussing pitching workload with parents, especially with those of travel players. Players themselves may not know how many pitches they threw in their last travel game, so coordinating with parents is crucial to keeping young arms healthy.
- e. **DISCIPLINARY ACTION:** In order to protect our athletes, the EBSA board reserves the right to levy disciplinary action if any abuses of the pitching rules come to light during the season.

C. BASERUNNING AND STEALING

The Middle Division plays with leadoffs and base stealing.

1. **LEADOFFS:** No primary leads may be taken in the Middle Division. Secondary leads may be taken based on the same principle as stealing.
2. **BASE STEALING:** Base stealing is allowed in the Middle Division after there is one out in the inning.
 - a. **TIMING FOR STEALS:** Players may steal only after the ball has passed the threshold of the home plate.
 - b. **ONE BASE PER PLAY:** Runners may only steal one base per play.
 - c. **ONE BASE ON A WALK:** Runners who steal on a pitched ball 4 may not advance more than one base from their original base
 - d. **NO STEALING HOME:** Stealing home is prohibited in all scenarios, including both straight steal plays and wild pitches/passed balls.
3. **SLIDING**
 - a. **RUNNER MUST ATTEMPT TO AVOID CONTACT:** Baserunners must attempt to avoid contact on any close plays at a base. A routine slide is deemed to be an attempt to avoid contact.
 - b. **FAILURE TO SLIDE:** If a baserunner fails to slide and significant contact is made with a fielder, the runner will be declared out.
 - c. **FLAGRANT CONTACT:** If, in the umpire's judgment, the baserunner's contact was flagrant or was with intent to injure the fielder, the runner will be ejected from the game.
 - d. **NO HEAD FIRST SLIDES:** No head-first slides are allowed in the Middle Division.

Exception 1: when the runner has missed or passed a base on their feet first slide attempt, they can dive back to the base head first.

Exception 2: Runners may dive back head first to a base on a pick-off attempt. This is proper form/technique.

4. RUNNING FOR THE CATCHER

- a. **WITH TWO OUTS:** With 2 outs, the offensive must supply a courtesy runner for the player who will be their catcher in the next half inning.
- b. **WITH FEWER THAN TWO OUTS:** With fewer than 2 outs, the offensive team may pinch-run for their catcher, but that player must start at catcher the next half-inning.
- c. **COURTESY RUNNER:** The courtesy runner should be the player who made the last recorded out.

5. ADDITIONAL BASERUNNING RULES

- a. **NO DROPPED THIRD STRIKE:** The dropped third strike rule is not in effect at the Middle level. All third strikes, even if uncaught, are outs, and the ball is live.
- b. **INFIELD FLY RULE:** There is no Infield Fly Rule in Middle Division
- c. **REQUESTING TIME:** As in IHSARules, baserunners may request time from the umpire to remove equipment or to recover from slides, but "time" is not granted until the umpire calls time. The umpire may declare a dead ball in this situation.

6. **COACHES:** During the course of the game, coaches must stay in the coaching areas, which are the areas near first and third base, and the dugouts. Base coaches may not touch runners. A coach's touch that propels or catches a player will result in that player being called out and result in a delayed dead ball.

7. OVERTHROWS

- a. Runners may advance a maximum of one additional base (including to home) on an overthrow only if the play begins with a batted ball.
- b. Runners attempting to advance on an overthrow do so at their own risk if the ball remains in play.
- c. Overthrows can occur on throws made to any base whether attempting to get an out on a runner or returning a ball to the infield after an outfield hit.
- d. Runners advancing to third base at the time of the overthrow may score on the overthrow (so long as the play began with a batted ball).
- e. If a subsequent overthrow occurs during the play, no additional advances are

permitted.

- f. **DEAD BALL:** If an overthrow is declared a “dead ball” by the umpire (e.g. ball goes out of play, goes into dugout, hits an on-deck batter, contacts equipment in the on-deck area, etc.), all base runners shall be awarded one base.

Exception: No runner shall be awarded home on a dead ball. A runner on third must remain at third.

- g. **COACH INTERFERENCE ON AN OVERTHROW:** Base coaches must get out of the way of a fielder attempting to retrieve an overthrow. Any blocking, or failure to allow a fielder space to retrieve an overthrow may result in a warning. Any blocking deemed intentional by the umpire will be ruled “coach interference” and the runner will be declared out.

V. EQUIPMENT

A. BAT CERTIFICATIONS

1. **ONLY USA BATS ALLOWED:** To be eligible for use in the Middle Division, metal bats must be stamped with the “USA” certification logo. Alloy and composite versions of such bats are acceptable.
2. **WOOD BATS ALLOWED:** Wood bats may also be used.
3. **NO UNCERTIFIED BATS:** Uncertified bats are prohibited.
4. **BATTING HELMETS**
 - a. **NO REMOVAL:** Offensive players must not remove their batting helmet at any time while in the field of play, including the on-deck area.
 - b. **PENALTIES FOR REMOVAL:** On the first instance of an offensive player removing their batting helmet while on the field of play, a team warning will be issued. Subsequent violations may result in a possible penalty at the discretion of the umpire.
 - c. **HELMET THROWING:** If a helmet comes off "unnaturally" (examples of “naturally” are if a player gently removes their helmet in dugout, or if a player is running the bases and it falls off), a strike will be assessed to the next batter.

If the helmet is removed in anger, a strike will be assessed to the next batter, and a team warning will be issued. If the anger is directed at an umpire, coach, or player, and/or the helmet is aimed at someone, the player may be ejected from the

game at the umpire's discretion.

After a team warning has been issued, for every further occurrence, a strike will be assessed to the next batter, and the offender will be ejected from the game.

5. CATCHER'S GEAR

- a. HEAD PROTECTION REQUIRED:** While in the crouch position, any non-adult warming up a pitcher at any location shall wear approved head protection, chest protector and shin guards. This applies to any person under 18 crouching to warm-up a pitcher on or off the field.. Per IHSA regulations, headgear must be one piece "goalie" style.
 - b. CUP REQUIRED:** Males are required to wear protective cups in order to catch in the Middle Division.
- 6. NO UNSAFE JEWELRY:** No metal safety inhibiting jewelry is to be worn on or about the neck or wrists during play. Soft necklaces may be worn with parental approval.

VI. SCORING AND SCOREKEEPING

A. SCORING

Each team is responsible for keeping score accurately. This can happen in two different ways:

1. **SCOREBOOK:** Keep score manually using the provided scorebook.
2. **GAMECHANGER:** Designate a coach or parent to keep score using the [Gamechanger](#) app.
3. **DISPUTES:** If there is a dispute that is not otherwise resolved, the “scorebook” of the home team will determine the outcome of the dispute.
4. **UMPIRE SCORING:** Though some umpires do keep score, it is NOT the responsibility of the umpire to do so.

B. PITCH COUNTS

Managers (or someone they designate) must keep track of the pitch count each inning. In addition, they should keep track for opposing pitchers as well, and reconcile with the opposing team each half inning to ensure that each pitcher’s pitch count is accurate.

No protests regarding pitch count will be heard without proof of reconciliation at the end of each prior half inning.

C. LINEUPS

Managers shall exchange lineups prior to the start of the game either verbally, via paper, or via Gamechanger.

D. SCORE REPORTING

1. **GAME RESULTS:** Within 24 hours, managers must enter their final scores via the Team Sideline App. If this is not possible, they must inform the Commissioner of the results of each game. **BOTH MANAGERS MUST ENTER SCORE INTO TEAM SIDELINE IN ORDER FOR THE GAME TO BE FINALIZED.**

2. **FAILURE TO REPORT:** Failure to report by either coach may result in recording the game as a loss if missing a coach approval or a tie if neither coach enters the score.
3. **TIES:** In the event of a tie, extra innings should be played assuming there is sufficient time available. If a game is tied at the end of the available time, the game shall be reported as a tie. Tied games will not be resumed at a later time.

VII. PROTESTS AND WEATHER

A. PROTEST PROCEDURE

Protests shall only be considered when based on the violation or interpretation of a playing rule, or the use of an ineligible player, or the participation of a suspended coach or manager. No protest shall be considered on a decision involving an umpire's judgment.

If a manager, or in the manager's absence, a coach, wishes to protest a violation or interpretation of a playing rule, said coach or manager will immediately and before any succeeding play begins, ask for time out, and will announce to the umpire and the other team manager or coach, that said game is being protested and give the reason for the protest.

At this point of the protest the following steps will be followed:

1. There will be no discussion of the protest by any participants of the game.
2. The umpire will mark in each scorebook, the date and time of the protest, and at what point the protest was declared.
3. The umpire will immediately continue the game from the point just before the timeout was called.
4. The protesting manager or coach will have 24 hours from the date and time recorded in the scorebooks or via text message by the umpire to separately notify the Middle Commissioner. Notification should be in writing and all details regarding the protest will be covered.
5. The Commissioner will make a ruling and inform both managers.

B. INCLEMENT WEATHER

Before games, league officials will decide whether there will be a cancellation due to rain, temperature, other inclement weather, or other unplayable conditions and inform managers. They will reschedule games as soon as possible.

1. In the event of rain during the game, the umpire will decide on continued play.

2. In the event of lightning, the game shall be immediately suspended and will be resumed at the point of the suspension regardless of how many innings have been played. It is up to the teams whether they will wait in the sheltered area (at James Park or Robert Crown) for the all clear signal or if the teams should wait in vehicles. They should not stay at the fields.

C. LIGHTING WARNING SYSTEM IN SELECT EVANSTON PARKS

1. The City of Evanston's Recreation Division installed lightning prediction and warning systems at James Park and Robert Crown Park in Spring 2007.
2. The warning system measures the surrounding atmosphere's electrostatic energy and warns of an impending lightning strike. If you are in the area of the warning system and conditions favorable to the creation of lightning have been detected, you will hear one 15-second blast of the horn and a strobe light will begin flashing. This signals that you must immediately seek an appropriate, safe shelter. The strobe will continue flashing until safe conditions return.
3. You may resume activities only after three 5-second blasts of the horn are sounded and the strobe light stops flashing.
4. If you remain outdoors after the warning is issued, you are putting yourself at serious risk.
5. The system will operate from 9 am to 10 pm seven days a week from April through November.

D. ADDITIONAL LIGHTNING PROCEDURES

1. **LIGHTING WARNING SYSTEM:** The lightning warning system does not need to activate for the 30-minute rule referenced below to take effect. Umpires have been instructed to follow the 30-minute rule regardless of other "all clear" signals.
2. **THUNDER:** When thunder is heard or a cloud to ground lightning bolt is seen, the storm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play and take shelter immediately.
3. **30-MINUTE RULE:** Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count reset the "clock" and another 30-minute count should begin.

E. SHELTER INFORMATION

Not all parks have shelter for heavy weather or large groups.

1. **JAMES PARK:** Use the Levy Center as a primary shelter; if the field house is open, it may also be used as a shelter. Players and coaches can also use vehicles. **DO NOT** use the metal canopy in the concourse as shelter during lighting events.
2. **ROBERT CROWN:** Use the Robert Crown Center. All players are required to stay under the covered area by the main entrance if not inside the building.
3. **FOSTER:** If open, use the Fleetwood-Jourdain Center.

VIII. PLAYOFF TOURNAMENT AND POSTSEASON:

A. PLAYOFFS:

1. **RULES:** All regular season rules apply throughout the championship game unless specifically stated otherwise.
2. **TIME LIMITS:** The standard time limits apply during the play-in round and the first full round. For all other rounds, the games are extended, but no new inning may start after 8:00pm. If the game is not complete at the time limit, the game will be suspended and finished as soon as scheduling allows.
3. **STRUCTURE:** The playoffs are a single bracket, single elimination tournament. Every team in the Middle Division will participate in the end-of-season playoff tournament.
4. **NO SUBSTITUTE PLAYERS:** No substitute or call-up players are permitted during the playoffs.
5. **SEEDING:**
 - a. Teams will be seeded based on their win percentage.
 - b. Seeding will take place after the second to last originally scheduled regular season game.
6. **TIED STANDINGS:** Ties will be broken in the following manner:
 - a. **Two-team tie:** When two teams are tied in the standings, the following procedure will be used (in the following order until the tie is broken):
 - i. Win-loss results of head-to-head competition between the two tied teams.
 - ii. Win-loss record of the two teams versus the No. 1 seed using common opponents only (and proceeding through the last or final seed if necessary).
 - iii. A coin flip by the Commissioner(s)
 - b. **Three or more team tie:** When three or more teams are tied in the standings, the following procedure will be used (in descending order until the tie is broken). Once and if the tie has been reduced to two teams, the two-team tiebreaker

procedure as stated in above will be used.

- i. Win-loss results of head-to-head competition between the tied teams.
- ii. If all teams are common opponents: total won-lost percentage of games played among the tied teams.
- iii. Win-loss percentage of the tied teams versus the No. 1 seed, proceeding through the last or final seed if necessary, using common opponents only.

IX. COACH EQUIPMENT RETURN POLICY

A. EQUIPMENT RETURN

1. **AFTER THE SEASON:** Following completion of your last game (elimination from the playoffs), the Manager is responsible for making arrangements with the Commissioner(s) to return the equipment.
2. **ALL EQUIPMENT MUST BE CHECKED BACK IN:** Regardless of whether you are coaching in the following season, all equipment must be checked back in either via communication, or in person to ensure proper inventory. Missing tees or catcher's gear will incur fees for coaches as detailed in initial welcome notes from Commissioners or the league.