

LEAGUES AND QUALIFIERS

Teams qualify for MSF State Tournament play via league play, weekend tournament play and by applying at large. League directors and tournament directors use their discretion in terms of what classes of teams they combine for league and tournament play. When different classes of teams are combined for league or tournament play, teams may only receive a state tournament qualifying packet for their MSF team class. If necessary to accomplish this, available packets may be passed down to 4th place.

PLAYERS

Players must reside or attend school within 30 driving miles of the Minnesota state border.

Players must participate on the team nearest to where they reside or attend school. **EXCEPTIONS:** Any player who tried out and was cut from the team nearest to their residence or school, or was released from that team, may participate with the next nearest team to where they reside and attend school which they tried out for and made. If two teams are holding tryouts for the same city/school attendance area, players may try out for either team, but only be rostered on one team.

In order to participate in a MSF State Tournament, you will have had to compete in a minimum of four regularly scheduled league or tournament games with the team whose roster you are on. Lack of four games played due to injury or illness is not an exception.

Players may not be on two rosters in the same age division for qualifier play or play in two qualifiers on the same weekend of play. Players/teams may only play in one MSF State Tournament. If a team wins and accepts a state berth at a qualifier, the players are frozen to their roster and may not be picked up by another team playing for a state tournament berth or a different team playing in an MSF State Tournament. If the qualified team declines the state berth, that team's players may be picked up by another team playing state, provided the players are legal pickups.

TEAMS

Open Tryouts or random placement of players must be used to form teams. Intact teams only, no combined teams. Reformed **ALL-STAR, RENAGADE** or **ROGUE** teams are not allowed in MSF Qualifier or State Tournament play. Teams that play in MSF Qualifiers or State Tournaments must emanate from a league/program that has four teams or more in each MSF age division and conducts an intraleague schedule of 12 games or more. Teams are allowed to pick up three players from their league/program for tournament play provided the players are in the same or lower age and team class. **NOTE:** If due to a lack of players available within a league/program draw area it may petition the MSF for special dispensation in that specific age group. **NOTE:** If there is no league/program available for a team to play in within one hour driving distance of the majority of their players legal residences they may petition the MSF for special dispensation.

AGE REQUIREMENTS

A player must meet only one of the two criteria.

- 10U: 1.) Born on or after May 1, 2013 OR 2.) Player is in 4th Grade and born after May 1, 2012
- 11U: 1.) Born on or after May 1, 2012 OR 2.) Player in 5th Grade and born after May 1, 2011
- 12U: 1.) Born on or after May 1, 2011 OR 2.) Player in 6th Grade and born after May 1, 2010
- 13U: 1.) Born on or after May 1, 2010 OR 2.) Player in 7th Grade and born after May 1, 2009
- 14U: 1.) Born on or after May 1, 2009 OR 2.) Player in 8th Grade and born after May 1, 2008
- 15U: 1.) Born on or after May 1, 2008 OR 2.) Player in 9th Grade and born after May 1, 2007



Classes of Competition

CLASS AAA

For skilled and competitive teams which compete in an “AAA” league or at “AAA” tournaments. Top teams from greater MN communities should consider playing “AAA”.

CLASS AA

This classification is for teams which are less competitive than “AAA” teams, compete in a “AA” League or “AA” tournaments. This classification is intended for second or third teams from a community (second teams could possibly still be Class AAA). Class AA is also for teams from smaller communities which cannot compete at the “AAA” level. If a “AA” team finishes first or second at the MSF Class AA State Championship and returns 5 or more players, they shall be reclassified as “AAA” the following year if their association does not have an existing “AAA” team within their same age group. The MSF reserves the right to reclassify teams at any time.

Roster Information

Roster limit is 18 players. Teams gaining entry to the state tournament through tournament qualifier play must utilize the team roster, which was used at the qualifier. If qualifier roster had less than 18 players, up to three players may be added provided they meet the designated eligibility requirements.

A properly completed MSF State Tournament Roster must be hand carried to the tournament site. Any team with an improperly completed roster shall be withheld from competition. Once the roster has been submitted at tournament headquarters it may not be amended in any way. MSF roster limit is 18.

The roster must include the residence or school address, which qualifies each team member as eligible for the MSF State Tournament. Players claiming eligibility through school attendance shall provide the schools address. Players claiming residence through their residence shall provide their home address.

Each player appearing on the MSF State Tournament roster must have in their possession (to be presented at team check-in) a copy of one of the following to verify their age/birth date or grade: birth certificate, computer printout from school showing birth date/grade, certificate of age/grade from church on letterhead, valid passport, certification of age/grade on letterhead signed by a superintendent/principal/attendance officer, hospital certificate of birth, school issued I.D. which includes birth date/grade, baptismal certificate.

Players must be prepared to prove their age/grade upon the request of a MSF Tournament Representative. Any team found to have used an ineligible player will be immediately disqualified from competition. MSF reserves the right to investigate eligibility matters at any time, including after the event.

Players, teams, or coaches who have been disqualified by their local association for unsportsmanlike conduct or other inappropriate acts, provided due process was granted, are not eligible for MSF Qualifier or State Championship play.



MSF Game Equipment

1. Unless modified here, all game equipment shall be in accordance with specifications listed in the National Federation of High School rulebook. Decisions made by the MSF Umpire in Chief regarding equipment are final.
2. All teams must wear numbered jerseys of the identical color, duplicate numbered jerseys are to be considered illegal and will not be allowed. Tape numbers are not acceptable. Illegally uniformed players must be withheld from competition until they become legal.
3. Metal spikes – High School rules apply for the 13-, 14- and 15-under age groups. They are not allowed in the 10-, 11-, and 12-under age groups.
4. Proper helmets must be worn while batting, base running and catching in accordance with the NFHS rules.
5. Bats:

10-13 year old teams:

Bats must:

- 1) have the **1.15 BPF (USSSA) or USABat** stamp; or
- 2) have a **BBCOR (National Federation)** stamp; or
- 3) be a wooden bat

14-15 year old teams:

Bats must:

- 1) have the **USABat** stamp; or
- 2) have a **BBCOR (National Federation)** stamp; or
- 3) be a wooden bat

VIOLATION: If first offense, batter is ruled out, runners return to previous base, batter and head coach are ejected from that game plus the following game. If second offense by same team, team is disqualified from tournament play.

6. Knee, elbow, hand, wrist, arm guard or brace made of plaster, metal or any other hard substance, even though covered or insulated with soft padding, is illegal. A hinged knee brace, if properly covered and padded with no metal protruding is LEGAL.
7. **Teams must supply their own first-aid kits. Athletic trainers may or may not be present.** Should a serious injury occur, player's parent/guardian and coach shall be allowed on the field. Parent/guardian or coach shall determine if an ambulance/paramedics should be called at the injured party's expense.



MSF Playing Rules

National Federation of High School rules shall govern play, except where modified in these rules. These rules will be used at the MSF State Tournaments and should also be used in qualifying tournaments. Any exceptions to these rules (which do not create a safety issue) must be stated in advance tournament rules.

1. The official schedule is the bracket board posted at tournament headquarters. It is the teams responsibility to be aware of any changes and to be in the right place at the right time.
2. Responsible adults must supervise teams at all times, on and off the field.
3. Home team shall be determined by a coin toss before every game.
4. A 10-minute grace period will be allowed for a team's first game before a forfeit is declared. Game time is forfeit time for all remaining games, but the MSF Site Manager must be summoned to declare it. A team that is a NO SHOW for their first game has one hour to contact the tournament director regarding the status of their remaining pool play games. If no contact is made within one hour, that team's games will be declared forfeits and they shall be dropped from the tournament.
5. A 10 run rule is in effect throughout the entire tournament. Games will end at the conclusion of 4 1/2 innings (home team) or 5 innings (visiting team) if the score differential is 10 runs or greater for all age groups.

6. Pitching/Base Distances:

AGE	PITCHING DISTANCE	BASE PATHS
10	46 feet	60 feet
11	46 feet	60 or 70 feet
12	52 feet	70 feet
13	52 feet	80 feet
14 & Up	60.5 feet	90 feet

7. Base Running Rules:

10 – U: Stealing is permitted however a runner may not leave the base until the ball crosses home plate. If the runner leaves early a dead ball is declared and the runner in violation is out. Dropped 3rd strike – Batter is out, runners may advance at their own risk, and ball is live.

11 – U: Stealing is permitted; however a runner may not leave the base until the ball leaves the pitchers hand. If the runner leaves early a dead ball is declared and the runner in violation is declared out. Dropped 3rd strike – batter is out, runner(s) may advance at their own risk – ball is live.

12 – 15 U: High school rules apply to leading off, stealing, dropped 3rd strike, etc.

8. Game Length / Time Limits:

POOL PLAY: 10–12U: 5 innings. No new inning shall begin after 1 hour 30 minutes (4 innings min).

POOL PLAY: 13–15U: 6 innings. No new inning shall begin after 1 hour 45 minutes (5 innings min).

BRACKET PLAY: 10-12U: 6 innings. No new inning shall begin after 1 hour and 45 minutes unless the score is tied. (5 innings minimum)

BRACKET PLAY: 13-15U: 7 innings. No new inning shall begin after 2 hours unless the score is tied. (6 innings minimum)

**In Pool Play games, if the score is tied at the end of regulation and the time limit has not expired, the game shall continue. Games may end in a tie in pool play once the time limit is reached. When the time limit is reached after an inning has started, it will continue thru that inning. The game will end immediately if the home team goes ahead in the bottom half of the inning.

9. **10-13U** free substitution applies and must bat the entire bench. Coaches are expected to follow the spirit of the rule here by batting the entire bench in all games during tournament play. If a player who is present is prevented from sitting on the bench to avoid the spirit of the rule, the head coach shall be prohibited from coaching any remaining games in the tournament and the game in question shall be forfeited. **14-15U** free substitution applies and have the option to bat the entire bench. Teams must notify both their opponent and the umpire at the pregame meeting which option they intend to use. Teams do not need to utilize the same option as their opponent. **For 10-14U**, ANY pitcher may re-enter the game as a pitcher at any time, even if they were not the starting pitcher, provided the player in question was not ejected from the game and has not exceeded per day/per tournament pitch limits. For 15U, ONLY THE STARTING PITCHER may re-enter the game as a pitcher (high school re-entry rules apply).

10. **10-13U** – A courtesy runner will be allowed for the current catcher or pitcher anytime. This means the catcher/pitcher must be the catcher/pitcher of record before and after the at bat. The courtesy runner will be the last player that made an out. The player that is run for must catch/pitch the next inning. **14-15U** – A courtesy runner will be allowed for the current catcher/pitcher anytime. Players who have participated in the game in any other capacity are ineligible to serve as courtesy runners until all players have participated. If all players have participated, then the courtesy runner will be the last player that made an out. The player that is run for must catch/pitch the next inning.
11. Teams must start the game with 9 players. If due to injury or illness, a team may finish a game with 8 players and no automatic out. A team reduced to less than 9 players due to an ejection shall be disqualified.
12. When batting the bench: If a player arrives late to a game or leaves early, close the batting order (eliminate the batting spot if player leaves) or for the player coming late you open up the batting order (add the batting spot at the bottom of the order). If a player is injured you close the batting order up (eliminate his batting spot and the player may not return that game). It is not an out when his spot comes up to bat. If a player is ejected in a 10-13 year old game then that batting spot is an out each time it comes up.
13. If a team forfeits a game in pool play all their results are cancelled and they may not advance to bracket play.
14. If a team is disqualified from the tournament by virtue of a legal protest filed by their opponent prior to completion of their game, their opponent shall move on in bracket play.
15. Only players listed on the MSF State Tournament roster may occupy the team bench. One batboy and one scorekeeper may occupy the bench in addition to team coaches. The tournament director reserves the right to limit the number of coaches per team.
16. Based on feedback received following the 2018 season, the MSF moved from Innings Pitched to a Per Day and Per Tournament Pitch Count limit, effective January 2, 2019. We believe the decision to move to a pitch count (though more bookkeeping will be necessary) will protect younger arms, while also requiring teams to develop pitching skills for all players. At the State Tournament, both teams are required to have a volunteer to keep track of pitches during games. Pitch counters are to keep track of pitches for both teams, and should check in with each other every half-inning and after every pitching change to avoid discrepancies, and must also report pitches thrown to the umpire. If there is a discrepancy, it must be resolved before play resumes. The per day and per tournament pitch count limits are listed below.

10U: 75 pitches per day, 140 pitches per tournament

11U: 85 pitches per day, 150 pitches per tournament

12U: 85 pitches per day, 150 pitches per tournament

13U: 95 pitches per day, 160 pitches per tournament

14U: 95 pitches per day, 160 pitches per tournament

15U: 95 pitches per day, 160 pitches per tournament

NOTE: If a player reaches his per day or per tournament limit during an at bat, he shall be allowed to finish that at bat but must then be removed from the game. Pitches which are batted foul, even those thrown with two strikes, shall be counted as pitches thrown.

NOTE: If the number of teams in pool play is imbalanced within a tournament a provision will be made to allow teams from the larger pools a greater number of pitches.

For One-Day Tournaments, the appropriate “per day” pitch limit shall be in effect.

First violation of pitch count rule: Head coach and pitcher ejected for that game, plus the following game.

Second violation of pitch count rule by same team: Team is disqualified from tournament play. Teams must keep track of pitches thrown by each pitcher during each game and verify with the opposing coach and umpire at the previously specified times and again immediately following the game. Coaches are also responsible for verifying the number of pitches thrown with the tournament director, who will keep a running total throughout the tournament.

17. Defensive Conferences/Trips to the Mound

Teams are limited to three (+1 in extra innings) defensive conferences/trips to the mound are allowed PER GAME in all age groups (can all be used on the same pitcher). On 4th and subsequent trips to the mound, the pitcher must be removed from the pitcher position.

18. For 10, 11, and -12U, the following pitches are legal: fastballs, change-ups, palm balls and knuckle balls.

All other pitches, including but not limited to: curve balls, knuckle curves, sliders, etc., shall be considered illegal.

1st offense - warning;

2nd offense - pitcher and head coach are disqualified for the remainder of that game.

High school rules shall apply for 13U, 14U, and 15U age groups.

19. WARM-UP PITCHES

Pitchers shall be allowed no more than 6 warmup pitches during their first appearance as a pitcher, and are limited to 4 warmup pitches every inning thereafter. A pitcher who re-enters the game is limited to 4 warmup pitches upon re-entry.

20. AROUND THE HORN

After an out is recorded, the ball must be immediately returned to the pitcher, and not thrown "around the horn".

21. BALKS

A balk may not be called in the 10 & 11U age groups unless the umpire judges the pitcher is being intentionally deceptive. A fake pitch will be considered a balk resulting in a dead ball with all runners advancing one base. High school rules will apply for the 12U, 13U, 14U, and 15U age groups.

22. EJECTIONS

Any player or coach ejected from a game for unsporting conduct (other than a pitching or equipment violation) will be suspended for the remainder of the tournament. These individuals may not be within 200 feet of the team bench throughout the remainder of the tournament. If the suspended party negatively affects the tournament in any way, they will be removed from the facility and may not set foot on any MSF State Tournament facility for the remainder of the weekend. If the individual(s) refuses to leave promptly and orderly, the police will be called. It is possible for the individual/team to face additional penalties regarding future MSF Tournament Participation.

23. A game that is suspended due to inclement weather (or for any other reason) will be resumed from the exact point of suspension. If any portion of the tournament is deemed unplayable, the tournament director/MSF staff reserves the right to do whatever is necessary to complete the tournament, including but not limited to changing the tournament format, shortening games, etc. The decision of the tournament director/MSF Staff is final.

If inclement weather (or any other reason) does not allow the tournament to be played out in its entirety, tournament staff may determine a champion from the remaining championship bracket teams using the following criteria:

- 1.) Overall Winning Percentage
 - 2.) Head-to-head (if two teams are tied)
 - 3.) Average run differential (max +/- of 10 per game)
 - 4.) Least number of runs allowed per game
 - 5.) Coin Toss.
24. In pool play games, if the score is tied at the end of regulation and the time limit has not expired, the game shall continue. Games may end in a tie in pool play. If time expires while a game is tied and in the middle of an inning, complete the inning in progress.
25. **POOL PLAY STANDINGS** are determined by:
1. Win/Loss Records
 2. Head-to-Head when only a two way tie exists
 3. Run differential in pool play (maximum +/- of 10 runs per game)
 4. Fewest runs allowed in pool play
 5. Most runs scored in pool play
 6. Coin Toss

If a three-way tie exists, please see examples below:

EXAMPLE #1: Team A = +8 run differential; Team B = +4 run differential; Team C = - 12 run differential; Team A is #1 seed from pool. Team B is #2 seed from pool, Team C is #3 seed.

EXAMPLE #2: Team A = +8 run differential; Team B = -4 run differential; Team C = -4 run differential; The tie between #2 and #3 seed in pool is broken by fewest runs allowed because they were tied in run differential. If still tied, go on to the tie breaker #5.

EXAMPLE #3: Team A = +2 run differential; Team B = +2 run differential; Team C = -4 run differential; The tie between team A and B is broken by the fewest runs allowed because they are tied in run differential. If still tied, go on to tie breaker #5.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Once the use of the 3-way tie breaker is necessitated, do not revert to head to head results to break a subsequent two-way tie.

Concussion Management Guidelines

A concussion is an injury to the brain and any injury to the brain is serious. It is caused by a blow to the head or a blow to the body resulting in an injured brain. Even a seemingly minor blow or jolt can cause a brain injury.

All umpires and youth coaches in Minnesota who officiate or coach games in which 18-under players participate, must have undergone concussion training within the past three years at the website provided below. Umpires and coaches should print and keep their certificate of completion in their possession.

Common Concussion Symptoms

Headaches	Nausea	Vomiting
Balance Off	Dizziness	Fatigue
Sensitive to Light	Sensitive to Sound	Ear Ringing
Numbness and Tingling	Visual Problems	Mentally Foggy
Difficulty Concentrating	Difficulty Remembering	Confusion
Nervousness	Drowsiness	Slurred Speech

Return to Participation

Athletics should not return to play until:

Evaluation and clearance by Health Care Professional

Athletes must be symptom free at rest and during progressively demanding exercises.

Athletes must remain symptom free upon returning to practice/play.

Detailed Concussion Training is available at www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/.

Additional resources available at www.mnata.com/resources/concussion-management/ or www.braininjurymn.org.

Lightning Protocol

Tournament directors and umpires should familiarize themselves with information on dealing with adverse weather from the local office of the National Weather Services.

A few recommendations are listed below:

- 1) If you can hear the thunder from a thunderstorm you could be in danger of being struck by lightning (lightning can travel as far as 10 miles from the parent cloud).
- 2) Always go indoors during a thunderstorm if possible. If not possible, avoid things that might attract lightning such as metal, tall trees, fences or power lines. If you are caught in the open, with no shelter available, crouch down with your hands on your knees.
- 3) Employ the 30 minute rule. Once play has been suspended due to the presence of lightning, thunder or high winds, wait 30 minutes until the last clap of thunder is heard or a flash of lightning is seen.