

**Mark Foreman – 229-2241**  
**BIRMINGHAM LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL, INC.**  
**LOWER DIVISION OFFICIAL LOCAL RULES**

All managers should be familiar with the Little League Baseball, Inc. Official Rules of Play. These are the basic rules of National Little League Baseball and govern all play unless expressly modified by these Official Local Rules.

The Official Local Rules are comprised of: (I) General Local Rules which apply to all Birmingham Leagues and (II) Individual League Rules which apply only to the specific league identified.

**BATS**

The bat must be a baseball bat which meets the USA Baseball Bat standard as adopted by Little League. It shall be a smooth, rounded stick, and made of wood or of material and color tested and proved acceptable to the USA Baseball Bat standard.

**All non-wood and laminated bats used in the Little League (Majors) Division and below shall bear the USA Baseball logo (as shown below) signifying that the bat meets USA Baseball's Youth Bat Performance Standard.**



**Tee Ball:**

Under the USA Baseball standard, certified Tee Ball bats (26" and shorter) will feature the USA Baseball mark and text which reads ONLY FOR USE WITH APPROVED TEE BALLS. All Tee Ball bats must feature the USA Baseball mark and accompanying text. Tee Ball bats that were produced and/or purchased prior to the implementation of the new standard can be certified using an Approved Tee Ball Sticker via the USA Baseball Tee Ball Sticker Program ([USABaseballShop.com](http://USABaseballShop.com)) beginning September 1, 2017.

**GENERAL LOCAL RULES:** The following rules modify the National Little League Rules and govern all Birmingham Little League play.

**1. GAME TIMES**

All weeknight games will start at 6:00 p.m. Home team practices on the field from 5:30 to 5:45. The Visiting Team will get the field from 5:45 to 6:00. Make-up games will be scheduled by the managers involved, with 48 hours' notice to the Division Director to obtain fields. Keep in mind, when playing at Derby or St. James and High School games are still underway, we must wait until they have completely cleared the field.

## Mark Foreman – 229-2241

### 2. WHO PLAYS

Every player who shows up for a game will be listed on the batting order and bat in turn. Late arriving players will be added to the bottom of the batting order and the umpire and opposing team manager will be notified. Tee Ball - Every player will play defense in every inning. Coach Pitch – 12 players will play defense – 7 infielders, 5 outfielders.

For Tee Ball & Coach Pitch, see individual league rules 7 and 8.

### 3. LEAGUES

**Tee Ball, - First experience (typically Entry Level or Novice);** Entry Level into Little League. Some players have participated in the YMCA baseball program; others are beginning their baseball careers. Most players are Pre-School & Kindergarten 5, with some age 4 and some age 6. Players are manually assigned to a team. Player Rosters are 12-15 players. A player's age is based on their age as of August 31st of that year. In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Directors may move a player up with one year of experience in BLL.

**Coach Pitch - Minimally 1 year of baseball experience – normally in K, 1<sup>st</sup> and some in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade;** Some years, there are two divisions; One more competitive (mostly 7 year olds) and one less competitive (mostly 6 year olds). The majority of the players are ages 6 & 7, some 8, and minimally in Kindergarten. Teams are manually assigned. Player Rosters can be between 12 – 15 players.

### 4. PRIOR TO GAME

The managers of both teams will agree on the fitness of the field before the game starts.

In Coach Pitch, the umpire and the team managers will go over the ground rules. There are no umpires in Tee Ball.

Each coach will pitch to their team with their own balls. The home team provides one new game ball. The visitors provide one new ball as a back-up. The home team uses the bench on the third base line. The Visiting team uses the bench on the first base line.

**For safety reasons, Little League Rules prohibit an on-deck circle or swinging of bats for warm up purposes.**

All players not in the game are to remain in the dugout or in an area around the bench designated “the dugout”. Only managers and coaches may be inside the fences, but then, only against the fence by the entrance area.

### 5. PITCHING RULES

Since players are not pitching in Coach Pitch & Tee Ball there are no player-oriented rules for pitching. There is a preferred method for the manner in which Coaches pitch in Coach Pitch. Please see last page of *‘Birmingham Little League Coaching Manual’*. Simply put, the kneeling position offers the most upside and success as it allows for a more accurate and better visual to our Coach Pitch players.

### 6. FORFEITS

Except as provided in General Local Rules, the only basis for a forfeit is misconduct by a team player, coaches and/or fans. This will only occur after the umpire has given fair warning. Lack of enough players is never grounds for a forfeit. If eight (8) or more players are available at game

## **Mark Foreman – 229-2241**

time, the game should be played and late arriving players added to the line-up when they arrive. If less than eight (8) are available at game time, the game should be rescheduled and played as soon as possible. If a manager knows he will be short of players, he may ask the other manager to agree to a postponement of the game prior to the arrival at the field, also notifying the Director of Umpires.

### **7. MANAGER & COACHES**

Coaches may be on the field of play to assist with the movement of the game. See below and individual Coach Pitch & Tee Ball rules (8b & 8d) for specific placement.

In Coach Pitch & Tee Ball, two (2) defensive coaches may position themselves in foul territory beyond the base coaches of the batting team and in the outfield, beyond the outfielders. In Tee Ball, an offensive coach may also be positioned behind the batter to assist the batter with batting stance and to assist in retrieving pitched balls. This coach will also make fair and foul calls down the first and third base lines.

### **8. RULES QUESTIONS**

Questions regarding an umpire's call shall be made prior to the next play, after calling time out and asking permission of the umpire. If there is a question of the umpire making an error regarding the rules, the umpire may reconsider and/or call the Director of Umpires or League Director for clarification. The umpire's decision is final.

### **9. SPORTSMANSHIP**

In the spirit of the game, players, coaches, parents and spectators shall refrain from directing comments to the opposing team and umpires.

### **10. GAME RESULTS**

In Tee Ball, there will be no score kept and no win/loss records.

For Coach Pitch, each team shall designate an official scorekeeper who will verify the actual score after each half inning with the opposing team. It is not the umpire's job to keep track of the score. The manager of the HOME TEAM will report the game score through the website or the Game Changer/Team Manager app.

### **11. INTERFERENCE**

A defensive player without the ball has no right to the base path. This constitutes interference; contact with the runner is not required. Sliding is not allowed at Coach Pitch or Tee Ball. The runner is never allowed to run into the defensive player. If that happens, the umpire may call the runner out. We want to discourage the possibility of player injury. Defensive players shall position themselves behind or to the side of home plate. Players shall make tags with their mitt, but not block runners with their bodies. Since base runners may not run into defensive players, a base runner that is improperly denied his right to the base may be awarded it at the umpire's discretion. All runners must avoid contact with the defensive player who has the ball.

### **12. BASE RUNNING**

In Tee Ball and Coach Pitch, base runners may not leave the base until the pitched ball has been batted by the offensive player. The batted ball must be put into play according to league rules for the player to advance on the base paths

### **13. STEALING BASES**

Tee Ball & Coach Pitch: No stealing is allowed.

## **Mark Foreman – 229-2241**

**14. BALL OUT OF PLAY**

When the defensive team throws the ball out of bounds, each base runner must stay at the base they were advancing to and stop. No other modifications to this rule are allowed.

**15. COMPLETE GAME**

A complete game is four (4) innings for Tee Ball or 1 ½ hour time limit, whichever comes first. A complete game is five (5) innings for Coach Pitch or 1 ½ hour time limit, whichever comes first. No inning may begin once the 1 ½ hour time limit has been met. In Coach Pitch, if the score is tied after the regulation time limit has been met the game will be reported as a tie for both teams.

If a game must end prior to a complete game, the following applies: If the game is called and the team with the fewest runs has batted at least three (3) times, it is a complete and official game. If the game is called with less than an official game, but at least one inning, game will be continued from the point where it was called as soon as possible.

**16. RESCHEDULING GAMES**

Games which are postponed due to weather, field conditions, darkness, or other reasons, shall be made up by the weekend immediately following the postponed game. If the managers of the two teams cannot agree upon a make-up date, they shall contact the Division Director, who will schedule a make-up date. **Coaches should make every attempt to complete their full schedule.**

**17. PINCH RUNNERS**

Are only allowed for players injured during that game. The pinch runner shall be the last player to make a batted out. If there is no prior batted out, the player preceding the injured player in the lineup must be used.

**18. BUNTING**

In Tee Ball and Coach Pitch no bunting is allowed, and batters shall be called out.

**19. INFIELD FLY RULE**

In Tee Ball and Coach Pitch it does not apply.

**20. THROWN BAT**

Umpire shall, after one warning to a batter, call the batter out. This is a judgment call by the umpire. The warnings are player based, not team based.

**21. MERCY RULE**

In Coach Pitch, the offensive team may score no more than six (6) runs in an inning. The mercy rule ends an inning, not a game. **FINAL INNING RULES: If the visiting team is trailing by more than 6 runs in their final at bat, they can score enough runs to tie the game. The home team could then score 1 run in the bottom of the inning to win the game. If the home team is trailing by more than 6 runs in their final at bat, they will be allowed to score enough runs to tie the visiting team. At that point, the game will be over and end in a tie. If the home team is ahead in the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> inning, they must forfeit their at bat in the bottom of the inning.**

In Tee Ball the mercy rule does not apply. See individual league rule 3.

**INDIVIDUAL LEAGUE RULES:**

The Individual League “Local” Rules override the National Little League and Birmingham General Local Rules where either of those sets of rules would otherwise apply.

## Mark Foreman – 229-2241

### TEE BALL

We use the tee exclusively. The diamond has 50 ft base paths and all players are positioned in the field during the game. No score is kept and rules have been adjusted so that each player plays the entire game. Coaches teach the fundamentals of the game and need to be highly organized. Soliciting help from parents is highly recommended as keeping players involved is necessary. Teamwork, camaraderie and understanding the rules of the game are objectives each Manager should attain.

1. Regulation is 4 innings or 1 ½ Hour time limit.
  2. No score or standings are kept.
  3. Roster size is maxed at 15
  4. 50 ft base paths are utilized. The ball must travel past a 10 foot semi circle in front of home plate
  5. The entire batting order hits each inning and no balls or strikes are counted
  6. Batting Order –

It is recommended that a lineup/batting order shall be established for the season with the most logical order being alphabetical. For game 1, the batting order would be Alpha, Beta, Charles...etc. For game 2, Beta would lead off and Alpha would be moved to the last batter in the lineup. This pre-established order 1) enables each player to bat leadoff at some time during the season, and 2) makes the coaches' job much easier in organizing the offensive half of the game in that at some point Charles will come to realize he always bats after Beta.

    - a. Batters hit off a tee for all scheduled games.
    - b. An offensive coach may also be positioned behind the batter to assist batter with batting stance and to assist in retrieving pitched balls. This coach will also make fair and foul calls down the first and third base lines.
    - c. The last batter can run the bases until he/she touches home plate without being tagged
- Helpful Hint:** The player whose turn it is to bat leadoff for the game can be designated Captain for that game. As Captain, he not only bats leadoff but also provides the post-game snack, can lead the team in pre-game calisthenics, pick the position he plays in the first inning, leads the team in post-game handshake lineup, etc.
7. All players play the field
    - a. All players are rotated between infield and outfield each inning
    - b. Two (2) Coaches may be used to assist the Defense. They may not assist the Defense by physically making a play.
    - c. Teams will place all of their players on the field while on Defense. No more than seven (6) players can be positioned in the infield. These positions are: Pitcher, 1<sup>st</sup> base, 2<sup>nd</sup> base, 3<sup>rd</sup> base, Shortstop and a mid-fielder positioned directly behind 2<sup>nd</sup> base. All other players are positioned in the outfield and must remain in the outfield grass and off the skin of the infield at all times or 10 feet into the outfield. It is the Defensive Coaches responsibility to make sure the outfield is positioned correctly

## Mark Foreman – 229-2241

- d. While on defense, coaches are allowed on the field to assist with positioning and instruction. It is recommended that coaches remain in the outfield, or at least behind the infielders to alleviate congestion in the infield area. While on offense, in addition to the traditional 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base coaches, one coach/parent should be designated “bench coach”. The bench coach is needed to maintain the batting order and attempt to keep the players on the bench when they are not batting. To protect both players and spectators, practice swings are not allowed under any circumstances unless a player is “at bat”
8. Outs still count, although are unlimited. If a player makes an out, they are counted as an out & must return to the bench. This continues until the team goes through their lineup one time.
9. **DEAD BALL RULES:**
  - a. If a ball is hit in the infield, advancement is only one base
  - b. Balls hit into the outfield, the batter may run the bases until the ball is returned to the infield dirt. Player control is not needed. The runner may continue to the next base if he/she was already advancing.
  - c. This is an important learning technique for outfield play. The process we are attempting to teach is to get to the ball, retrieve it and throw it back into the infield as quickly as possible.
10. Runners passing a team mate on the base paths will be called out
11. The defensive team may get a batter out by:
  - a. Catching a fly ball
  - b. Tagging a base before the runner gets there
  - c. Or throwing the ball to the pitcher inside the circle. You can not run it into the circle or hand the ball to the pitcher
12. Since we will not use a catcher, no outs can be made at home plate
13. The following is NOT ALLOWED
  - a. Baseline interference
  - b. Infield fly rule
  - c. Double or Triple plays
  - d. Running on overthrows
  - e. Protests
  - f. Lead offs, stealing or sliding

### COACH PITCH

The diamond has 55 foot base paths and all players are positioned in the field during the game. We begin to keep score and standings. Rules, once again have been modified. Coaches continue to teach the fundamentals of the game and need to be highly organized. The use of multiple coaches is highly recommended

Initially we use Coaches to pitch and the goal is to have every player hit live “Coach Pitching” by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> half, the second half of the season we may introduce the Pitching Machine. In addition, all players rotate from infield to outfield every inning. Teamwork, camaraderie and understanding the rules of the game are the objectives.

1. Regulation is 5 innings or 1 ½ Hour time limit.

## Mark Foreman – 229-2241

2. Scores and Standings are kept
3. Roster size is maxed at 15
4. 55 ft base paths are utilized.
5. An Umpire will be used to control the game moving it along keeping within the time frames, assist in the base runner placement and make out calls. Coaches will assist in calling Fair & Foul balls
6. Three (3) outs end an inning or six (6) runs whichever comes first
7. Batting Order –

It is recommended that a lineup/batting order shall be established for the season with the most logical order being alphabetical. For game 1, the batting order would be Alpha, Beta, Charles...etc. For game 2, Beta would lead off and Alpha would be moved to the last batter in the lineup. This pre-established order 1) enables each player to bat leadoff at some time during the season, and 2) makes the coaches' job much easier in organizing the offensive half of the game in that at some point Charles will come to realize he always bats after Beta.

  - a) Batters hit from a Coach Pitching to them.
  - b) There is a "soft" 7 (seven) pitch maximum allotment then the Batting Tee will be utilized. Keep in mind the spirit of the rule, not the actual written word. We want the players to use the tee as minimally as possible. If a coach is throwing bad pitches, or if the batter is foul-tipping or barely missing pitches, keep pitching to him/her. When a player is missing a lot of pitches and missing by a lot, then use the tee. Keep in mind that the more the tee is used, the more the game is slowed down.
  - c) A defensive coach should be positioned behind the catcher to assist in retrieving pitched balls. They will also assist the Umpire in making fair and foul calls down the first and third base lines.

**Helpful Hint:** The player whose turn to bat leadoff for the game can be designated Captain for that game. As Captain, he not only gets to bat leadoff but also provides the post-game snacks, can lead the team onto the field, pick the position he plays in the first inning and is first in line for post-game handshakes, etc.

8. Defense Alignment
  - a. Players are rotated between infield and outfield each inning and no player may play the same position in consecutive innings. **If the defensive team does not have enough players to rotate between infield and outfield on consecutive innings, then no player shall play in the infield more than two (2) innings in a row, or more than three (3) innings total in the game. A player may only play the defensive pitcher position one inning per game. All infield players must remain behind the base path prior to the pitch. [New for 2024]**
  - b. Two (2) coaches may be used to assist the Defense. They may not assist the Defense by physically making a play.
  - c. Teams will place twelve (12) of their players on the field while on Defense. No more than seven (7) players can be positioned in the infield. These positions are: catcher, pitcher, 1<sup>st</sup> base, 2<sup>nd</sup> base, 3<sup>rd</sup> base, shortstop and a mid-fielder positioned directly behind 2<sup>nd</sup> base. Five (5) other players are positioned in the outfield and must remain 5 feet in the outfield



## **Mark Foreman – 229-2241**

grass and off the skin of the infield at all times. It is the Defensive Coaches responsibility to make sure the outfield is positioned correctly

- d. While on defense, coaches are allowed on the field to assist with positioning and instruction. It is recommended that coaches remain in the outfield, or at least behind the infielders to alleviate congestion in the infield area. While on offense, in addition to the traditional 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base coaches, one of the coaches will be pitching, and one coach/parent should be designated “bench coach”. The bench coach is needed to maintain the batting order and attempt to keep the players on the bench when they are not batting. To protect both players and spectators, practice swings are not allowed under any circumstances unless a player is “at bat”

### **9. DEAD BALL RULES:**

- a) If a ball is hit in the infield, advancement is only one base
- b) Balls hit into the outfield, the batter may run the bases until the ball is returned to the infield dirt and a Player control is not needed. The runner may continue to the next base if he/she was already advancing. This is an important learning technique for outfield play. We are attempting to teach the importance of retrieving the ball & get it back into the infield to a teammate quickly.
- c) Coaches may, draw a semi-circle 6 feet in front of home plate and the ball must pass that point to be considered fair

**10.** Runners passing a team mate on the base paths will be called out

**11.** The defensive team may get a batter out by:

- a) Catching a fly ball
- b) Tagging a baserunner before the runner gets to the base including Double Plays
- c) Or throwing the ball to the base and a player has control while tagging the base with a part of his body including Home Plate since we have a catcher

**12.** The following is NOT ALLOWED

- a) Baseline interference
- b) Infield fly rule
- c) Running on overthrows
- d) Protests
- e) Lead offs, stealing or sliding