

VSS Rules Committee - January 21, 2026 - Minutes

The VSS Rules Committee met on January 21, 2026 at the French Club in Vernon. The meeting was called to order at 6:04pm. Attending: Steve Vera (Internal Competition Chair, Rules Committee Chair); Steve Cervizzi, Keven Busque, Ed Donofrio, Fred Valenti, Jeff Cristaldi, John Hardy, Brian Michaud, Scott Shaw, and Bill Hettinger (League Secretary, non-voting). Missing Kathy Sunderland, Matt Kellie.

I. The criteria for judging rules changes was presented to the committee.

What problem are we trying to solve with this rule change?

Does the proposed rule change solve that problem?

Is the rule change consistent with the purpose of the league?

II. The committee discussed 29 suggested rule changes for 2026 season as submitted by league members and committee members.

The following rule changes are recommended to the board:

1. Allow teams to make defensive substitutions during the double inning so some guys don't have to sit 2-innings

Discussion was held. Recommendation passed: Yes – 8; No – 1

2. The committee also recommends the league track the number of games that do not go to completion like they did in 2024 and reevaluate double inning and sub rules mid-season if game time is a problem. Passed: Yes – 9; No - 0

3. A ball hit into the pitching screen is a foul ball.

Discussion was held. Recommendation passed: Yes – 9; No – 0

4. Drop the Flip Flop rule or make it 12 to 15 runs. (Note: SSUSA Flip Flop rule 5.5(2) is 10 runs. Current VSS rule mirrors SSUSA)

Discussion was held. Recommendation to drop the flip-flop rule passed: Yes – 7, No -2

Since the motion to drop the rule passed, changing the number of runs was not discussed

5. Change the home run rule. Open it. Let the guys that can hit him hit him. It's a five run rule inning anyway.

Discussion was held. Recommendation to eliminate the limit on home runs passed: Yes – 8; No – 1

6. Hit to the Outfield Grass Rule: a) Any ball hit to an infielder who is on the dirt who was able to knock it down and make the play, but the ball rolls onto the grass that infielder be allowed to continue to make the play and throw out the runner going to first base.

Discussion was held. Recommendation passed: Yes – 8; No -1

7. A base runner at third base be allowed to step into foul territory, even with the base, when there is a batter at the plate, particularly a strong pull hitter. When the ball is hit the runner must go back to retouch third base and then they can run home.

Discussion was held. Recommendation passed: Yes – 8; No -1

8. Allow a team to get subs to bring them 11 players instead of capping it at 10

Discussion was held. Recommendation passed: Yes – 7; No – 2

9. Change the position rule when a sub plays to exclude up the middle because nobody plays that when they're short a player and add in second base so there's an infielder's spot.

Discussion was held. Recommendation passed: Yes- 7, No - 2

10. Subs can play anywhere.

Discussion was held. Recommendation passed: Yes – 7; No - 2

11. There were two similar have to umpire a game after arguing with an umpire suggestions submitted. The committee considered the following:

If a player argues with an umpire and receives a yellow card/ejection, they have to umpire a game before they will be allowed to play again.

Discussion was held. Recommendation passed: Yes – 9; No - 0

12. The pitching screen must cover ½ of the rubber

Discussion was held. Recommendation passed: Yes – 9; No - 0

The following rule changes were discussed, but are not recommended to the board

13. Get rid of the double inning. Play the game like a regular game, an inning at a time.

Discussion was held. Recommendation failed: Yes – 0; No – 9;

14. For Regular season do 2 innings back to back through the 4th inning just to give us a little more time to make sure games get 7 innings in

Discussion was held. Recommendation failed: Yes – 0; No – 9

15. No Intentional walks. Got to pitch and make an effort to throw something near the plate

Discussion was held. Recommendation failed: Yes – 2; No – 7;

16. A batter who is intentionally walked gets 2 bases. If a batter is intentionally walked and there is no one on base, they get 3 bases.

Discussion was held. Recommendation failed: Yes – 2; No – 7;

17. Hit to the Outfield Grass Rule: b) A short pop-up that is hit over an infielder's head onto the grass, and the infielder can pick it up should be allowed to have a play on a runner running to first.

Discussion was held. Recommendation failed: Yes – 0; No – 9

18. Do what other leagues do – Only call the infield fly rule retroactively if it should have been caught by the fielder.
Discussion was held. Recommendation failed: Yes – 0; No – 9
19. Any rule can be overruled if both managers agree
Discussion was held. Recommendation failed: Yes – 0; No – 9
20. Reconsider the balls used - Get rid of the hot softballs
Discussion was held. Current balls are .44/375. Recommendation failed: Yes – 0; No – 9
21. Give each team three balls per game. Each team hits their own balls. If the team doesn't retrieve balls hit into woods or over fence and runs out of game balls, they will need to hit balls from the bucket.
Discussion was held. Recommendation failed: Yes – 0; No - 9
22. Reconsider the age allowed to use senior bats
Discussed changing the age for senior bats. Recommendation failed: Yes – 0; No - 9
23. Allow USSSA bats in addition to USA/ASA bats for those under 70 (both are spec'd 1.20 BPF or below)
Discussed the USSSA bats may be hotter than USA/ASA bats. Recommendation failed: Yes – 0; No - 9
24. If a team has less than 10 players, the other team supplies a catcher. No subs. (Still have to have 8 or your own or pool players so you don't forfeit).
Discussion was held. Recommendation failed: Yes – 0, No – 9
25. Umpires should wear orange shirts to distinguish them from the players
Discussion was held. The feeling is people know who the umpires are. Recommendation failed: Yes – 0; No – 9.
26. Eliminate the playoffs. This is a rec league. Play the regular season through the end of August
Discussion was held. Recommendation failed: Yes – 1; No – 8
27. During playoffs we would allow (if a team wishes). A team to **match** the number of players on the opposing team. For example, if your team has 14 players and the team you are playing only has 11, your team can also bat just 11 players in their batting order. Note: The team with 14 players would still need to play all their players at least 3 innings and those extra players would need to get an "AT BAT" at some point during the game by pitch hitting for another player on their team.
Discussion was held. Recommendation failed: Yes – 2; No – 7
28. Cannot have substitute runners from the bases
Discussion was held. Recommendation failed: Yes – 2; No – 7
29. Eliminate the extra foul (the one to waste)
Discussion was held. Recommendation failed: Yes – 3; No – 6

Board Topics

The following Board Topics were submitted in response to the request for Rule changes. These are included for board discussion purposes.

1-Pitch Tournament

- a. Structure the teams for the 1-Pitch tournament using the last league standings before the tournament. The team in first place would be paired with the team in eighth place, the team in second place would be paired with the team in seventh place third place and six place teams would be paired together as would teams in fourth and fifth place. That would give us our four teams for the one pitch tournament
- b. Mid season 1 Pitch tournament: do a redraft of just players from the league that want to play...get at least 4 teams. Managers are from the top 4 teams with the best record at the time and we do a draft. Teams wear like color shirts.
- c. Preseason or Midseason 1 Pitch double elim tourney just for the 8 league teams. 5 or 6 Inning games to keep the early season wear and tear down. Doing it Preseason would be a great way for everyone to get some practice in before the Regular season and get a feel for their team where to position players in the field and batting order for the regular season.

Fall League

- d. Make the Fall league more Interesting by keeping Standings and having a one day single Elim playoff format at the end. 4th place vs 1st place at one field and 3rd place vs 2nd place at the other field. Both winners play in the championship game after the 1st games are finished.

Schedule

- e. Give each team 2 double headers earlier in the season before it gets hot on Thursdays only. This would free up a full week in the schedule either for more makeups or the mid season tournament.

Suggestions Requiring By-Law Changes

- f. Change age limit to 60
The committee is not recommending this change to the board
- g. Change the league structure so league members directly elect the officers (e.g. commissioner) rather than have the league members elect the board members who then select the officers.
The committee is not recommending this to the board

III. The meeting was adjourned at 8:21pm.