

A Playing Guidelines

[updated March 2009]

Preliminaries

- Mouth guards and athletic supporters recommended. Rubber cleats only, no metal cleats. No jewelry worn (watches, bracelets, rings, etc.) No gum chewing, no sunflower seeds.
- Managers and coaches should attend coaching seminars before and/or during season. Practice time is critical- develop practice plans in advance and execute practice time efficiently. Recruit coaches and parents for help with stations, to keep kids moving and avoid standing around. Players should be able to throw and catch effectively after playing an "A-League" season, and have basic hitting techniques.
- If you are short players you may borrow players from another team to fill out your lineup line-up so long as the borrowed players are registered Little League players.
- Coaches/Parents umpire the game. This is an instructional level of baseball therefore the parent umpire should take the time to "explain" the calls so the players learn the rules of baseball ...especially field rules like foul balls, advancing on overthrows, force outs, etc.
- Reduced Injury Factor ("Level 5" soft) baseballs shall be used for practice and game play.

Game Playing Rules

- All play follows the current Little League Rulebook
- Five innings per game. Minimum 3 innings per game per player, unless disciplinary action is being imposed (i.e. late to practices, missed practices, poor sportsmanship). If less time is to be played, the opposing coach must be told before start of game.
- No new inning begins after one hour 45 minutes.

Offense:

- Bat through entire roster (however teams still change when three outs are reached. Late arrivals go to the end of the batting order.
- No on-deck batter.
- Hit away. No walks or bunting. The batter either hits the ball or strikes out ...but no walks are given.
- No leading off bases. No head first sliding. No stealing on passed balls by catcher, pitcher or infield overthrows.
- Five run maximum per inning, including the last inning.
- No infield fly rule shall apply.

Defense:

- 10 players on the field, which includes 4 outfielders (on outfield grass) at all times. As baseball play making is not always obvious to beginners, one or two coaches/parents should take positions in the field to help guide the play making as it occurs.

- Pitching: Coach from team at bat pitches, gentle, overhand throws. Take a knee to avoid difficult to hit “drop balls”. Experiment with the speed of the pitches (some kids have more success with a faster, flatter pitch).
- May want to allow 4 or 5 strikes for the first half season or by Manager’s discretion.
- Play ends when defensive team attempts to return the ball to the pitcher to end the play (i.e. no advancing on overthrows to the pitcher).
- No walks are given. The batter must swing the bat to get on base.

Game Environment

- No negative comments about umpires or players from the stands (the players all know when they make mistakes). No “calling of the game” by parents on the sideline. It is the managers’ responsibility to control the parents.
- Remember this is for the players and not for coaches’ egos. Focus should be on player development and enjoyment- let them have fun! Learning the game and its fundamentals- not winning and losing- is the focus at this level.

