

2015---OFFICIAL RULES---2015

AGE LIMIT FOR 2015

CLASS AA/18U	-YOUTH BORN ON OR AFTER MAY 1, 1996
CLASS A SR/15U	-YOUTH BORN ON OR AFTER MAY 1, 1999
CLASS A JR/14U	-YOUTH BORN ON OR AFTER MAY 1, 2000
CLASS B SR/13U	-YOUTH BORN ON OR AFTER MAY 1, 2001
CLASS B JR/12U	-YOUTH BORN ON OR AFTER MAY 1, 2002
CLASS C SR/11U	-YOUTH BORN ON OR AFTER MAY 1, 2003
CLASS C JR/10U	-YOUTH BORN ON OR AFTER MAY 1, 2004
CLASS D SR/9U	-YOUTH BORN ON OR AFTER MAY 1, 2005
CLASS D JR/8U	-YOUTH BORN ON OR AFTER MAY 1, 2006

In order to participate in the 2015 season, a player must attain the age of six on or before April 30, 2015. A certified record of birth date must accompany the agreement of any player whose birthday is not on record in Hamilton, Adams, Brown, Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Highland, or Warren Counties, Ohio. Boone, Campbell, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, Pendleton, or Mason Counties, Kentucky. Dearborn or Ohio Counties, Indiana.

- 1. INDIVIDUAL AGREEMENTS:** (a) Players agreements are for the 2015 playing season which starts when the player signs the agreement and ends when the player's team finishes its regular season and is determined not to be eligible for the Greater Cincinnati Knothole Tournament. Each player and the parent or guardian must have signed an Agreement before a player participates in a regular season game. (b) A player, while under a Knothole contract, may play on any other team in a league or tournament with the following exception: A player may not play on more than one Knothole team.
- 2. ALL PLAYERS** must have access to a birth certificate. It is recommended that all players have a physical examination and have a Doctor's permission to participate in the baseball program. The player's Manager or the District Supervisor may require the birth certificate or the Doctor's permission, or both before placing any player on a team.
- 3. LEGAL TEAM:** (a) Not less than eleven or more than twenty players, including playing manager, shall constitute a legal Knothole team. (b) If the team roster falls below eleven players due to releases, the legality of the team is not affected providing no other rule applies. (c) District Supervisor may establish a standard number of players per team between 11 and 20 players. (d) Teams may play in only one Knothole Division II league but may play in other non-Knothole leagues and tournaments. (e) District Executive Supervisors have the authority to disallow teams from playing in leagues or tournaments outside of Knothole.
- 4. LEAGUE-** Knothole is composed of the following Divisions: Division II and AA. These rules apply to Division II. The rules for AA are provided separately. Any situation not specifically covered by the rules for AA shall be controlled by these rules.
 - (a) Division II is made up of teams playing on a District/Region level.
 - (b) When Districts combine to form a league, and Agreement must be reached on a League Supervisor. If no agreement can be reached on a League Supervisor, the Executive Board of Greater Cincinnati Knothole will appoint the League Supervisor.
 - (c) During the regular season, a minimum of four (no maximum) teams in any one class will constitute a league. Where three or less teams exist in one class, they must be transferred to another contiguous district whose supervisor will have jurisdiction, except for practice fields. When a district has less than eight but more than three teams, the district may, at the supervisor's discretion, elect to transfer to another contiguous district. **No district shall be allowed to combine with more than three other districts for regular season play except with the express written consent of the Board of Directors.**
- 5. KNOTHOLE DISTRICTS:** (a) Knothole districts are composed of geographical areas depicted on maps kept on file by the Knothole Club of Greater Cincinnati, Inc. subject only to the exceptions listed below:
 - (1) A player will play in the district in which he resides.
 - (2) If a player is a member and in good standing with a parish, church, or school which provides a Knothole team, the player will be permitted to play on the parish, church, or school team in spite of the fact that he may not reside in the District in which the parish, church, or school is located. (This rule applies to any denomination of churches.)
 - (3) A player may play in an adjoining District providing both District Supervisors agree in writing.
 - (4) If a player moves to a District in which he did not participate in the preceding year, the player shall be permitted to participate in the player's former District provided the player had a valid contract in the former District for the preceding year and provided that the player secures the approval of both District Supervisors.

- (5) If a player's residence is such that it is unclear in which District he resides, the player shall be assigned to a District by the President of the Knothole Club.
- (6) PENALTY - Forfeiture of game in which player participates.
- 6. NEW PLAYER(S) AND RELEASES:** (a) New Player(s) When a team roster declines below its standard number of player(s), new player(s) may be signed no later than June 1. Class AA – June 21, of the current season. A team may sign up to and including 5 new player(s), consisting of added player(s), and replacements for released player(s), providing the maximum is not exceeded at any time. New player Agreement(s) must be submitted to the District Supervisor prior to the player participating in a regular season game. After June 1, a District Supervisor may allow a team to add a player if required for the team to be able to finish its season, (e.g. a team's roster falls below nine players). When this permission is granted, the team will not be eligible for participation in the City Tournament.
- (b) Release(s) – Provide a procedure whereby players(s) are afforded the opportunity to participate on a Knothole Baseball Team when:
- (1) Player(s) are relocated because of action by the court in a custody hearing, or
 - (2) Player(s) are needed to complete a team roster when player(s) have quit or moved.
 - (c) All other requested release(s) will be resolved by the District Supervisor within 4 weeks prior to the start of the season, and within 2 weeks after the season opens. If no decision is made by said District Supervisor in the time allotted, then said release shall be deemed approved. When a player is released, the official release must be completed and delivered to the District Supervisor.
 - (d) Under no circumstance may a player have more than one (1) signed Knothole Player Agreement(s) on file at the same time.
 - (e) PENALTY – Forfeiture of game in which player participates.
- 7. REGULAR PLAYING SEASON:** (a) Consists of a minimum of a twelve game schedule that must be played during the season and prior to the Greater Cincinnati Knothole Tournament. The official starting date for the Greater Cincinnati Knothole Tournament will be July 1 or thereafter. The Tournament Director will determine the starting date.
- (b) A junior or senior team may play in a league that combines both junior and senior teams and still be eligible for their respective tournament if their district does not have a least seven (7) teams at their respective level. For example, a district has four (4) C Junior teams and five (5) C Senior teams. The teams could combine to form one league. The C Senior teams would be eligible for the C Senior City Tournament and the C Junior teams would be eligible for the C Junior City Tournament provided all other tournament player eligibility rules were met.
- 8. OFFICIAL GAME** – Class AA=7 innings; Class A=7 innings; Class B=6 innings; Class C Senior = 6 innings; Class C Junior = 5 innings; Class D=5 innings. Official games may end by run rule as indicated below:
 7 inning games – 8 runs after 5 innings are complete (4 ½ if home team is leading) – Classes AA & A
 6 inning games – 10 runs after 4 innings are complete (3 ½ if home team is leading) – Classes B SR; B JR; C SR
 5 inning games – 10 runs after 3 innings are complete (2 ½ if home team is leading) – Classes C JR; D SR; D JR
 These run rules will be used in the City Tournament. During the regular season and for District/Region based tournaments, a District Supervisor may choose to uniformly invoke a different set of run rules or use no run rules at all and not be in conflict with this Knothole rule.
- 9. PITCHING DISTANCE** – Class AA=60 feet, 6 inches; Class A=60 feet, 6inches; Class B Senior =54 feet; Class B Junior = 51 feet; Class C=48 feet; Class D=45 feet. Any leagues, schedules and/or games which involve both Class B Senior and Class B Junior teams will use the Class B Senior pitching distance.
- 10. BASE DISTANCE** – Class AA=90 feet; Class A=90 feet; Class B Senior=80 feet; Class B Junior = 75 feet; Class C=70 feet; Class D=60 feet. Any leagues, schedules and/or games which involve both Class B Senior and Class B Junior teams will use the Class B Senior base distance.
- 11. INCOMPLETE GAMES:** (a) Any scheduled game stopped by inclement weather or darkness shall be considered an official game as follows:
 7 inning games – after 5 innings are complete (4 ½ if home team is leading) – Classes AA & A
 6 inning games – after 4 innings are complete (3 ½ if home team is leading) – Classes B SR; B JR; C SR
 5 inning games – after 3 innings are complete (2 ½ if home team is leading) – Classes C JR; D SR; D JR
 The above are the minimum number of innings for an official game; a game can become official at any point after the minimum number of innings have been played provided the home team has been allowed to bat (if necessary because the home team is not leading) in the bottom half of any inning played. Any games which are stopped and are not official are considered suspended and shall be played to completion at a later date. Suspended, non-official, games which are not completed by the end of the regular season shall be considered

games not played. After the minimum innings are completed, or any inning thereafter, without a winning team, the following Major League rules may be necessary/useful to determine the completion of an official game: 4.10(d); 4.11(d); 4.12(a)(1-6); 4.12(b)(1-4) and/or 4.12(c). (b) A District Supervisor may uniformly invoke a suspended game rule and not be in conflict with this Knothole rule. (Does not apply to City Tournament).

- 12. PERSONNEL ON PLAYING FIELD** – Only the official Manager or the designated coaches and the participating players shall be allowed on the players' benches or on the playing field during the progress of an officially scheduled game. Failure to comply with this rule can result in forfeiture of the game by action of the umpire in chief.
- 13. DISPUTED PLAYS** – Only the official manager or designated coach of any team participating in a scheduled game may address the umpire on any disputed play during the progress of the game.
- 14. FORMAL PROTEST:** (a) Any formal protest on a field play must be made to the umpire-in-chief who shall be the plate umpire and the opposing manager must be notified before the next legal pitch is made. Both score books must be noted and signed by both umpires and managers. (b) A written (preferably typewritten) statement of fact, setting forth the date, time, and all matters covering the formal protest must be submitted by the official team manager in person to the District Supervisor (or his designated representative) prior to Noon of the next day. Include a full statement of facts such as number of outs, men on base, ball and strike count and rule number violated.
- 15. BATS** – Approved baseball bats are any unaltered commercially manufactured bats available for retail purchase with the following exceptions: 1. Classes D Junior through Class B Senior: (a) The maximum bat diameter is 2 and $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. (b) Softball bats are not allowed to be used. (c) Composite material and flex handle bats are prohibited unless they are "bpf", BBCOR or BESR rated. Ratings may be printed on the bat or received from the manufacturer in some written or electronic (email) manner for each bat model. (d) Any legal bat in Class A-1 (14U) and up may be used in Class D Junior through Class B Senior. 2. For Class A-1 (14U) and up: (a) Bats must have BBCOR or BESR certification. Ratings may be printed on the bat or received from the manufacturer in some written or electronic (email) manner for each bat model. (b) The maximum difference between bat length and bat weight is minus 3 (-3). 3. Wood bats and single piece aluminum bats are allowed to be used in all classes without any ratings; all other restrictions apply.
PENALTY: Player is out and the ball is dead immediately and the bat is immediately removed from the game and the bench area. Additionally, the manager of the offending team is automatically ejected from the game.
- 16. PROTECTIVE HEADGEAR & EQUIPMENT:** (a) The batter and the base runner must wear a double ear helmet while at the plate and while running the bases. Penalty for not wearing a helmet shall be that the player will be declared "OUT" if the player refuses to wear a helmet after being reminded by the umpire that the player is not wearing the proper headgear. (b) Catchers are required to wear a chest protector, a mask (with throat protector), shin guards, and a protective headgear covering on top of the head while catching behind the plate. All male catchers must wear a cup. It is the coach's responsibility to make sure that he does. (c) Any player warming the pitcher before the game and between innings shall wear a catcher's mask (with throat protector). Refusal to do so after being reminded by the umpire shall result in the ejection of the offender.
- 17. THE KNOTHOLE PITCHER** –
 - A. Rest Between Pitching Assignments** –
 1. Any player who pitches in any portion of a game (including practice games) shall not be permitted to pitch again without two complete nights' rest between pitching assignments.
 2. In any one day a pitcher cannot pitch more innings than the length of a normal game in his class in his class in his district. Note: A single pitch in any inning counts as an inning pitched.
 - B. Pitch Count Limit** –
 1. On the day he pitches, a pitcher shall be limited to the maximum number of pitches as follows: Class A – 90 pitches; Class B – 80 pitches; Class C – 70 pitches and Class D – 60 pitches provided he has not exceeded his innings limit in Rule 17 (A) (2).
 2. A "pitch" is recorded each time the pitcher addresses and throws a "pitch" towards home plate after the umpire has called "play ball" and the ball is live. Throws during a "timeout" (including warm-up pitches) shall not be counted in the pitch count. Pitches shall include strikes, balls, batted foul balls, batted fair balls, dead balls (such as hit by pitch) and any other "pitch" as defined by the National Major League Baseball Rules.
 3. When the pitcher reaches his pitch count limit, the team manager, if he so chooses, may allow the pitcher to finish pitching to the current batter, but not be allowed to pitch to any other subsequent batter of that game or any other game during that same day which might be allowed under other sections of this rule.

4. Each manager shall have his team scorekeeper keep pitch counts for both the home and away teams' pitchers. At the end of each half inning, each team's scorekeeper shall verify and reconcile the recorded pitch count. The pitch count recorded in the home team's scorebook for all pitchers shall govern in any disputes involving this rule and the umpire shall rely on the pitch count recorded in the home team's scorebook if the umpire is requested to verify a pitcher's pitch count prior to removing him from the game to comply with this rule. If the umpire determines the pitcher exceeded his pitch count under this rule and should have not started pitching to the current batter, the umpire shall remove said pitcher from the game immediately. The replacement pitcher shall be given an adequate number of warm-up pitches before he begins to pitch to the batter.

C. Pitching In Multiple Games On The Same Day –

1. A pitcher may pitch in more than one game on the same day provided that:
 - a. The pitcher has had two complete nights rest prior to the day of the games.
 - b. The pitcher pitches no more innings than the length of a normal game in his class in his District.
Rule 17 (A)(2). Note: A single pitch in any inning counts as an inning pitched.
 - c. The pitcher has not exceeded his pitch count for a single day in his class. Rule 17 (B)(1).

D. Trips To The Mound – Removing The Pitcher –

1. In Classes AA, A and B, after the second trip to the mound by the manager or coach in the same inning, the pitcher shall be removed from his pitching assignment but may otherwise stay in the game. Once removed due to trips to the mound, said pitcher may not resume pitching until the following inning.
2. In Classes C and D, after the third trip to the mound by the manager or coach in the same inning, the pitcher shall be removed from his pitching assignment but may otherwise stay in the game. Once removed due to trips to the mound, said pitcher may not resume pitching until the following inning.

E. Taking Signals - The National League rule that requires the pitcher to take signals while in contact with the pitching rubber shall only be enforced in Classes AA and A.

F. Pitcher Accommodations - A pitcher may wear a medical alert bracelet on his non-pitching arm as long as the bracelet is secured and covered by flesh colored tape.

G. Knothole District Supervisor Restriction and Penalties –

1. This rule cannot be changed by any Knothole District Supervisor except that any Knothole District Supervisor may implement a pitch count rule for District play which allows fewer pitches but otherwise follows all other aspects of this rule.
2. Penalty for first violation – The team manager of the violating team will be suspended for two games and forfeit the game in which the violation occurred.
3. Penalty for second and/or subsequent violation – Not governed by GCKA – Can be established by each District Supervisor at their discretion for their District.

18. **KNOTHOLE MODIFICATION TO RE-ENTRY:** A team must start a game with nine players but may finish with eight players. The vacant batting spot will be declared out. (a) Any of the starting and substitute players may be withdrawn and re-entered once, providing such player occupies the same batting position whenever he is in the lineup. Penalty for violation of this section shall be ejection of the manager and player involved. (b) If Player is injured or ejected and cannot be replaced because all substitutes have played, then the opposing manager will choose any player from the bench to replace the injured or ejected player.
19. **BATTING ORDER OPTIONS:** (a) A tenth batter may be added to the batting order at the start of the game. Any nine (9) of the ten (10) batters may play on defense. If a team using the AH drops from ten (10) to nine (9) players available, the spot in the lineup is left open and is not an out. (b) A team also has the option of using a continuous batting order. The Definition of the continuous batting order is as follows: (1) Team must declare at the start of the game that they are using the Continuous Batting Order; (2) All players present at the beginning of the game must be placed in the batting order; (3) Players who arrive late after the game has started are placed at the bottom of the batting order; (4) There is free substitutions for the defensive positions; (5) A player who is injured or ill or who has to leave the park may leave the game, but may NOT return. That spot in the batting order is skipped and does not count as an out. Injuries and illnesses may not be feigned, doing so may result in the forfeiture of the game; and (6) A player who leaves the game while on base or at bat is replaced by the most recent batter not currently occupying a base. Note: Teams using the AH or continuous batting order must refer to Rule 18 if their batting order falls below nine (9) players.
20. **SLIDING BASE RULE:** (a) When a runner goes into a base standing up and the runner and base move more than the width of the base in any fashion whatsoever, and the runner is tagged, the runner is out. (b) If the runner gets back to the spot where the base was before being tagged, the runner is safe. (c) When sliding, the runner shall remain on the ground until the umpire calls time. If the player gets up and moves before the umpire calls time, the runner will be called OUT if tagged and not standing on the original spot of the base. If the player

moves the base and gets up and makes the next base, the future runner will go to the original spot of the base. (d) If the base is tied down the runner must stay with the base. (e) If a tied down base becomes loose or broken because of a slide and the base moves away, the runner is not in jeopardy. (f) Pegged or weighted bases may be used.

- 21. CONDUCT – (a) Each manager is responsible for the conduct of the team’s players, coaches and fans before, during and after the game (b) Taunting by players, coaches or fans shall not be condoned and shall be governed by Major League Rule 4.06 and shall be considered unsportsmanlike conduct. (c) The use of alcoholic beverages, profane language, or improper conduct will not be permitted on any baseball field while a Knothole game or practice is in progress. Violation will result in immediate ejection from the field and further disciplinary action by the League Supervisor. (d) No weapons of any kind (guns, knives, etc.) are allowed in or around the playing area of a Knothole game or practice. This shall include the field of play, any foul territory around the field of play, the fan areas of the stands and other viewing areas and the areas around any concession stands. (e) No game shall continue until the offender or offenders have left, or all persons shall be cleared from the field and the game will continue with the spectators removed.**
- 22. MANAGER’S AGREEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES –** The official team manager will be held responsible for the legality and correctness of his team’s roster and player agreements as follows:
 - (1) On the player’s agreement, a correct birth date, a correct permanent address, a correct phone number, the player’s signature, a parent/guardian’s signature and the manager’s acceptance signature and acceptance date must be shown. A completed player agreement will be turned in for each player listed on his team’s roster.
 - (2) The manager is responsible for ensuring that each player listed on his team’s roster resides within the District in which his team is playing. Exception: Proper release(s) were obtained under Rule 5 and/or 6; said release(s) is attached to the completed player agreement.
 - (3) Copies No. 1 and No. 2 of each player agreement along with a copy of the team roster will be delivered to the manager’s District Supervisor as soon as the team is formed, but in no case later than the official District opening game.
 - (4) **PENALTY:** The use of any illegal players will result in the forfeiture of all games in which an illegal player was used. The team manager will receive a three (3) game suspension automatically and will come under Knothole Board review which could lead to further disciplinary action up to and including a lifetime ban on managing a Knothole team.
- 23. INELIGIBLE PLAYER:** (a) An ineligible player is defined as any player who has: (1) Not signed or whose parent or guardian has not signed his player’s agreement, or whose player’s agreement has not been accepted by his team manager prior to his participation in any regularly scheduled game;
 - (2) A player who is playing on a Knothole team contrary to Rule 5 or 6 of the “Official Rules” or contrary to the Local Rules of the Knothole District in which he resides;
 - (3) **A player whose age exceeds the permissible age limitation of the Class in which he is participating.**
 - (4) A player who has played in a non-approved event.(b) Manager and / or teams using an ineligible player will be penalized by forfeiture of each game in which an ineligible player participated.
- 24. APPROVED BASEBALL PROGRAM:** (a) During the regular playing season, no player / team agreement signed by a player, parent, guardian, manager, or other authorized person with the Knothole Club of Greater Cincinnati, Inc., shall be valid in any tournament play of any kind outside their district from the first official game in the district the contract represents to the last official game within the same district unless:
 - (1) Except as provided below, the player plays for the team his contract represents.
 - (2) Player / Team does not violate any Knothole rules.
 - (3) Team fulfills all obligations to their district.
 - (4) A team can play in a tournament during the regular season with the written approval from their District Supervisor prior to the event. It cannot affect regular scheduled games.
 - (5) A team that qualifies for the Knothole City Tournament cannot play in any other tournament until eliminated from the Knothole City Tournament. **Exception:** This rule does not apply to a team playing in their Knothole District Tournament and the City Tournament. City Tournament scheduling shall take priority.(b) If a player / team violates any of the conditions above, the player / team will be disciplined by the District Supervisor or the Knothole Tournament Supervisor in accordance with Knothole rules.
- 25. SUPERVISION:** (a) During the regular season, each Executive District Supervisor is authorized within his District to schedule games, regulate activities, decide protests and render all necessary decisions. (b) National League Official Playing Rules are the standard of the Knothole Club of Greater Cincinnati, Inc., and will govern in all baseball activities except wherein rules of the Knothole Club take precedence. (c) An individual District

Supervisor may alter, modify, or add to these rules providing the rules are not in direct conflict with Knothole rules and are written and deposited at Knothole headquarters and sanctioned by the Rules Committee before the season starts.

26. **INTENTIONAL FIGHTING** by participants including players, managers, coaches and other team personnel may result in a one year "Calendar" suspension of said participant. Any striking or other offensive touch not in the normal course of a baseball game by a player, coach, or manager of an umpire before, during or after a baseball game shall result in a one year "Calendar" automatic suspension.
27. **"FAKE TAG" – No defensive player may make a tag attempt on a base runner if that defensive player does not have the ball in his possession. This is to ensure the safety of the base runners by eliminating unnecessary slides that may result in injuries to the base runner. The penalty for infraction of this rule is that the base runner shall be declared "Safe" and offender may be ejected from the game.**
28. **NO METAL SPIKES WILL BE PERMITTED IN KNOTHOLE EXCEPT IN CLASSES AA AND A (A Senior & A Junior).** A player wearing metal spikes improperly will be given the opportunity by the umpire to change into the appropriate shoes and continue playing in the game. If the player does not have the appropriate non-metal spike baseball shoes, then he shall not be permitted to play in the game. If any situation arises with a player and/or manager/coach/parent about the improper wearing of metal spikes, the umpire may declare unsportsmanlike conduct and impose the penalties to the offending individuals as he see fit up to and including ejection from the game and playing field.
29. **HURDLING OR PLOWING OVER THE CATCHER OR OTHER BASEMAN** – (Will be judgment call and could result in unsportsmanlike conduct.)
30. **WAITE HOYT DIVISION II CITY KNOTHOLE TOURNAMENT**
 - (a) The top four teams in Classes A, B Senior, B Junior, C Senior, C Junior and D Senior in each region (North, South, East, West) are eligible to play in the City Tournament. (b) Teams may be added to fill open bracket slots with the approval of the Tournament Committee. (c) Maximum 16 teams per Class.
31. **The pitching plate will be used in all Greater Cincinnati City Tournament games for Classes "AA"."A"."B"."C", and "D".**
32. **In the event a team entered in a Greater Cincinnati Knothole Tournament game is given incorrect instructions, as to the time or place to report for a tournament game, by a District Supervisor, the team shall not lose the game by forfeit, provided the facts are reported to the Tournament Director by the District Supervisor the same day the game was scheduled. The Tournament Director shall schedule the game for play no later than the next playable day.**

ADAPTED BASEBALL

Organized youth baseball programs are available for children with disabilities. For information on the Adapted Baseball Program, call the Cincinnati Recreation Commission, Division of Therapeutic Recreation, at 352-4945.