

Point Loma Little League

2026 Playoff Supplemental Rules

National League Division

All 2026 Little League Baseball Official Regulations and Playing Rules apply except as modified below. [2026 Little League Baseball Official Regulations and Playing Rules](#) are available online and via an app for IOS and Android devices.

I. Safety Rules

A. Apparel:

1. **Shoes.** All players, coaches, and managers must wear shoes for games. Flip flops, sandals, and open-toed shoes are not permitted on the field during games or pregame warmups.
2. **Jewelry:** Jewelry can now be worn; however, any jewelry worn by a player that poses harm to injury will be subject to removal - *Rule 1.11 (j)*
3. **Sleeves:** Are allowed to be worn by all players (including pitcher) without being covered, so long as they are solid in color and not white or grey (i.e. the same as long sleeve shirts) - *Rule 1.11 (a) (3)*
4. **Sunglasses:** Are permitted by any player, including the pitcher; however it is up to the umpire's discretion on whether or not they are distracting and should be removed.
5. **Eyeblack:** Little League does not have a formal policy on the use of eye black. It is up to the discretion of the manager; however, it should not be excessive, distracting, or used to intimidate.

B. Equipment:

1. **Bats.** Please review *Rule 1.10* regarding bats in Little League.
 - a) **Change/New Addition: A.R. 2** — No bat, in any level of Little League Baseball is permitted to be altered. Products such as, but not limited to, choke-knobs, choke-up assists are considered alterations or modifications to the bat and are not permitted. *thumb protectors are now permitted*
2. **Helmets.** All batters and base runners must wear a helmet.
 - a) **At practices.** Remember to follow this rule at practices as well (for example, if you're working on base running, sometimes kids will forget to put on their helmets, so be alert for that).
 - b) **Update:** Helmet stickers are allowed, so long as they are not "excessive."
 - c) **If a player is coaching a base.** Player base coaches must wear helmets.
 - d) **Catcher during pregame warmup.** If a player is catching for a coach who is hitting warmups to the team, that player must wear a catcher's mask. This is not in the rulebook, but has been widely published by Little League.
 - (1) **Note: This is an insurance thing.** If a kid gets injured by a coach swinging a bat, YOU ARE NOT COVERED.
3. **Catcher's equipment.** Male catchers must wear a cup. All catchers must wear approved protective gear: helmet with face mask and throat guard, chest protector, and shin guards. Catchers must wear a catcher's glove, they cannot use a first baseman's mitt or fielder's glove. - *Rule 1.12*
 - a) **Athletic cup.** While it's only officially required for the catcher, all male players should wear a cup at all games and practices. (It's smart, and an important habit for them to learn; plus, you never know who may end up catching in a particular game so it's good practice to require your players to simply wear a cup to be prepared.)

C. Dugout rules.

Players must be in the dugout, and coaches and managers in or next to the dugout (in the little painted square). Specifically:

1. **Players.** When the team is batting, all players except the batter must be in the dugout. When the

team is on defense, any players who are on the bench must be in the dugout.

2. **Coaches and Managers.** Coaches and managers (when not base coaching or feeding a pitching machine) must be in the dugout or behind the out-of-play line for their dugout area. Coaches should not be standing next to the fence while the kids are in the batter's box or standing in foul territory.
3. **On-deck batter.** There is no on-deck circle in Little League and swinging a bat in foul territory while waiting to hit is forbidden. Only the current batter is allowed to be holding a bat. Bats stay in the rack until the player steps up to the plate; they are never allowed in the dugout. The "on-deck" batter should, however, have his or her helmet on and be at the front of the dugout, ready to step up to the plate.
 - a) Note: Batting donuts are not allowed in Little League.

II. Participation Rules

- A. **Positions.** Teams play with 10 defensive players: 4 in the outfield and 6 in the infield.
 1. **Pitcher.**
 - a) The pitcher must be positioned within 3 feet of the dirt cutout of the pitcher's mound, and can be no further forward than even with the pitching machine wheel and no further back than the back edge of the dirt cutout of the pitcher's mound.
 - b) The pitcher stands to the first base side of the pitching machine when a right-handed batter is hitting, and to the third base side when a left-handed batter is hitting.
 2. **Catcher.** The catcher can be in the catcher's box, or within the backstop area.
 3. **Infielders.** The other four infielders play their appropriate positions on the infield.
 4. **Outfielders.** Outfielders are not to be used as extra infielders by rushing to an infield position on a hit ball. Before each pitch they must take a position at least 25 feet beyond the edge of the outfield grass on the Minor Field, and at least 15 feet beyond the edge of the grass on the Major Field and Cabrillo (usually a chalk arc will be drawn on the field to mark this distance, or marked with cones. Outfielders may not cross this line until the ball is hit). If an outfielder is playing too close to the infield and is party to an out unfairly, the umpire can rule the play as a non-out and instruct the offending player to take a proper defensive position. This rule is intended to encourage all managers to teach kids proper skills and an understanding of the game.
 5. **Moving players between different defensive positions during an inning is not permitted**, other than as necessary to accommodate any injuries that might occur (or a player leaving or similar).
- B. **Borrowing players.** To start a game your team must have at least 8 players present: You need to have 9 players minimum in the field, but one of these can be borrowed from the other team.
 1. **The borrowed player** (a) shall be the player who made the last out during the opposing team's previous at-bat, and (b) plays an outfield position.
 2. **While on offense**, only your own team's players bat, and the 9th spot in the order is skipped without penalty.
 3. **If you have 9 players**, you simply play the game with 9 instead of 10 (using 3 outfielders).
- C. **Batting order.** All players that are present are listed in the batting order. All players bat in the batting order.
 1. **If a player is injured or has to leave early**, that spot can be skipped without penalty.
 2. **Late arriving players** are added to the *bottom* of the batting order regardless of where the team is currently hitting in the order.
- D. **Minimum/Maximum play.** To help ensure that all players get a share of playing time and a chance to develop, National League has these rules:
 1. **Minimum 2 innings on infield.** Each player is required to play one of the six infield positions (P, C, 1B, 2B, 3B, SS) for a minimum of 2 innings per game. Also, at least one of these two innings

- must be at a position other than catcher.
2. **Maximum 4 innings on infield.** All players must also play a *non-infield* position (including bench) for a minimum of 2 innings per game.
 - a) Note: For this requirement, the position of catcher may be treated as a non-infield position. So a player can play a maximum of 4 innings at P, 1B, 2B, 3B, or SS, and must play at least 2 innings in the outfield, at catcher, or on the bench.
 3. **Bench.** Two requirements:
 - a) Players cannot be on the bench for 2 consecutive innings;
 - b) Players cannot be on the bench for more than 2 innings in the first 6 innings of a game.
 4. **Extra innings.** These requirements are fulfilled in the first 6 innings of the game. After that, for example, players can play a 5th infield inning, or sit for a third time (but still can't be on the bench twice in a row).
 5. **Lineup matrix.** The league has a [Google Sheet](#) document that calculates compliance with these rules. You can use that file, or a method of your own. In any case, you should print out at least 3 copies of your lineup (batting order and defensive positions by inning) for each game: one for the other team, one for your scorekeeper, and one for you.
 - a) **Making changes during the game.** You are not bound by the defensive positions in the matrix you hand out. If you decide to make some changes to your defense before a particular inning starts, that's perfectly fine as long as you're still in compliance with the rules above.

III. Ground Rules

- A. **Pitching machine.** A pitching machine is used in all games.
 1. **Setup.** The machine sits on the pitcher's mound: On the Minors Field, please use the machine labeled for the Minors fields set to the speed on the label; position the back leg against the rubber of the mound; on the Majors Field, position two front legs against the cutout of the bottom of the mound; at Cabrillo, set the the back legs at 46' from home plate.
 2. **Speed.** Each of the machines are labeled with the appropriate speed settings to result in a 40 MPH pitch based on the machine locations specified in the setup instructions outlined above. You must comply with both the setup instructions and speed settings per these rules but the machines are notoriously finicky, so you may need to tweak them occasionally.
 3. **Feeding the machine.** An adult feeds the machine. For each batter, the coach/parent feeding the machine starts with the 5 game balls (to speed play, balls that are not hit should just be kept to the side of the catcher during the at-bat, then all returned for the next batter). The coach feeding the machine is not allowed to coach the batter or runners in any manner after dropping the ball into the machine. However, prior to the pitch, the machine feeder is permitted to coach the batter regarding his/her proper batting stance (e.g., "move closer/farther from the plate," etc.). Players are not allowed to touch the machine at any time.
 4. **Strikes, strikeouts, and number of pitches.** The Junior Umpire calls and keeps track of strikes. A strike will be called only when a player swings and misses or fouls off a pitch (balls and strikes are not called on pitches not swung at). A foul ball counts as a strike, but not as the third strike for a strike out. Players will receive a maximum of 5 pitches, with two exceptions:
 - a) If the "last" pitch is fouled off, another pitch will be awarded;
 - b) On any pitch in the count, if the coach feeding the machine feels that the pitch is "unhittable" (e.g., in the dirt or over the batter's head), and provided the batter does not swing at the ball, that coach may call "no pitch" and the pitch will not count against the batter. If the batter hits a pitch that has been called "no pitch," the ball is in play as if the "no pitch" call had not been made.
 - c) Players will be called out on strikes if:
 - (1) they swing at and miss a pitch for their 3rd strike,
 - (2) the catcher catches a foul tip on a batter with 2 strikes, or

- (3) they fail to hit or foul off the 5th (or last) pitch offered to them.
5. **Batted ball that hits the pitching machine.** Any hit ball that strikes the machine (including the power cord, ball bucket/holder, or balls being stored on the ground) or the coach who is feeding the machine is ruled a dead ball single. The batter is awarded first base, and runners advance *only if forced*.
- B. **No live batting practice before games.** Batting practice on the field before a game is prohibited. This applies to the 4-hour time period before a game. This includes any batting practice held at the Point Loma Little League fields or in either batting cage using live pitching or the pitching machines. Notwithstanding the preceding, the League may permit soft-toss or coach-pitch batting practice before the game inside one or both batting cages at specified times, in which team managers will be notified.
1. **Tee, wiffle balls, and soft toss are ok.** Use of a batting tee is allowed, as is soft toss and pitched wiffle balls. Also, any off-site batting practice is not covered by this rule.
- C. **Inning Run Rule.** All games will have a 4-run limit per inning. When the 4th run scores, that half-inning is over.
1. **Note:** The 4-run limit applies to innings 1-5 even if the 5th inning, due to time, turns out to be the last inning of the game.
 2. **6th inning is open.** There is no run limit in the 6th inning or extra innings.
- D. **Adults on the field.** Four adults should be available for each game: the manager and 3 coaches. When a team is batting, one adult will feed the pitching machine and the other 3 coaches/adults will either be coaching 1st or 3rd base, or in the dugout with the team. *When the team is on defense only 3 adults are allowed on the field, so one of these coaches needs to leave the field every half inning* (this can be a bit awkward, and something you may need to clarify with your coaches).
- E. **Base coaches.** Adults may coach base at 1st and 3rd. These coaches must abide by rules pertaining to base coaches: Base coaches must stay in or near the coaching box, should not interfere with any thrown or batted ball, and may not assist runners by holding or pushing them in the correct direction; doing so may result in an interference ruling with the player being called out.
1. **Note:** Players may also serve as base coaches, abiding by the same rules. Also, as stated in the *Safety* section, player base coaches must wear a helmet.
- F. **Pregame warmups: No mitts!** Managers and coaches—and well-meaning parents—are not allowed to have a mitt on to play catch during a game or warmups, with 2 exceptions:
1. Catching balls to adjust the pitching machine, and
 2. *a coach may wear a glove and catch balls from players if simultaneously holding a bat and hitting with his/her other hand.* This is another topic you may need to finesse with the parents on your team, as they often show up and want to play catch with their kid before the game (and often in sandals, also a violation). These are District rules we must abide by. Also, only the manager and coaches are allowed on the field during warmups (though a parent can substitute temporarily for a late-arriving coach).
- G. **No bunting, stealing bases, or infield fly rule** in this league.
- H. **Time limit.** Game length is limited if another game follows, or by darkness. Specifically:
1. **Saturday and Sunday games (except the last game of the day).** Games will consist of
 2. **Weekday games or the last scheduled weekend game.** This time limit does not apply. However, the umpire will call the game if darkness makes play unsafe (in which case, the score reverts to the last full inning).
- I. **Tie games/Extra Innings.** Play out ties if time permits, with time limits as described above. A tie game is

recorded as 1/2 win and 1/2 loss in the standings.

J. Delayed Dead Ball / Freezing runners.

1. The delayed dead ball is initiated when either:
 - a) a ball thrown from an outfielder to an infielder*, including the catcher, touches the infielder's glove,
 - b) an infielder fields a batted ball and does not immediately attempt to make a play on a base runner (see note below J.2),
 - c) an infielder* receives and controls a thrown ball from another fielder and does not immediately attempt to make a play on a base runner.
 - (1) **NOTE:** An *infielder receiving a ball from the outfield must be on the inside of the drawn or chalked outfield line.
2. Once a delayed dead ball has been called, all base runners are "live" (eligible to be put out) until they safely advance or retreat to their proximate bases. A base runner who is both at least halfway to the next base when a delayed dead ball is called and safely reaches that base, is allowed to remain at that base. A base runner must return to the previous base if they safely advance to the next base but were not more than halfway when the dead ball was called.
 - a) **NOTE:** In the case of a ball hit directly to an infielder, runners are allowed to advance two bases from the base where they start, at their own risk, regardless of where they were at the time of the delayed dead ball rule being triggered. *If the ball is caught by an infielder, runners can tag up and advance a maximum of one base at their own risk. Runners will not advance further on an overthrow.*
 - b) In case a lead runner is forced to retreat to a previous base which is occupied, trailing runners will be forced to retreat to the previous bases as needed to accommodate the lead runner.
3. In the likely event of an overthrow, all runners are allowed to advance at most one base beyond the base they occupy or the base they are attempting if more than halfway.
 - a) **Note:** All base runners are "live" and advance or retreat at their own risk.

- K. Overthrows.** On an overthrow of 1st, 2nd or 3rd base, all base runners are permitted to advance a maximum of one base only beyond the base they were then on or going to. **Runners may advance on one overthrow per play, as the delayed dead ball has already been initiated.** All runners advancing on an overthrown ball do so at their own risk. On an overthrow made to a player with intent to initiate the Delayed Dead Ball rule, base runners may advance a maximum of one base at their own risk. **The ball must go past the receiving player (in the air or on the ground) and make it onto the grass area of the outfield, infield or the dirt in foul territory in order to be considered an overthrow.**

IV. Sportsmanship Rules

- A. **Players.** These rules are intended to teach the players good sportsmanship as their skill level grows. Violations can cause the player to be called out or removed from the game.
- B. **Must slide/avoid.** When a defensive player has the ball waiting, a base runner must either slide, avoid contact, or give himself up for an out.
 1. **Note:** The point is, we want to avoid collisions. And on that point, please also teach your players not to stand in the way of a baserunner—for example, the 3rd baseman standing on or right in front of the bag when there is no play, obstructing a runner from rounding 3rd to come home.
- C. **Fake tag.** A defensive player may not induce a base runner to slide unless the defensive player has the ball. A warning is issued for a first offense at this level. A second offense by the same player can result in a one base penalty.

- D. **Player throwing equipment accidentally.** For incidental throwing of equipment (most commonly, a batter accidentally throws the bat), on the first offense the Junior Umpire should give the player and manager a warning. If the same player does it a second time, it's cause for ejection from the game. (If batting, the player would be called out, and any runners would be returned to the bases they were on.) Note: A lot of kids tend to throw the bat now and then, so watch for this, work with them on it, and be a bit forgiving in games unless it's flagrant.
- E. **Player throwing equipment in anger.** A player who throws equipment in anger can be immediately removed from the game. No warning needs be given.
- F. **Adults.** Keep your cool! As stated under *Sportsmanship Rules* above, a player can be removed from the game without a warning for throwing something in anger. It's even worse when an adult does this, or swears in anger, or yells at a junior umpire, because coaches and parents are role models and need to behave with dignity and set an example. Violators may be ejected, and will be reported to the Board.
- G. **Only managers may talk to umpires.** If there's a bad call or other issue, the manager should ask for time out and then talk to the umpire with courtesy, and ask him to check with the other umpire if need be. Coaches should not go to the umpires directly; they should call the issue to their manager's attention, and the manager can then take it to the umpire.
- H. **Think about your goals.** What's *your* mission statement? Do you want to teach kids baseball, have fun with them, help them grow and develop self-confidence, instill a love of the game? What else? Keep your goals in mind at practices and games, and be sure your actions are moving you toward them.