

# HWSA Rules

## 1. Purpose of HWSA

The Homeschool World Series Association (HWSA) is a nonprofit corporation that endeavors to promote and coordinate baseball competition at the high school level among homeschool teams throughout North America in a distinctly Christian environment. HWSA sponsors annual Regional Tournaments, the showcase World Series Tournament, and other activities for both homeschool baseball teams and individual players.

The HWSA is dedicated to the honor of God, and activities that reflect His honor. We believe that we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works. Although none of us are perfect, this organization will strive to conduct itself according to the principles provided in Scripture and the Rules agreed upon herein.

## 2. Definition of Homeschooling

HWSA purposes to serve homeschooling athletes. As such, the definition of homeschooling shall be as follows.

"Homeschooling" is defined to mean that a student's education is parent-directed. As such, the parents shall be involved in their child's education by assuming the role of principal or headmaster, thereby (1) setting the date and requirements for high school graduation; (2) selecting and approving course materials and study schedules; and (3) selecting tutors, correspondence courses, videos, computer courses and similar resources for their child's education.

It is understood that students may have the opportunity to take dual-credit college courses, particularly in their junior or senior years. This organization encourages such enrollment by homeschool students and the definition above shall not be construed to mean that such students are not homeschooled if the participating college admitted the homeschool student as a high school student.

Clearly, enrollment in a traditional public or private high school is not homeschooling because the child's education in such schools is not parent-directed. However, the demarcation between a homeschool, a cooperative school, and an umbrella school can become blurred. In some states, "homeschool students" are required by law to attend a private school and, in such cases, cooperative or umbrella schools are formed for this purpose. These schools, whether called cooperative, umbrella or "private", are characterized by significant and direct parental involvement, often simply representing different forms of homeschooling within a group of like-minded families.

For purposes of eligibility in HWSA activities, those students who attend a cooperative or umbrella school, or a "private" school formed by homeschool parents for legal purposes, shall be considered homeschoolers and shall be eligible; and, furthermore, teams from such schools shall be eligible to participate in HWSA activities and tournaments.

Where there is a question of eligibility due to the definition of homeschooling, the HWSA Board shall review the matter and, knowing that teams must make plans, render a decision in writing and in a timely manner to the affected party.

## 3. Rules of Eligibility

**3.1 Team and Organization Eligibility:** Teams and their sponsoring organizations are eligible to participate in the activities of the HWSA if they:

- a. Are invited to an activity and approved by the HWSA Board as a team and organization that conducts itself (a) in manner consistent with the Purpose of the HWSA, (b) in a manner consistent with the Rules of Conduct of the HWSA, and (c) as an organization that provides a service to homeschooled athletes in their local geographic area within the guidelines and rules for homeschooling as defined in Section 2;
- b. Represent that each player is a homeschooling student as defined in Section 2;
- c. Represent that each player is a high school student, athletic grade level of 8 or higher as declared by the parents and coach;
- d. Submit a Team Roster, consisting of 18 (eighteen) qualified players or less by the date of March 10 preceding the contest to the HWSA Administrator, such roster to include player names, birth dates, and declared athletic level (e.g., eighth grade, freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) (**Team Roster Rule**);
- e. Submit a Team Coach Roster, consisting of the names of the Team Manager (if any), Head Coach and Assistant Coaches for HWSA-sanctioned tournaments by the date of March 10. Managers and coaches may not be on more than one Team Coach Roster and only managers and coaches shown on the Team Coach Roster may be in the dugout or on the field when that team is playing (**Coach Roster Rule**); and
- f. Agree to abide by the Rules of the HWSA.

### 3.2 Rules Governing Team Rosters and Number of Players

- a. Each team shall submit to HWSA prior to the date of March 10, a Team Roster consisting of 18 (eighteen) players or less who are eligible according to Section 3.3 herein. No players will be eligible to participate in HWSA-sanctioned tournaments whose names are not submitted on this Roster.
- b. At the start of the Tournament, whether Regional or World Series, the Coach for each team shall certify to the Tournament Director that only players listed on the Team Roster will participate in the Tournament. Only players who are shown on the Tournament Team Roster may be in the dugout during the Tournament.
- c. Tournament player awards or other merits of distinction will be made only to players on the Tournament Team Roster.

**3.3 Individual Player Eligibility Rules:** Player Eligibility rules herein follow generally accepted rules established by public and private school associations, and to some extent NCAA rules, particularly with respect to athletic grade designations, years of eligibility and transfer rules. These rules have been adopted by HWSA for the purpose of establishing credibility with other associations, both public and private, and their teams so as to enhance the opportunities homeschool teams may have to play these teams. It is the belief of the Board that rules which could be construed to mean that HWSA teams have undue advantage (for instance, when a player who is designated as a senior appears as a player for a second year) are

detrimental to HWSA's efforts to further the opportunities of homeschool students to play competitive ball and to be recognized by scouts, colleges and universities for their skill and achievement.

Therefore, players are eligible to participate in activities of the HWSA if they:

- a. Are homeschool students under the definition of homeschooling in Section 2 since January 1<sup>st</sup> of the year of the tournament (**Homeschool Rule**);
- b. Live at home with their legal guardian (**Residency Rule**);
- c. Are at least 13 years old and less than 19 years old on the date of September 1 prior to the contest (i.e., a player may turn 19 on September 2 prior to the contest and may not turn 20 prior to September 2 following the contest) (**Age Rule**);
- d. Are athletic grade level of 8 (eight) or higher as declared by their parents and coach. Please note: Once a player declares his athletic grade level, that player may not subsequently change his declaration for the purpose of playing an additional year even if that player played four years or less at the end of his senior year, nor shall that player be allowed to repeat any grade level even if after repeating a level that player will have played 5 years or less (**Athletic Grade Level Rule**);
- e. Have played high school baseball no more than 4 years previously (that is, if a player declares his grade level to be eighth grade, he shall be granted five years of eligibility; if a freshman, four years; if a sophomore, three years; if a junior, two years; and if a senior, he shall be granted one year of eligibility) (**5-Year Eligibility Rule**);
- f. Have not been expelled from a public or private school during the academic school year of the contest or in the year prior (**Expulsion Rule**);
- g. Are in good academic standing and are completing a course of study as prescribed by their parents (**Academic Rule**);
- h. Are in good standing with respect to character and behavior according to the player's parents, coaches, other team leaders, and according to criminal laws applicable to their place of residence (**Character Rule**);
- i. Are on the Team Roster as timely submitted by their team to HWSA. Team Rosters must be submitted on or before the date of March 10 prior to the contest (**Team Roster Rule**);
- j. Complete a Registration Form signed by the parents and the coach of the team, and provide a copy of the player's birth certificate upon registration with the HWSA Administrator, such Registration to include the player's declared Athletic Grade Level (**Registration Rule**); and
- k. Have not participated on another HWSA homeschool team during the academic school year of the contest or in the year prior unless:
  - (i) A team fails to submit its roster or the coach is not certain that the team will be able to timely submit a roster to participate in HWSA tournaments (in such case a player must notify the HWSA Administrator, who shall confirm the circumstances, but may try out with another team and transfer pending HWSA approval);
  - (ii) A change of residence has been made by the player's family and another team is closer; or
  - (iii) A new team has been created consisting of a new sponsoring organization, name, coaches and team roster. In such case, players from any team are free to transfer to the new team until the first Team Roster is submitted to HWSA on March 10 of the year the team participates in its first HWSA tournament (**Transfer Rule**).
- l. Nothing in these Rules is intended to prohibit a player who is unqualified from participating on any homeschool team, including a team which participates in an HWSA tournament, provided that the unqualified player does not participate in HWSA tournaments and does not appear on the Team Roster as submitted to HWSA for that year. For example, a player who transfers from one team to another and becomes disqualified by so doing (i.e., his transfer is not allowed by the exceptions in Rule 3.3k), may not participate in HWSA tournaments for one year. But such a player may participate in HWSA tournaments and activities in the year thereafter if otherwise qualified.

**3.4 Two Teams from an Organization:** An organization may not send two teams to compete in HWSA. HWSA encourages teams to develop Junior Varsity and younger teams to support the Varsity team.

**3.5 Eligibility Decisions:** Questions or issues concerning individual player or team eligibility, requests for exceptions to the eligibility rules or for rulings thereof, should be submitted to the HWSA Administrator or to members of the HWSA Board. The Board shall review the matter and, knowing that teams must make plans, render a decision in writing and in a timely manner to the requesting party. Though exceptions to eligibility rules will be unusual, HWSA reserves the right to make such exceptions if it deems, in its sole discretion, that doing so is beneficial or necessary for the advancement of the purposes or tournaments of the HWSA and that, by doing so, HWSA believes no undue advantage or disadvantage will be bestowed on any one particular team.

**3.6 Comments to the Board:** Questions or requests regarding game rules, tournament rules, or HWSA Rules shall be privately and respectfully submitted to the HWSA Administrator or to members of the HWSA Board. HWSA shall carefully consider each such communication and shall attempt to give a response in a timely manner, though time does not necessarily permit answers to comments made after the start of the season and prior to the end of the World Series. Requests for Rule changes shall typically be considered at the HWSA Board meeting each September. The Board shall make no commitment to respond to comments that are not made privately according to this section.

## 4. Rules of Conduct

It is the purpose of this organization to teach the athletic skills needed to competitively participate in sports, but more importantly, it is the purpose of HWSA to teach by example and by word Christ-honoring precepts and values.

Therefore, the following Rules of Conduct shall take precedent over certain rights that coaches and other individuals may believe they have under the “Rules of Baseball”. Each HWSA participant shall submit to the following basic principles and prohibitions during the conduct of all team and HWSA activities. “Participants” shall mean players, parents, coaches, HWSA staff and leaders, and HWSA Directors. Those who refuse to submit to these rules shall be subject to Discipline under Section 7 of these Rules.

### 4.1. Respect for Authority and Good Sportsmanship

a. Coaches, players and all other participants and spectators shall respect the authority and decisions of the umpires on the field and HWSA leaders off the field. A pattern of disrespect to authorities, either by speech, demeanor or gesture, will be a discipline issue. Ejection of a player, coach, or spectator by an umpire shall be a serious discipline issue.

b. Coaches and players shall at all times conduct themselves according to the principles of good sportsmanship. A pattern of unsportsmanlike conduct, either by coaches or players, shall be considered a violation of rules and is subject to discipline under Section 7 of these Rules. It is hoped that coaches and players will demonstrate exemplary sportsmanship by refraining, for example, from taunting opposing players. They will instead, for example, offer congratulatory comments or handshakes to opposing players for outstanding plays. Good sportsmanship is a term commonly understood; however, HWSA coaches and players will be held to a higher standard of good

sportsmanship. Both umpires and HWSA officials, such as Field Managers, have the authority to make judgments concerning the HWSA standards of conduct and infractions thereof.

c. Close calls by umpires may invoke "oohs and aahs" from spectators, and frequently spectators and participants give encouraging remarks to players when there is disagreement with an official's call (e.g., saying "good pitch" or "close pitch" to the pitcher after a called ball). Comments become disrespectful, however, when attention is drawn to an umpire with reactions like "c'mon blue", "explaining" to him/her why the call may have been wrong, or "staring him/her down". HWSA recognizes that this behavior detracts from the "spirit of sportsmanship", the focus of athletic endeavor, and (most importantly) the honor of God. HWSA encourages coaches, players and parents to take appropriate steps to quickly deal with these remarks, whether they come from the dugout or the stands. Serious offenses will require discipline under Section 7 of these Rules.

**Teach by example the precept to "obey your leaders and submit to them" (Heb 13:17) and "to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed" (Titus 3:1).**

#### 4.2 Protesting Calls

- a. All protests shall be settled at the time of the protest and prior to resumption of play. Any protest not lodged prior to resumption of play shall be deemed waived. Any protest of the final play of the game must be made before all umpires have left the field of play.
- b. A protest may be made only for a misinterpretation of rules; protests of judgment calls shall not be permitted.
- c. A protest shall first be addressed directly and respectfully to the umpire making the protested call who shall make the Initial Ruling.
- d. Either coach may appeal the Initial Ruling to all the umpires on the field, who shall make a Second Ruling.
- e. Either coach may appeal the Second Ruling to the Field Manager, who shall either make a final ruling or, in the sole discretion of the Field Manager, the Field Manager may elect to consult with one or more Directors prior to making a final ruling.
- f. A final ruling by the Field Manager shall be final and non-appealable.
- g. All final rulings shall be respected and followed without further public display of disagreement. This is a matter of respect for authority. A coach, player or parent who makes a public display of disagreement with a final ruling shall be considered a violation of the Rules of Conduct and subject to Section 7.3 of these Rules.
- h. Field Managers whose own teams, coaches, players, parents, or other participants would be affected by the outcome of a protest shall disqualify themselves from making a ruling on a protest. In such case the Tournament Director or an HWSA Director shall act as Field Manager for purposes of the protest.

#### 4.3 Anger, Speech, and Demeanor

- a. Coaches, players, other participants, and parents shall at all times control their spirit and demeanor, be slow to anger, and be respectful in speech. A pattern of anger, outbursts, dissension or derogatory

statements shall be a discipline issue. Using words or gestures that demean any participant (including taunting, "talking-down", or related actions and attitudes), using words that demean any participant, or any swearing or cursing will be a discipline issue.

**Be "slow to speak, slow to anger" (James 1:19); letting "no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear" (Eph 4:29); and let your "speech always be with grace" (Col 4:6), "allowing no filthiness and silly talk, or course jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks" (Eph 5:4). By example, be "sound in speech which is beyond reproach, in order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us" (Titus 2:8). "Encourage one another" (Heb 3:1) to excel, conducting ourselves "honorably in all things" (Heb 13:18), and stimulating "one another to love and good deeds" (Heb 10:24). Remember that growth and maturity is a matter of "practice" (Heb 5:14), particularly in difficult play situation.**

#### **4.4 Alcohol, Tobacco, Drugs and other Matters**

- a. Consumption of alcohol or tobacco by players before, during, or after any tournament game or HWSA activity is prohibited
- b. Reckless driving to and from events is prohibited.
- c. Use of illegal drugs is prohibited.
- d. Careless use, destruction or abuse of property or facilities, or littering of property is prohibited. Each team shall, furthermore, insure that their respective dugouts and stands are clean of litter prior to departing. Parents are encouraged to help clean the stands of litter before departing.
- e. Sexually explicit materials, provocative clothes or behavior, or extramarital sexual relationships are prohibited. It is further required, particularly since some of the HWSA events are conducted near beaches, that all participants, whether players, family or friends, wear modest and respectful clothing at all times, suitable for the occasion and as a testimony to the higher Christ-honoring standards of HWSA.
- f. Jewelry on players must be removed during all practice and games.
- g. All players are expected to be neatly and appropriately dressed at all times as a representative of HWSA. Uniforms are appropriate at the Sunday morning service if such is conducted..
- h. Teams will honor a curfew of 11:00 p.m. the night before games if HWSA events and games allow. Coaches may require an earlier curfew at their discretion.

#### **4.5 Respect for Decisions of HWSA and Condition for Participation**

- a. The HWSA Board and its representatives shall make every attempt to make decisions that are favorable to all teams and not favorable to any one individual team or individual player. However, final decisions made by HWSA concerning tournament formats, schedules, team and player participation, rules for making player awards, and other such issues shall be supported without further dissention.

- b. All teams, coaches, players, other participants and spectators agree to abide by the Rules of the HWSA as a condition for participating in its activities.
- c. A coach, player or parent who is dissatisfied with a decision of the HWSA Board or its representatives may respectfully approach an HWSA Board Member to express his or her disagreement *in private and without public display*. That Board Member may elect to involve other Board Members in the discussion, and if appropriate, bring the disagreement to the entire HWSA Board for consideration. Once a final decision is made by a majority of the entire HWSA Board, the decision shall be considered final. All final decisions shall be respected and followed without public display of disagreement. This is a matter of respect for authority. A coach, player or parent who makes a public display of disagreement with a final decision of the HWSA Board shall be considered in violation of the Rules of Conduct and subject to Section 7.3 of these Rules which may affect that coach's, player's or parent's eligibility for continued participation in HWSA events.

## 5. Game Rules

### 5.1 Baseball Game Rules

Games will be governed by the rules of the National Federation of State High School Associations, Indianapolis, Indiana. Rule books may be ordered from [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).

### 5.2 Exceptions

The HWSA Board or the Tournament Directors may publish exceptions to the Rules for each tournament depending upon the requirements of the tournament.

## 6. Regional and World Series Tournament Rules

### 6.1 Tourney Formats

Formats shall be determined by the Board and the Tournament Director. HWSA reserves the right to place teams in tournaments or brackets as it determines is best. A team may or may not participate in a Regional Tournament that is closest geographically.

### 6.2 Tie Breakers

Tie breakers, if required, shall be determined for each tournament.

### 6.3 Game Protest

- a. A protest shall be made only for a misinterpretation of rules.
- b. Protests shall be resolved per Section 4.2 of these Rules.

#### **6.4 Rain Delays and Special Tournament Rules**

The Tournament Director shall have the right to establish rules for rain delays and any other special rules, such as rules for use of the fields, that may be required for the tournament. If unforeseen circumstances arise, the Tournament Director shall put in place special rules to accommodate the special needs. In such case, if time and circumstances permit, the special rules shall be reviewed by two or more HWSA Directors or preferably, reviewed and approved by a majority of the Board.

## **7. Violations and Discipline**

### **7.1 Scriptural Guidance**

- a. Discipline due to a violation of rules established by the HWSA shall be addressed in accordance with our Lord's guidance in Matthew 18:15-17: "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed".
- b. Every attempt will be made by the HWSA to fairly and impartially judge the merits of each issue such that decisions can be made and enforcement carried out in a way that (a) considers the circumstances from the perspective of all parties, (b) honors teams and individuals, coaches and umpires, and (c) preserves the integrity of our testimony, knowing that we (players, coaches, spectators, and coaches) all sin and "fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

### **7.2 Responsibilities of Coaches, Players, other Participants and Spectators**

- a. HWSA encourages coaches, players and parents to take appropriate steps to deal with issues of conduct in the dugouts, on the fields, and in the stands, in a gentle manner, and in accordance with Scripture and these Rules.

### **7.3 Violations of the Rules of Conduct and Responsibility of the HWSA**

- a. HWSA has a special responsibility to monitor violations by participants and spectators under the authority vested by the HWSA Bylaws. The Tournament Director, Field Managers and HWSA Directors are responsible for exercising this authority and enforcing the Rules of HWSA.
- b. Umpires, Field Managers, and the Tournament Director shall have the authority to eject coaches, players, parents, or spectators as required during the game. A refusal to leave by the ejected person shall result in forfeiture of the game by the affected team.
- c. Violation of Rules may result in disciplinary actions such as player suspension, coach ejection (one or multiple games), game forfeiture, or, in the case of a serious offense, suspension from all HWSA

activities. All teams, by participating in activities sanctioned by the HWSA, agree to and consent to abide by the Rules contained herein.

d. The Field Manager or Tournament Director, upon recognizing a possible violation of the Rules that remains unsettled may before play resumes meet to discuss the possible violation with the umpires and coaches and shall make a decision that is consistent with the Rules of HWSA. Field Managers whose own teams, coaches, players, parents, or other participants are affected, may participate to mediate a resolution but shall disqualify themselves from making disciplinary decisions. In such case the Tournament Director or other HWSA Director shall mediate. Violations which are not play specific may be discussed at the end of the game or later at the discretion of the Field Manager, Tournament Director or a committee of HWSA and a disciplinary decision made accordingly.

e. Less serious violations shall be met with a discussion and a warning. Ejections are considered serious violations and are discussed in Sections (f) and (g) hereinafter. Other serious violations or continual violations and continual warnings either during a single game, or from game to game, may be met with (a) suspension of a player, coach or other leader for any or all remaining games or (b) forfeiture of games by the affected team. A pattern of violations from year to year may be met with a suspension of a player's, coach's or leader's participation or suspension of a team's participation in future HWSA activities.

f. An ejection of a player is considered a serious violation, though it is recognized that umpires are human and sometimes "over react" to an unintentional situation. Nevertheless, to maintain the high standards of character to which HWSA aspires, any player who is ejected from a game, regardless of the reason, shall also be suspended for the following game. A player who is ejected in the last game of a tournament shall be suspended in the first game of the World Series if that team advances.

g. Any coach who is ejected from a game, regardless of the reason, shall also be suspended for the following game. A coach who is ejected in the last game of a tournament shall be suspended in the first game of the World Series if that team advances.

h. The appropriate response to a violation, if a matter of character as demonstrated by a player or coach, shall be an attempt to apologize to the affected parties in a respectful and honest manner.

### **Rules Adopted**

1. These Rules were adopted by the Homeschool World Series Association on November 4, 2002 by the Directors of HWSA.
2. Revision 1 of these Rules was adopted September 6, 2003 by the Directors of HWSA.
3. Revision 2 of these Rules was adopted September 17, 2004 by the Directors of HWSA.
4. Revision 3 of these Rules was adopted September 23, 2006 by the Directors of HWSA.
5. Revision 4 of these Rules was adopted September 20, 2008 by the Directors of HWSA.