# RULES OF PLAY

Any situation not covered in this set of rules will fall to the Little League Baseball Rules and Regulations.

# General Rules

# Bats

1. In agreement with the safety concerns identified by the Little League Organization (<http://www.littleleague.org/Little_League_Online.htm>), bats which are not approved by the official Little League (“USA Stamped”) will not be allowed for use in inter-league play. There will be no specific date set for this action. Simply if a bat is not approved by the Little League Organization, it is not allowed for use in inter-league play. For the sake of convenience, a copy of the bat list should be printed on or about the opening day of the season and kept in each pressbox. The only exception to this rule is the use of a wood bat.
2. The opposing coach may appeal to the umpire for a bat inspection if he/she suspects a bat is unapproved. If the batter has already stepped into the batter’s box and the bat is found to be unapproved, the batter is out. The appeal must take place during the at-bat and cannot take place after the at-bat is complete. Any further infractions of this rule (2nd time coming to plate with an unapproved bat), will result in a team forfeit of the game.

# Pitching

1. A pitcher may pitch a maximum of three (3) innings per game and a maximum of nine (9) innings per week. Failure to follow this rule will result in a forfeiture of the game. One thrown pitch is considered an inning.
2. A pitcher may not re-enter the pitching position in the same game.
3. There will be no called balks on pitchers.
4. There is no rule requiring the catcher to catch the third (3) strike except in the **Majors, at the Majors Level runners may run on a dropped swinging third strike**.
5. If a pitcher hits two (2) batters in one inning, his/her coach will be warned. Upon hitting a third (3) batter in the same inning he/she will not be allowed to continue pitching in the game. Upon hitting a third (3) batter in the game, his/her coach will be warned. Upon hitting a fourth (4) batter in the game, he/she will not be allowed to continue pitching in the game.
6. Any pitcher who intentionally throws at a batter will be ejected from the game and at the League President’s discretion may be suspended for a number of games or indefinitely from the league depending on the severity of the situation.
7. A player may not be intentionally walked.
8. **On the 2nd trip to the mound in one inning, a coach much change pitchers**.

# Base Running

1. All base runners must remain on occupied bases until the pitched ball crosses home plate. The penalty for the first (1) offense is a team warning and the offending base runner is returned to the original base if it is not occupied. If occupied, he/she will be placed on the next unoccupied base. The Penalty for the second (2) and subsequent offenses is that the offending base runner is out. If it is the third (3) out of the inning, no runs can score on that play. If a play is made on the base runner violating this rule and the base runner is out, the out stands and all other base runners return the bases they occupied before the pitch was made.
2. A base runner must slide into a base (except First Base) if a play is being made. Fake tags by the fielder will result in an ejection of that player. A base runner who does not slide may be ejected from the game, at the umpire’s discretion, for any contact made with the player making the tag.
3. All slides must be feet first (no head first), except where a base runner is making a quick return to the previous base.
4. If there are two (2) outs, a courtesy runner will be allowed for the player who will be playing the catcher position. The courtesy runner will be the person who made the last out. In the event of an injury, a courtesy runner will also be allowed, again with the courtesy runner being the person who made the last out. In the event that there are no outs in the inning at the time of the injury, the last out will be from the previous inning. If the event that there is no previous inning, the courtesy runner will be the determined as the player farthest from that point in the line-up.
5. Stealing is allowed in the Major and Minor Leagues. With respect to stealing Home, the following additional discussion is provided. A player (Major or Minor) on Third Base who turns back towards Third Base, must return to Third Base before he/she may steal Home, except on a subsequent overthrow to the pitcher. Once the pitcher has the ball securely and is on the rubber of the mound, all runners, not explicitly in the process of a steal, must return to their base. In the Minor league, a player may steal Home only on passed balls and overthrows. In the Major league, a player may steal home.
6. If a base runner misses a base, the defensive team must appeal to the umpire for the out.
7. The base runner may not hurdle or jump over a play to avoid a tag.
8. There will be no use of the Little League® special pinch runner rule.

# Defensive

1. A player’s feet must be in the field of play (does not mean ‘fair territory only, rather indicates within the fence and not in a dead ball area, such as the dug-out) at the time he/she catches the ball for the batter to be out. If the fielder catches the ball in the field of play, then carries into a dead ball area, all runners will be awarded one base.
2. Any ball remaining in the field of play is live and runners may advance as far as possible at their own risk
3. The following constituted a one (1) base award: A) thrown ball going under the fence in foul territory; B) thrown ball going in the dug-out; C) thrown ball becoming entangled in the fence, backstop, or other dead ball area obstruction.
4. Any ball thrown that goes under or over the fence in fair territory shall result in a two (2) base award.
5. Players may not go into, on, or behind the dug-outs in pursuit of balls.
6. The INFIELD FLY RULE is in effect to be called at the umpire’s interpretation of a reasonably catchable ball. There is no appeal if not called.

# Line-Up

1. Free substitution is allowed. However, there can be no change to the batting order. All re-entries must be on defense.
2. There will be no designated hitter.
3. All teams must field at least eight (8) players. Less than eight (8) players will result in a forfeit. In the event of a team playing with eight (8) players, they must take an out in the ninth (9) position in the batting order.
4. All players who will be playing in the game must be on the line-up at the beginning of the game as provided to the opposing coach.
5. In the event of a player injury, with no other substitutes available, a team is not required to take an out for an injured player. In this instance, the injured player may not re-enter the current game or any other game on the same day.

# Mandatory Play Rule

1. During the course of a regular game, each player in attendance must play at least two (2) innings in the field and have at least one (1) at-bat. If the home team does not bat in the bottom half of the last inning, a player entering the game in the top of the fourth (4) inning shall be considered to have played two (2) full innings. Any player playing less than as outlined above must start the next game and play at least three (3) innings in the field and have at least one (1) at-bat.

# Mercy Rule

1. In the event that one team is ahead by twelve (12) runs after four (4) innings [or three and ½ (3.5) innings if the home team is in the lead], the game will be declared final. In the event of a double-header, the run differential is reduced to ten (10). The home team must have an equal number of at-bats if it is losing.

# Protests

1. All protests must be made immediately after the violation and must be made known to the head umpire. The protest must be made in writing. No protest shall be made on a decision play, just a rule violation. If the League upholds a protested game, the game shall be resumed from the point of protest.

# Uniform and Equipment

1. No steal-cleated shoes are allowed.
2. All players must be in complete uniform. The exception being for those players who are ‘playing-up’ due to injury or illness; they will be in the uniform of the team to which they were drafted.
3. A catcher in full gear is required. The catcher must assume the normal catcher position (squat). The use of a protective cup is required.
4. All base runners must wear protective headgear. At the discretion of the umpire, a base runner may be called out if he/she intentionally removes his/her headgear.

# Player Conduct

1. Any player that throws a bat, helmet or other equipment, whether accidentally or on purpose may be ejected from the game at the umpire’s discretion.
2. Any player who swears or continually disrupts the game through abusive or harassing language shall automatically be ejected from the game.

# Other

1. Each team must keep its equipment out of the field of play.
2. Spectators may not be in the enclosed area, or behind the backstop (other than as seating may be arranged).
3. Players must remain in the dug-out when not on the playing field with the exception of the on-deck’ batter who will warm-up in the designated location. Players may leave the general field area to use the lavatory or to get a drink. Absolutely no food is to be brought into the dug-out.
4. If a game is suspended, it will resume at the same point. A game is not considered complete unless four (4) innings have been completed or three and ½ (3.5) if the home team is ahead. Player eligibility shall remain unchanged. Only pitchers eligible for the suspended game may be eligible for resumed play.
5. Coaches shall be permitted to coach first (1) and third (3) bases. Coaches must remain within the designated coach’s box at all times. The exception shall be a coach moving out of the way to allow a defensive player to make a play on a batted or thrown ball. If in the umpire’s judgment the coach interferes with a fielder in the act of making a play on a batted or thrown ball, the umpire shall call the batter or runner out and the ball shall be dead. The coach may not touch his own base runner. The umpire may call the base runner out in this instance.
6. The Fake Bunt, where the batter turns to bunt, then pulls back and swings away is not allowed. A player who does this will be called out, the play is dead and runners cannot advance.
7. A player who throws the bat after a hit will result in a team warning. A second offense, by any player, will result in an out, the play is dead, and runners cannot advance.

# Major League Specific Rules

1. Batters may run on a **dropped swinging third strike**.
2. No Minor League player can play in a Major League game except in a case where a Major League team does not have enough players. When selecting a Minor League player to participate in a Major League game, the selection should take into account player safety and where possible older players should be given the first opportunity to play. If a Minor League player is pulled-up in anticipation of not having a full roster, then the Major League teams fields a full roster, the Minor League player should be, if possible, allowed to leave. If necessary for them to stay, they may play a maximum of two innings and may not start the game. The exception would be for an injury to a Major League player. A Minor League player may not be pulled up explicitly to play as an extra hitter. There cannot be more Minor League players in the game than there are Major League players out of the game.
3. A team may bat as many players as they want.

# Minor League Specific Rules

1. No Major League player can play in a Minor League game.
2. No Pee Wee Major player can play in a Minor League game except in a case where a Minor League team does not have enough players. When selecting a Pee Wee Major League player to participate in a Minor League game, the selection should take into account player safety and where possible older players should be given the first opportunity to play. A Pee Wee Major League player cannot play the pitcher or catcher positions; they must also bat at the bottom of the order. If a Pee Wee Major League player is pulled-up in anticipation of not having a full roster, then the Minor League teams fields a full roster, the Pee Wee Major League player should be, if possible, allowed to leave. If necessary for them to stay, they may play a maximum of two innings and may not start the game. The exception would be for an injury to a Minor League player. A Pee Wee Major League player may not be pulled up explicitly to play as an extra hitter. There cannot be more Pee Wee Major League players in the game than there are Minor League players out of the game.
3. A team may bat as many players as they want.
4. If there are at least ten (10) players on the lineup, the coach must use four (4) outfielders. This cannot be changed, barring injury, during the game. If four (4) outfielders are used, they must be played in the normal positions (no rover).
5. An inning will end with three (3) outs, seven (7) runs, or if the at-bat team bats through their order; whichever of these conditions is met first. However, during the last inning of a game, an unlimited number of runs may be scored. The last inning will be determined by either the maximum number of innings for Minor League; or when the time limit is near, the home coach is responsible for a conference with the umpire and visitor coach to set the last inning due to the time limit. However, the visiting coach may also initiate the conference. The umpire will be responsible for any final determination.

# Pee Wee Major Specific Rules (Coach Pitch)

1. All players must be in the batting lineup.
2. If there are at least ten (10) players on the lineup, the coach must use four (4) outfielders. This cannot be changed, barring injury, during the game. If four (4) outfielders are used, they must be played in the normal positions (no rover).
3. An inning will end with three (3) outs or if the at-bat team bats through their order; whichever of these conditions is met first.
4. The use of a catcher’s glove is not required.
5. Pitching will be done by coaches. Players will be afforded seven (7) pitches to hit the ball. The batter cannot be struck-out by a foul. However he/she is out if the foul ball is caught by a defensive player.
   1. The coach may choose to throw the last two (2) of the seven (7) count as a soft-toss. It is recommended that this only be used for players who struggle to master hitting from the coach pitch and in lieu of the ‘T’.
   2. At the discretion of the home team, a ‘T’ may be used for a player. The ‘T’ cannot be brought into play until at least five (5) pitches have been attempted. The player will have as many swings at the ‘T’ as there are pitches left from the original seven (7) count. It is recommended that the ‘T’ only be used for players who struggle to master hitting from the coach pitch.
6. The player who is playing the position of Pitcher must keep at least one (1) foot in the dirt circle of the pitcher’s mound. The player should be behind and to the side of the coach pitcher, but not directly behind. The player may stand on the left or right side of the mound and may switch from batter to batter.
7. There is no INFIELD FLY RULE.
8. The defensive player has a choice of making a play on an offensive base runner. If a play is made on the base runner, the play is deemed ‘still alive’ and the base runner can advance on an overthrown ball. However, the base runner advances at his/her own risk and can only advance to the next base. He/She cannot advance another base if there is another overthrown ball at the next base. Base runners behind the base runner on which the overthrow was made are also restricted to the single base. However, if there are other base runners on advanced bases, they are free to run while the play is being made on another base runner.
9. If the base runners are stopped and the defensive player chooses to throw the ball to the pitcher (or coach pitcher), the play is deemed dead. The base runners may not advance on an overthrow to the pitcher in this situation. A base runner that never stopped his/her advancement (momentum) around the bases may advance to the next base only at his/her own risk when the defensive team returns the ball to the pitcher. If the base runner stops and re-starts while the defensive players are returning the ball to the pitcher, he/she must return to the previous base.
10. There will be no bunting.
11. There will be no stealing of bases.
12. Games will go be no more than six (6) innings. No new innings may start after one (1) hours and fifteen (15) minutes.
13. The scoreboard will only be used for recording the outs and innings.