HEMPFIELD AREA

 ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

 (HAAA)

 Player Eligibility & Drafting Rules

 (Baseball & Softball)

 February 2025

1. GENERAL

The process for selecting HAAA teams depends on the number of registrants. When a member area forms more than one team from within an offered age group, these teams are to be formed via a draft system. The primary objective in the formation of teams is to provide balance within each level. A "draft" system is used to evenly form teams within an organization based on skill level. This system is most effective where different skill levels are more readily apparent and where play becomes progressively competitive. Success in creating balanced teams via a draft system is usually very good when children attend and demonstrate their true capabilities at player evaluations (formerly “tryouts”), when parents do not try to influence the selection outcome, and when coaches refrain from making commitments to player candidates before teams are formed.

The general format for establishing teams at each level is outlined below. Specific procedures are prepared for each level before teams are selected since the number of teams and returning players vary each year.

There shall be no recruiting for individual teams.

Under no circumstances may an organization establish a tiered (ex. A and B team) team structure within an age group based on skill or age.

2. OVERSIGHT

With regard to eligibility and drafting rules, the HAAA Board of Directors will be responsible for overseeing:

a. The adherence of these draft rules.

b. Determining and imposing applicable penalties for violations to the established rules.

c. Decisions regarding all player eligibility and releases.

d. Deciding game protests.

e. Deciding appeals to player and team playoff eligibility.

With regard to eligibility and drafting rules, the applicable HAAA Baseball or Softball coordinator will be responsible for:

a. Maintaining team rosters.

b. Investigating any allegations of eligibility and/or draft rule violations.

c. Ruling on player and team eligibility for the playoffs.

With regard to eligibility and drafting rules, the member area presidents and coordinators will be responsible for:

a. Ensuring that these rules are followed within their organization

3. COACHES

Each team is comprised of a head coach and two (2) assistant coaches with the agreement of the Board of Directors. Head coaches are responsible for all aspects of the team, including players, coaches, parents, fans, equipment, uniforms, and teaching the game of baseball and/or softball. Assistant coaches have a narrower range of responsibilities since they tend to focus more on the players and teaching the game of baseball and/or softball. Assistant Coaches provide assistance as requested under the direction of the Head Coach.

4. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

a. A new player must play for the area in which they reside or the area that is closest to their residence. Any player wishing to play in a different area must get a release from their Area Softball or Baseball Coordinator or President. The Area Softball/Baseball Coordinator or President must act upon any request for release within thirty days. If the Area Softball/Baseball Coordinator or President will not release the player, then the player can submit a written request to HAAA, and the Board of Directors will make the final decision to release the player. Once a request is received, the Board of Directors must disposition the request within thirty days.

b. Established players that have played for one area within the league, and later moves out of that area to another area, within or outside the established league boundaries, may option to remain an eligible player for the area in which the player first resided and previously played for. If this player relinquishes this option, then that player will be obligated to the area in which they now reside. Established players are those defined as players who participated in at least half of the games for the team, which has claimed them during the regular playing season. All other players are considered to be new players and must play for the area in which they reside, or obtain the proper release from that area.

c. Initial and Final Rosters are to be submitted to the league coordinator by the cut-off dates identified in the League Playing Rules.

d. Once a draft has been completed, the area's Coordinator or the HAAA Softball/Baseball Coordinator can only add a new player to a team's roster via placement. If the new player resides within the area's geographically established boundary, then the new player is added to a team's roster by the area coordinator. If in the event that at least three or more new players become eligible for an area's team after the draft has been conducted, then a new draft shall be conducted in accordance with the draft procedures established herein.

e. The HAAA Softball or Baseball Coordinator will place any new players residing outside of an area's boundary on a team. The coordinators have the discretion to place these players on whichever team they feel will best suit the objectives of the area and the league as a whole. The coordinators shall give consideration to teams that are short of players, current skill level amongst teams, and the division of age equality. Designated pitchers may be assigned to a team by the coordinator in order to keep all teams competitive. Placement of the new players may be made regardless of which team is next in the order established for the draft. The HAAA coordinators reserves the right to place any new player from outside the leagues established boundaries on any area's team, regardless of the area in which the new player originally registered. In this event, the new player must re-register in the new area, in accordance with the new areas procedures.

f. Fill-in players from another team may be used to fulfill a team's allowed number of ten (10) players. All fill-in players must be permanently rostered in HAAA for the same organization in which they playing as a fill-in. The team manager who determines eligibility and selection to a team makes such arrangements. Fill-in players are not allowed to play in a game if it conflicts with a game for the team with which they are rostered. If that team ends up having enough of their regular players to play the game, then the fill-in player can play no more than 2 innings in the field, and the fill in player must bat no more than once.

Younger players, “Call-ups,” may be brought up during the season as fill-in players on a game-by-game basis when teams do not have full rosters. A player of either age in the next youngest age group can move up to the next older age group as a fill-in player if the team in their area needs a player to have enough to play their game. Since the first commitment of players brought up is to the team that they are rostered on, it is important that the same player not be brought up on a regular basis. It is also important that players and their parents understand that being asked to play on an older team does not mean that they will be drafted to that team the following year, regardless of how many times they play on the same older team.

Players in the same age group, “Call-overs,” may play as fill-in players on a game-by-game basis when teams do not have full rosters. A player of either age in the same age group can serve as a fill-in player if the team in their area needs a player to have enough to play their game. Call-over players can only be used during the regular season. Call-over players must bat last and are only permitted to play the outfield positions.

Under no circumstances may a player who is rostered at an older age division be used as a fill-in player in a game for a younger age group.

g. To be eligible to play in playoffs, the player has to have played in at least half of the scheduled regular season games unless an injury occurred. An exemption to this rule for an individual player may be obtained in the event of a serious injury or illness which causes a player to miss multiple games. This exemption must be requested by the Head Coach of the team to the applicable HAAA Baseball or Softball coordinator prior to the playoff seed meeting. The request must include the player’s name and contact information for the player’s parent or guardian. The applicable HAAA coordinator will render a decision as to the player’s eligibility.

5. PLAYER RELEASES:

a. HAAA would like to limit releases and keep more of our baseball and softball players remaining in their local recreation areas that they are residing in. Area coordinators must abide by the following criteria before accepting a player from outside their area.

b. Both the releasing and receiving area coordinators will be in agreement of the release. If no such agreement can be made then the player is not released. Player releases can be appealed in writing or in person to the HAAA board. All releases must be approved no later than the last HAAA meeting prior to the beginning of the playing season.

c. All releases for the playing season will be annotated by the HAAA boys and girls coordinators on a player release sheet that will be kept with the team rosters for the baseball and softball leagues. If a release is not obtained the player must play for the area in which he/she resides or disciplinary action may result for the organization area coordinator, coach and/or player involved.

d. The HAAA board may nullify a release if it determined that the team or organization in question is using releases to shift competitive balance. For example if it is determined that a team received releases from multiple organizations for elite or travel players.

6. DRAFT PROCEDURES:

a. All candidates for league play shall be assessed to the greatest extent possible to determine the player's skill level. Player evaluations (formerly tryouts) are recommended but not mandatory when assessing age groups player skill levels. Player history can be used to determine a candidate's skill level. A common rating sheet can be given to each Manager prior to the draft indicating the rank sort from top to bottom of all eligible players participating.

Pitchers or those wishing to pitch, or those players taking pitching lessons must identify themselves as a potential pitcher prior to the draft. For competitive balance, it is suggested that pitches be split evenly between teams in an organization.

It is important that each team try to maintain a minimum roster of twelve players throughout the season.

Eligible high school, legion, college and travel players must identify themselves prior to draft. This is an effort to keep all teams in the league competitive.

Under no circumstances will players be denied the chance to play based on ability (i.e. there are no cuts permitted). This rule does not apply to a player who wishes to play in an older age division. An organization may require that the player be rostered in their correct age group.

b. Permissible Drafting Methods are as follows:

Preferred Method: Teams shall be drafted based on cumulative skill level with the weakest team drafting first in the round. For illustration: In round one (1) the team with the weakest overall ranking (based on the cumulative score of the evaluation rankings of the “Options” players) drafts first. Then the second lowest ranked team drafts second. Remaining teams proceed in a similar fashion until the round is completed. At the conclusion of each round, each teams cumulative score is updated and a new draft order (weakest team to strongest team) is established.

Alternate Acceptable Method 1: Teams shall be drafted in a serpentine fashion. Managers shall draw numbers to establish the order of selecting players. For illustration, the Manager drawing number one makes the following player selections: 1st choice in round one, the last choice in round two, the 1st choice in round three, and so on. The Manager drawing the last number (determined by the number of teams) makes the last choice in round one, the first choice in round two, and so on until all rounds are completed. The exact round in which Optioned Players shall be placed shall be according to talent.

Alternate Acceptable Method 2 (8U only): A serpentine method shall be used, and the Managers shall draft in order from all eligible candidates beginning with round one and ending with the last round. Players of the older age within the age group shall be drafted prior to proceeding to the younger aged players. No team shall complete its draft without having drafted the same number of players in each age group as the other teams participating in the draft. A maximum difference of two oldest-aged players from the age range between teams may be allowed if necessary. This maximum difference will also apply to the younger-aged players in the age range as well.

c. Managers may submit "Options" on a maximum of three (3) players only.

Daughters/Sons and sisters/brothers of Managers and daughters/sons and sisters/brothers of Assistant Coaches will be considered automatic options and will automatically count towards the allotment of three (3). A team may have more than two (2) assistant coaches, but their children must be acquired via the drafting process.

d. The following may be considered during the draft:

1. Siblings of a player currently on roster. Every attempt will be made by the area to honor the following Parent requests:

a. If both (all) siblings are selected then they must be on the same team.

b. If both (all) siblings are selected then they must be on different teams.

c. Either (all) sibling must be placed on the same team or neither (no) sibling will play on the same team.

Siblings may fulfill multiple rounds of drafting for a team. For example if a team drafts two (2) siblings in the second round, they may not draft again until the fourth round.

2. Friend Requests. Parents may request that fiends play on the same team. Friend requests may be considered during the drafting process but will not be cause for:

a. A team to draft multiple players in a single round.

b. The competitive balance to be thrown off between teams. Friend requests must not be used to “stack” a team with a disproportionate number of higher skill players (including travel, legion, or school players).

7. EVALUATION OF A SUCCESSFUL DRAFT:

a. Each team has an equal number of pitchers and catchers

b. Each team has an even number of travel, legion, and/or school players.

c. Each team has a comparable number of “older” and “younger” players within the age group.

d. Head to head games within an organization are close in score.