YELLOW BALL
INVITATIONAL

Official Rules & Guidelines

Welcome to the **Yellow Ball Invitational** — a one-of-a-kind youth baseball event inspired by the fun, fast-paced energy of **Banana Ball**! Our goal is to keep the action moving, make every inning matter, and most importantly, have fun.

⚾ General Tournament Format

- **Teams:** 3–4 per age group, formed by Tournament Hosts
- **Games:** 3-game guarantee
- **Fields:** 2 fields per division
- **Game Info:** 60-minute time limit or 4 innings, whichever comes first. 5 runs maximum per inning, per team (including the 4th inning).
- **Pitching:** Coach (or machine) pitch, with a player-pitcher in the field
- **Start Times:** Registration at 10:00am; first pitch at 12:15pm; Awards Ceremony at 5:15pm
- **Baseball Rule Set:** NFHS ruleset will be defaulted to (as needed)
- **Seeding Tiebreakers:** Wins > Points Won > Points Allowed > # of Trick Plays > Dance-off Wins

🕐 Time Limits

- Yellow Ball games are **capped at 60 minutes or 4 innings**, whichever comes first.
- The **umpire keeps the official game clock**, starting at the first pitch.
- **No new inning starts after the 50-minute mark.** Any inning that starts before 50:00 is played to completion.
- 8U pool games are **50 minutes**, with no new inning after 45:00.
- When the game ends, the **team with the most total points wins** (see How Scoring Works).
- If the game ends **tied in points**, the team with more officially scored Trick Plays wins. Still tied? The team that won the dance-off wins. Pool and consolation games can end in a tie. Only a tied **championship game** goes to a Showdown, as a last resort.

💯 How Scoring Works in Banana Ball

We're not counting runs — we're counting **points!** Every game is decided by **total points**, earned four ways:

- **Win the inning (innings 1–3):** The team that scores more runs in an inning earns 1 point. Tied inning, no point. Runs reset every inning, so everyone gets a fresh start.
- **2nd-inning stretch dance-off:** After the 2nd inning, both teams hit the dance floor. The umpire picks the winner based on the 3 E's (Everybody, Energy, Extra), and they earn 1 point.
- 4**th-inning bonus:** If the 4th inning starts before the 50-minute mark, every run scored in it is worth 1 point (5 max, like any inning). There's no separate "win the inning" point in the 4th.
- **Trick Plays:** Each officially scored Trick Play earns 1 or 2 points (see Trick Plays sheet). A trick only counts if it leads directly to an out on the same play, and the umpire calls it out and is marked by the official scorer. Trick Play points add to the game total; they don't decide who wins an inning.

> At the end of the game, add it all up: **inning points** + **dance-off** + **4th-inning runs** + **Trick Play points**. Most points wins!

Tied? Most officially scored Trick Plays wins (count, not points), then the dance-off winner. Pool and consolation games can end tied. A tied **championship game** goes to a quick **Showdown**: one batter vs. the other team's pitcher and a fielder, score or out, round by round until one team scores and the other doesn't. Still tied after 3 rounds? Coin flip.

A scorekeeper tracks points on the scoreboard at every game as the umpire calls them. **The umpire's call is final** on runs, Trick Plays, the dance-off, and the clock.

This keeps every inning exciting, every at-bat meaningful, and the pace fast and fun — just like Banana Ball is meant to be! 🍌⚾

🧢 Equipment & Safety

- Players must wear a **helmet** when batting, on deck, or running the bases. Players are encouraged to wear their face masks if that helps them feel comfortable.
- Only accepted, age-level bats will be allowed (baseball and softball).
- **Catcher's gear** (mask, chest protector, shin guards, cup) is required behind the plate.
- Teams are encouraged to ensure every player has **hydration**, **sun protection**, and appropriate attire for weather conditions.

🤝 Equal Play Guidelines

- Every player will participate in the field and hit each game.
- Teams will bat the entire roster. For game 2, whoever your next at-bat would have been from your first game, will be your lead off for the next game. Same for game 3.
- Teams must rotate defensive positions throughout the day. All players must play the infield and the outfield at least 1 inning per game.
- Coaches should strive for **equal playing time** for all players.
- 9 defensive players (10 at 8U) should be in the field, including the player-pitcher, who stands behind the coach pitcher or pitching machine. Any bench players during the inning will be expected to lead dances, encourage their teammates, and be the rally machine!
- Substitutions and inning changes should be made quickly to keep the pace of play high.

🍌 Banana Ball Rules 🍌

1️⃣ Win the Inning, Get the Point

Innings 1–3 are each worth one point.
Whichever team scores more runs in that inning earns the point. If it's tied (including 0–0), no point is awarded. Teams can earn bonus points from the dance-off, the 4th inning, and Trick Plays (see How Scoring Works) that count towards your final total.

2️⃣ 60-Minute Time Limit

All games are capped at **60 minutes**.
No new inning begins after the 50-minute mark, but an inning already underway is finished. If a game ends tied in points, the team with more officially scored Trick Plays wins, then the dance-off winner.

3️⃣ No Stepping Out

Batters must stay in the box — no timeouts, no stepping out between pitches.
Stay ready, stay in the game!

4️⃣ No Bunting

Swing away! Bunts are not allowed and will result in an automatic out.

5️⃣ Batters Can Steal First

If a pitch gets past the catcher at any time, the batter may attempt to **steal first base**!

6️⃣ No Walks Allowed

Four balls doesn't mean a free base.
When a 4th ball is thrown, the batter **must sprint toward each base** while the defense must throw the ball to **every defensive player** (including the pitcher) before trying to make an out.

7️⃣ No Mound Visits

Coaches, catchers, or players cannot visit the mound — pace and fun come first!

8️⃣ Fan Foul Out

If a fan catches a foul ball (before it touches the ground), the batter is **out!**
Yes, fans — you're part of the game! Don't forget your glove.

9️⃣ Golden Batter

Each team designates **one "Golden Batter"** per game. If they hit a home run, it counts for **two runs** that inning. (They must be announced to the umpire before the at-bat.)

🍌 Rotten Banana Batter

Once per game, a team may select a **fan from the opposing team's crowd** to come onto the field and attempt an at-bat! The fan can't strike out looking — they must swing!

🚫 No Challenge Rule

There are no video replays or challenges — the umpire's call stands. Keep it light and fun!

🏅 Sportsmanship & Fun

This tournament is designed to celebrate **energy, effort, and excitement**.

- Celebrate great plays — from both teams.
- Cheer loudly, laugh often, and keep the spirit positive.
- We want to see Trick Play attempts, hilarious dances, laughing off errors, and picking each other up.
- Coaches are responsible for maintaining respectful behavior from players and parents alike.