

West Lafayette Little League Baseball Rules Briefing

Rules common to Business and Bank League

Safety Rules

- **Play must be suspended immediately at the first sighting of lightning or the sound of thunder.** Once suspended, play cannot resume until after a period of 30 minutes with no lightning elapses.
- Only players, managers, coaches and league officials are allowed on the field or in the dugouts.
- No one (player, manager, coach or umpire) wearing a cast is allowed on the field during games. A player or coach wearing a cast may remain in the dugout.
- All batters, base runners and player-base coaches must wear a helmet with a face mask at all times from leaving the dugout until returning to it—even when running off the field after being retired or at the end of a half inning.
- At least one adult must be in the dugout at all times during games (maximum of 3 adults).
- All gates to the field should be kept closed at all times.
- No bats are allowed in the dugout or in the on deck cage. All bats must be kept in receptacles outside the dugouts.
- Only coaches and the next due up batter are allowed in the on deck cage. All other players must be in the dugout.
- Catchers must wear appropriate protection during games, including cups for boys.
- Catchers must wear a catcher's mask during pre-game infield practice.
- Head first slides are not allowed. The runner is ruled out. A runner may dive back to a base.
- Between inning team meetings should not be held in front of the dugouts.
- **LOCAL RULE** - The first time the batter throws the bat, the plate umpire issues a warning to the batter after the play is over. (This is noted by the Official Scorer.) If this **same** batter in the same game throws the bat a second time, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and any runners return to the last base that was legally touched at the time of the pitch.

General Rules

- Home teams occupy the third base dugout; visitors occupy the first base dugout.
- All players are in the batting order at all times unless injured.
- Each player must play a minimum of 6 defensive outs. These outs do not have to be consecutive.
- A seven run/half inning rule is effect for all games. The half inning ends immediately upon the 7th run crossing the plate.
- If a game becomes mathematically un-winnable due to the seven-run rule, it is up to the manager of the trailing team to decide whether or not play continues.
- No more than three adults may be in the dugout at any one time. Adults must remain either in the dugout or behind the fence during live ball situations, except when coaching the bases. There can be two adult coaches on the bases, provided there is still an adult in the dugout.
- Team hats **must** be worn in the field.

Business League

Game Night:

4:30 - 4:50	Visiting team has the batting cages (batting practice is NOT to take place on the field)
4:50 - 5:10	Home team has the batting cages
5:10 - 5:20	Visiting team takes infield/outfield
5:20 - 5:30	Home team takes infield/outfield and remains on the field for the start of the game
5:30	Game starts (Before school is out, no inning shall start after 7:00 p.m. After school is out, no inning shall start after 7:30 p.m. An inning starts the moment the third out is made in the bottom of the previous inning.)

NOTE: The home team is responsible for setting up AND putting away both the GAME machine and any other equipment used in the batting cages/area (second pitching machine, tees, etc).

Rules:

- The game must start with each team having a minimum of 10 players (at least 8 of which must be from the competing team. If there are not 8, the game will be forfeited). Substitute players may only be obtained from teams who played the previous business game. A substitute player must bat **last** in the batting order and only play the outfield.
- The home team supplies the home plate umpire. The visiting team supplies the base umpire.
- Each team will play 10 players in the field at all times (4 outfielders – LF, LC, RC, RF). **The outfielders are to be positioned at least 10 feet into the grass.**
- Infielders cannot position themselves on the grass portion of the infield prior to a pitch.
- Fielders **may not** change positions during a half-inning other than for substitutions.
- No infield or outfield practice is to be taken between half-innings.
- The infield fly rule will **not** be in effect.
- Bunting is not allowed. A bunt will be called a no pitch.
- Stealing is allowed **only** from 3rd base on a passed ball. A passed ball is defined as a pitched ball which the catcher should have caught or controlled with ordinary effort.
- If the ball is in the infield, controlled by a fielder and it is being returned to the mound or pitching circle, the runners must return to their previous base unless they are over halfway to the next base (in which case they can take that base only). Where the runners were located when this occurs will be a judgment call for the umpire

Pitching Machine:

- A coach or parent from the batting team is responsible for feeding the pitching machine. No coaching is allowed from this position.
- The speed of the pitching machine should be set at **52** rpm.
- Adjustments to the aim of the pitching machine should be made **only** when absolutely necessary and then only at the beginning of an inning.
- The pitching machine is not in play. When a batted ball hits the machine, it immediately becomes a dead ball. The batter advances to first base only and any runners advance one base only if forced.
- The adult who is feeding the pitching machine is in play. If a batted or thrown ball hits this person, the ball is still live and in play.

- The fielder in the pitching position shall have both feet on the dirt portion of the mound and be even with, or behind the pitcher's rubber when the ball is released from the pitching machine.
- There are **no** walks, but strikes will be called if the batter misses a pitch or does not swing at a pitch in the strike zone.

Bank League

Game Night:

6:30 - 6:50	Visiting team has the batting cages (batting practice is NOT to take place on the field)
6:50 - 7:10	Home team has the batting cages
7:10 - 7:20	Visiting team takes infield/outfield
7:20 - 7:30	Home team takes infield/outfield and remains on the field for the start of the game
7:30	Game starts. (Before school is out, no inning shall start after 9:15 p.m. After school is out, no inning shall start after 10:00 p.m. An inning starts the moment the third out is made in the bottom of the previous inning.)

NOTE: The home team is responsible for putting up any equipment used in the batting cages/area (pitching machine, tees, etc).

Rules:

Teams must start the game with 10 players (at least 8 of which must be from your team. If there are not 8, the game will be forfeited). Substitute players may only be obtained from the two business teams who played the previous game (whether on that same day or the day before). A fill-in business player cannot play any more innings than any rostered bank league player. A substitute player must bat **last** in the batting order and only play the outfield. **No 9 year olds or younger are allowed to substitute in the Bank League.**

- As a gentlemen's agreement among managers there are no intentional walks.
- The infield fly rule is in effect.
- There are no balks in Little League baseball.
- A catcher need not catch a third strike for the batter to be declared out, but runners may advance.
- The number of pitches per half inning is kept by the base umpire and that is the authoritative count. At the end of each half inning or when there is a change of pitchers, this count is given to the official scorer who maintains a running total and enters the total into the pitching log when a pitcher completes his term.
- It is the manager's responsibility to obtain an accurate pitch count to insure that a pitcher does not exceed his eligibility.

Some pertinent and often misunderstood rules

Below is a thumbnail sketch of some of the more important and/or often misunderstood rules. This list is no substitute for thoroughly reading and understanding the Little League's Official Regulations and Playing Rules.

- **Pitching eligibility**
 - Any player on the roster can pitch and there is no limit to how many pitchers a team uses in a single game. Exception: A player who has played the position of catcher for four or more innings cannot be used as a pitcher.
 - There is an 85 pitch limit for 11-12 year old pitchers
 - When a pitcher reaches the 85 pitch limit for 11-12 year olds, then the pitcher must be removed but may remain in the game at any other position except catcher. **Note:** a pitcher who reaches the 85-pitch while facing a batter may continue in the game until that batter is retired, reaches base or the half inning is completed, whichever occurs first.
 - Pitchers must adhere to the following rest periods after pitching:
 - Over 66 pitches in a day: four calendar days of rest.
 - 51-65 pitches in a day: three calendar days of rest.
 - 36-50 pitches in a day: two calendar days of rest.
 - 21-35 pitches in a day: one calendar day or rest.
 - 1-20 pitches in a day: no days rest required.
 - **NOTE:** the use of the term "calendar day" as opposed to 24-hour day. A pitcher, who pitches on Monday and has to observe a three calendar day rest, must rest Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The earliest he would be eligible to pitch would then be Friday. **NOTE: There is no longer a requirement that the pitcher must also sit out a game as well as the rest period.**
 - Illegal pitches count against a pitcher's pitch count even if the ball was not delivered to the plate.
 - If a player has pitched 41 or more pitches in a day he cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of the day. He can play any other position.
- **Mound Visits:** A manager may visit a pitcher twice in one inning or three times in a game. On the occasion of the third visit in a single inning or the fourth visit in the game, the pitcher must be replaced. **Any defensive time out which involves the coaching staff counts as a visit to the mound.** A manager may confer with any other defensive players during a visit to the mound.
- **Offensive time outs:** The manager of the team on offense is allowed one time out per inning.
- **The Strike Zone** is the space over home plate which is between the batter's armpits and the top of the knees when the batter assumes a natural stance. **The ball only needs to pass through a portion of the zone to be considered a strike.**
- **Fair or Foul?**
 - Before reaching first or third base whether a ball is fair or foul is determined by where it is when it stops or is touched—where the player is standing has no affect. Home plate, first and third base and the baselines are all in fair territory.
 - Beyond first and third base fair or foul status for a fly ball is determined by where it first hits the ground or is touched. The status of a ground ball is determined by its position when it passes first or third base.
- **Foul Tip:** a batted ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher's hands and is legally caught. It is not a foul tip unless caught; it is a foul ball, instead. Any foul tip is a strike **even if it is the third strike**, the ball is in play and **base runners can advance**. It is a not a catch if it is a rebound, unless the ball has first touched the catcher's glove or hand. A foul tip can only be caught by the catcher.

- **Hit by pitch:** If the batter is hit by a pitch, the ball is dead and first base is awarded. This rule applies even if the ball bounces into the batter. The hands are **not** part of the bat. If the batter swings at the pitch or is in the strike zone when hit, the ball is dead and the batter is charged with a strike—first base is not awarded.
- **Running out of the base line:** Any runner is out when running more than three feet away from his baseline **to avoid being tagged**. The base line is established by drawing a straight line from the runner to the base and is not, necessarily, the straight line between two bases.
- **Overrunning first base:** A runner cannot be tagged out after overrunning or over sliding first base if he returns immediately to the base. It does not matter if the runner is in fair or foul territory as long as no attempt has been made to advance to second base.
- **Obstruction:** Obstruction occurs when a fielder, not in possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any base runner whether or not intentional. This often a delayed call. Bases may be awarded if in the opinion of the umpires the obstruction prevented a runner from obtaining a base he had a reasonable chance of reaching.
- **Interference:** Offensive interference is an act by the team at bat which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play. The ball is dead, the runner or batter is out, and any runners return to the last base that was legally touched at the time of the interference. **Catcher interference** occurs when the catcher's mitt touches the batter's bat when attempting to swing. The ball is dead and the batter is awarded first base. Other runners advance if forced. If the batter hits the ball and advances past first base, the interference is ignored.
- **Infield fly:** A fair fly ball that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, when first and second, or first, second and third bases are occupied with either no or one out. When apparent, the umpire shall declare, "Infield Fly, Batter is Out." Runners may advance at their own risk. If the catch is made, runners must tag up prior to advancing. The rule still applies even if the umpire fails to make the declaration.
- **Bunting:** Any forward movement of the bat during a **bunt attempt** is considered a swing. Bunting foul with two strikes is an out. **Local Rule:** Once the batter squares to bunt, he may **not** swing away or he will be declared out.
- **Sliding:** A base runner must slide **OR** avoid contact with a fielder. The base runner who does not slide and contacts a fielder will be declared out. It is perfectly legal for the runner not to slide as long as contact is avoided.
- **Appeals:**
 - Can be made for a missed base or failure to tag up after a fly out.
 - Must be clearly intended as an appeal by a verbal request by a player
 - Must be made during a live ball situation.
 - Only one appeal shall be attempted on the same runner at the same base

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