

Mark Foreman – 229-2241

BIRMINGHAM LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL, INC. UPPER 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.

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. Visitors get the field from 5:45 to 6:00. Make-up games will be scheduled by the managers involved, with 48 hour notice to the Director of Umpires. See General Local Rule 16. If using Derby or St. James, we may need to wait for HS games that are underway.
2. **Who Plays** Every player who shows up for a game will be listed in 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. Every player will play at least three (3) innings on defense.
3. **Leagues** **Juniors** 6-7 years' experience (13-14 year with some 15s); **Majors** 4-5 years' experience (typically 11-12 years old); **Association** 3 years' experience (typically ages 9 & 10 with some 11 year olds); **Minors** 2 years' experience (typically age 8 with some 9 year olds) based on child's age as of August 31st of that year. In exceptional circumstances, with approval of the Board of Directors, a player may be allowed to play in a League outside his or her age range.
4. **Prior to Game** The managers of both teams will agree on the fitness of the field before the game starts. If the managers cannot agree, the umpire will decide. Once the game starts, the umpire decides if the field is playable.

The umpire and the team managers will go over the ground rules.

The home and away teams shall each provide one new game ball to the umpire. The home team uses the bench on the third base line. The away 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**
League limits of innings pitched in a day/game: **Juniors** – 3, **Majors** – 3, **Association** – 3, **Minors** – 2 (see minors individual league rule 4). If a dispute arises regarding a pitcher's

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eligibility, the umpire will determine the eligibility by checking with the pitcher or manager as to the last time and the number of innings pitched.

Delivery of one (1) pitch constitutes an inning. Once removed, no pitcher may be returned to the game as a pitcher.

There is no limit to the number of pitchers a team may utilize in a game.

If a pitcher strikes three (3) batters by a pitched ball in one game, then the Pitcher shall be removed as the pitcher for the remainder of the game.

In addition to the inning limit, there are pitch count limits which must be followed. Keep in mind the days of rest needed, which is dependent upon the number of pitchers thrown.

The manager must remove the pitcher when said pitcher reaches the limit for his/her age group as noted below, but the pitcher may remain in the game at another position:

THRESHOLD EXCEPTION: If a pitcher reaches the limit imposed for his/her league age while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until that batter reaches base or is put out, and the pitches attributed to that pitcher shall not exceed the bench mark maximum reached during the at bat.

Note 1. Intentional Walk: Intentional Walks may be requested verbally by the defensive team. Time will be called and the pitcher will be charged with 4 pitches.

a) Pitchers league age 12 and under must adhere to the following rest requirements:

- * If a player pitches 66 or more pitches in a day, four (4) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- * If a player pitches 51-65 pitches in a day, three (3) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- * If a player pitches 36-50 pitches in a day, two (2) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- * If a player pitches 21-35 pitches in a day, one (1) calendar day of rest must be observed.
- * If a player pitches 1-20 pitches in a day, no (0) calendar days of rest

Dual position: Pitchers & Catchers

1. If a player pitches more than 40 pitches in a day, the player **may not** play the catcher position for the remainder of the day, THRESHOLD EXCEPTION applies: If the pitcher reaches the 41-pitch limit while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch, and maintain their eligibility to return to the catcher position, until any one of the following conditions occur: (1) that batter reaches base; (2) that batter is retired; or (3) the third out is made to complete the half-inning or the game. **This first rule applies to Majors & Association only.**
2. If a player catches more than 3 innings in a day, the player **may not** play the pitcher position for the remainder of the day.
3. A player who played the position of catcher for three (3) innings or less, moves to the pitcher position, and delivers 21 pitches or more in the same day, may not return to the catcher position on that calendar day. THRESHOLD EXCEPTION APPLIES: If the

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pitcher reaches the 20-pitch limit while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch, and maintain their eligibility to return to the catcher position, until any one of the following conditions occur: (1) that batter reaches base; (2) that batter is retired; or (3) the third out is made to complete the half-inning or the game

Keep in mind we have numerous travel ballplayers in our league and the possibility of weekend tournaments and scheduled weekday travel games may come in play. It is up to the Manager & Coaches to communicate with the parents in regards to overuse of that player.

- b) Each team must designate the scorekeeper or a coach as the official pitch count recorder.
- c) The pitch count recorder must provide the current pitch count for any pitcher when requested by either manager or any umpire or at a minimum, between half-innings. The scorebook shall reflect all pitch count totals with signatures of both managers. However, the manager is responsible for knowing when his/her pitcher must be removed.
- d) The official pitch count recorder should inform the umpire when a pitcher has delivered his/her maximum limit of pitches for the game. The umpire-in-chief will inform the pitcher's manager that the pitcher must be removed. However, the failure by the pitch count recorder to notify the umpire-in-chief, and/or the failure of the umpire-in-chief to notify the manager, does not relieve the manager of his/her responsibility to remove a pitcher when that pitcher is no longer eligible.

We have provided an easy to use chart below:

Pitching Chart

	BLL DIVISION			
	Juniors	Majors	Association	Minors
Maximum innings per game	3	3	3	2
Maximum pitches per outing	95	85	75	35
Maximum pitches to move to catcher position	40	40	40	40

- 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 time, the game should be played and late arriving players added to the line-up when they arrive. If fewer 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** Must remain off the field during play, except for a base coach at first and third base. Coaches may confer with their players, with the umpire's permission, between plays. (Also see rule no. 4)
- 8. **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.

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ALL non-wood and laminated bats used in the 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.



ALL OTHER BATS ARE NOT ALLOWED. Additionally, the bat diameter shall not exceed 2 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches for these divisions of play. Bats cannot exceed 33". All wood bats are acceptable. Additional information is available at LittleLeague.org/batinfo.

For JUNIORS only – USA Baseball or BBCOR must be used.

It is up to each Manager to enforce these bat rules. Our Umpires will do random checks, but will not enforce these rules. If a bat is found to be non-approved it will be removed from the game with no penalty to the batter.

A bat which is damaged, severely dented, cracked, split or punctured will be removed from the game for safety reasons. The batter will resume his at bat at the point of notification

- 9. 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.
- 10. Sportsmanship** In the spirit of the game, players, coaches, parents and spectators shall refrain from directing comments to the opposing team and umpires.
- 11. Game Results** The manager of the HOME TEAM must report the game score and pitch counts through the BLL website or the Game Changer/Team Manager app within twenty-four (24) hours of the conclusion of the game
- 12. Interference** A defensive player without the ball has no right to the base path. This constitutes interference; contact with the runner is not required. If there is a play at a base, the runner must slide. If the runner does not slide, he/she may be called out. 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 slide if there is a possibility of a play; this shall be broadly interpreted to mean "slide when in doubt".

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13. Base Running In Majors, Association and Minors, base runners may not leave the base until the pitched ball passes home plate. When this happens, resulting in a stolen base, the runner must return to his starting base. If the batter hits the ball, generally the play stands, but is limited to one base. (For more details see the National Little League Rule Book, Rule 7.13 et. seq.).

14. Stealing Bases

Major and Association: Stealing of any base, including home, is allowed, as is advancing at the runner's risk on an overthrow or error. The other runners may advance at their own risk.

Minors: Stealing of 3rd base only is permitted and base runners may not advance on an overthrow. Stealing of 2nd base and home is not permitted. The batter only may advance to second on an overthrow, if it's the first play, thus possibly forcing other runners to advance.

14. Ball out of Play When the defensive team throws the ball out of field of play, each base runner gets the base to which he was advancing plus one more base. (Minors see rule 13.)

On a passed ball/wild pitch that goes under the backstop, each base runner is allowed to advance one base if they were in the act of stealing. The runner on third cannot advance.

15. Complete Game A complete game is six (6) innings (Majors, Association & Minors). If the teams are tied after a complete game, extra innings shall be played.

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 four (4) times, it is a complete and official game. If the game is called with less than an official game, it shall be resumed from the EXACT POINT at which the game was halted. These games should be resumed as soon as possible. All game and week pitching rule limits apply (see rule 5).

16. Rescheduling Postponed Games All games, which are postponed due to weather, field conditions, darkness or other reasons, shall, if at all possible, 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 Director of Umpires, who will schedule a make-up date. **Teams that do not complete a full schedule will face a lower seeding in the BLL playoffs due to uncompleted games.**

17. Pinch Runners Are only allowed for players injured during that game. The pinch runner shall be the last player to make an out, if none exist, then the next available spot preceding the injured player in the lineup.

18. Bunting Allowed in Majors & Association. In Minors, Coach Pitch, and Tee Ball no bunting is allowed and batters shall be called out. All Leagues: a batter is out for illegal action if he/she fakes a bunt and then takes a full swing

19. Infield Fly Rule Applies to Majors and Association only.

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- 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** The score at the start of an inning determines the number of runs that may be scored by either team. A team that starts an inning tied or ahead may score no more than EIGHT (8) runs. A team that trails at the start of an inning may score enough runs to match the score of the opposing team at the start of the inning, plus EIGHT (8) additional runs. The mercy rule ends an inning, not a game. The home team may not win in the bottom of the sixth, if the visitor's half of the inning was stopped by the mercy rule. They may only tie the game and proceed to extra innings.

EXAMPLES: First Inning: The visiting team may score no more than 8 runs in the first inning of play. Likewise, the home team batting second may score no more than 8 runs in the first inning, i.e., the score at the start of the inning (0 to 0) plus 8 runs.

Subsequent Innings: If the score is 7-5 in favor of the visitors at the start of an inning, the visiting team may score no more than 8 runs in its turn at bat. The home team may then score no more than 10 runs, i.e., the number of runs (2) required to match the visiting team's score at the start of the inning, plus 8 runs.

In addition to the above, there will also be mercy rules that will end games. They are as follows:

- If any team is ahead by 15 runs after 4 innings (3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead), that team will win and the game will end immediately.
- If any team is ahead by 10 runs after 5 innings (4 ½ innings if the home team is ahead), that team will win and the game will end immediately.

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.

MAJORS

1. All leagues may utilize two adult base coaches.
2. A ball hit fair down the first or third base lines at the Kenning Park Fields, that goes into foul territory and beyond the outfield fences, will be a Ground Rule Double, with all runners advancing two bases from inception.
3. The batter becomes a runner when the third strike called by the umpire is not caught, providing (1) first base is unoccupied or (2) first base is occupied with two out. NOTE: A batter forfeits his/her opportunity to advance to first base when he/she enters the dugout or other dead ball area.

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ASSOCIATION

1. Stealing of home is permitted and a runner may score on a passed ball or wild pitch.
2. On defense, each team uses 10 players, including four (4) in the outfield.
3. The strike zone shall be viewed liberally in favor of the pitcher. In order to avoid excessive bases on balls, the strike zone shall be from the top of the shoulder to the bottom of his knees and the width of plus two (2) inches on each side of home plate

MINORS

1. Minors pitchers will pitch from a 40' mound.
2. Each game, both managers will supply a new ball to the Umpires
3. The use of pitching machines during games will be as follows:
First 6 games of the season: pitching machines all innings; 6 inning games
Next 6 games of the season: pitching machines 3 innings; player pitch 3 innings
Last 2 games of the season: players pitch all innings. Games will be limited to 5 innings.
Playoff games will also be 5 innings, all kid pitch.
Make-up games shall be played under the same format as the original scheduled game.
4. The coach of a hitting team will feed balls into the pitching machine. The pitching machine should be set at an optimal hitting speed. Pitches should not be lobbed in at a high arc but more of a flat pitch. If the machine or coach feeding the pitching machine is hit or interfered with by a batted ball, the play shall be taken over. This is in the umpire's discretion.

When using the pitching machine, three (3) strikes will constitute an at bat unless previously put into play by the batter. To constitute a strike out, the last pitch must be swung on and missed or called a strike by the umpire.

5. Only stealing of 3rd base is allowed and base runners may not advance on an overthrow. An overthrow is any throw, fair or foul, that goes beyond its intended recipient. This is in the umpire's discretion.
6. The strike zone shall be viewed liberally in favor of the pitcher. In order to avoid excessive bases on balls, the strike zone shall be from the batters shoulder to the bottom of the knees and the width of home plate plus two (2) inches on each side of home plate.
7. Dead Ball Rule
To create a dead ball and stop the play, the defensive team must have control of the ball in the infield. Possession must be with an infielder, pitcher or catcher. The umpire may call time and instruct each runner to proceed to the base to which they were closest, in the umpire's discretion.
8. On defense, each team uses eleven (11) players including five (5) outfielders.

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9. Every player must play at least one inning in the infield per game (C, P, 1B, 2B, 3B, SS).
10. During any full or partial machine-pitch game, no player shall play the pitcher position for more than two (2) innings. [New in 2024]
11. In all Minors games, prior to the pitch all infielders other than the pitcher shall be defensively positioned at or behind the base paths. Outfielders shall be positioned at least ten (10) feet onto the outfield grass. [New in 2024]